

PRACTICING GRATITUDE

Workbook



THANKS

With such powerful benefits, you might think that practicing gratitude comes with its own price tag – too time consuming, expensive, or requiring more effort or resources than you have the energy or ability to give. But practicing gratitude is simple, inexpensive, and easy to implement. With just a few basic activities incorporated into your everyday routines, you can gradually shift your mindset to one of “appreciation” rather than simply “reaction” to the events of the day. Use the exercises below to help you do this.

“Three Good Things” Exercise

Write down three things that went well for you each day for one week. Use the template below as a guide.

1. **Event:** _____

- › What happened? Include what you or others did, what was said, etc.
- › How did it make you feel? How do you feel now?
- › What/who caused this event?

2. **Event:** _____

- › What happened? Include what you or others did, what was said, etc.
- › How did it make you feel? How do you feel now?
- › What/who caused this event?

3. **Event:** _____

- › What happened? Include what you or others did, what was said, etc.
- › How did it make you feel? How do you feel now?
- › What/who caused this event?

Tips and reminders:

- › **Content:** Your items can be low in impact or importance (e.g., “there was no traffic this morning”) or of high importance (e.g., “I got the job!”).
- › **Style:** Do not worry about writing style, spelling, or grammar.
- › **Technique:** Writing down your items is important to create a physical record.
- › **Process:** You can repeat this one-week exercise at regular intervals, but be sure to space them out. You might try for every other month or even quarterly.

Reference: Greater Good Science Center (n.d.) Three Good Things. Retrieved November 19, 2020 from <https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/three-good-things>

Strengthen social connections

Both expressing and receiving gratitude have an impact on our social connections. List some ideas for what you can do to show appreciation to others. See the prompts below for special people in your life, your community, and society. Use the suggestions to the right to jumpstart your thinking.

- › **My partner:**
- › **My children:**
- › **My sibling(s) and their family:**
- › **My parent(s):**
- › **My best friend(s):**
- › **My colleagues:**
- › **My neighbor(s):**
- › **Strangers I meet:**
- › **My community:**
- › **The world:**

Bring coffee for a colleague **Hold the door for a stranger** **Help someone load groceries in car** **Make a playlist for someone** Smile
Leave a note in an unexpected place **Volunteer** Donate your talents
Teach someone a new skill **Do a chore without being asked**
Plant something and nurture it **Text a friend** Leave money on the vending machine Let someone in front of you in line **Give a stranger a compliment**
Reconnect with an old friend **Do a favor without asking for repayment** Bring treats to the office Write a kind note on a napkin/receipt **Pay for someone's food/drink order** Listen to someone vent Join a cause Donate to a charity **Pick up litter or trash** Give some alone time **Cook a favorite meal** Plan a fun day for partner or family member
Help a neighbor Write a poem for someone Leave a nice note on someone's car Tell a boss about a good employee **Leave a positive review or comment online** Tell someone why you miss them Share overheard compliments about others **Offer to run an errand** **Send a funny message to a friend** Follow up with someone who is struggling **Accept help** Read or study with your children **Give unused coupons to other shoppers**

Writing a gratitude letter

Gratitude letters are a great way to focus attention on people in your life who you are grateful for. A gratitude letter is more than simply a “thank you” note. It is more specific and targeted. It should help you focus on the details – the what, the how, and the why – of how someone has impacted you positively. It is not simply thanking them for a favor or something you received from them. Use the example and guidelines below to help you with yours.

Dear Isabelle,

Address the person directly, as you would in any letter.

I wanted to reach out and let you know how grateful I am to have you for a sister.

Explain the intent of the letter

I remember when we were kids and I used to hang out with you in your room and we'd listen to old records together. I remember you teaching me how to do “the Electric Slide,” and how bad I was at it. You told me that “no one is hopeless!” We tried and tried again until we could do it in our sleep. I remember that every time I try to do the dance at a wedding.

Describe why you are grateful to this person. Be as specific and concrete as possible. Include the following:

- › Memories or situations that stand out to you
- › What they did or said that had an impact
- › Explain the specific impact of their behavior

You taught me how to be kind and patient with others. I try to put that into practice today while I'm teaching my students. You also taught me how to be persistent, to keep trying until I succeed. You are still teaching me how to be my best self even today, and I am so grateful.

Review what you are doing in your life now and when you most remember about their words, behavior, etc.

- › What did they teach you and how do you apply it to your life today?
- › If they are still in your life, describe how they continue to impact you or what you appreciate about them on an ongoing basis

Love,
Cristina

Tips and reminders:

- › **Length:** Your letter can be as long or short as you like. Around one page is a good goal.
- › **Style:** Spelling and grammar are not important. Simply focus on what you'd like to say.
- › **Process:** You do not have to send your gratitude letter. But if you do, you not only feel gratitude in the moment, but you also give the recipient a chance to feel it themselves.

List one person to whom you could send a gratitude letter, and jot some notes below on what you might write:

Name: _____

- › What memories, situations, traits, abilities, or gifts are you grateful for in this person?

- › What did they say or do that impacted you, and how?

Keep a gratitude journal

A gratitude journal is one way you can regularly “train” yourself to see the positives, even in the midst of your everyday routines or when times are hard. A gratitude journal isn’t like a diary, and isn’t as thorough as the “Three Good Things” exercise we reviewed. It is simply a short record of things you are grateful for in a day. Below are some examples of what you can include in your gratitude journal:

- › A simple pleasure you enjoyed
- › A place you visited
- › A conversation you had
- › An interaction with a loved one
- › An interaction with a stranger
- › A project or task you completed
- › Something you learned or mastered
- › An emotion/sensation you experienced
- › A gift/favor you received
- › A song, TV show, book, etc. you enjoyed
- › Something you were able to do for others
- › A message or piece of mail you received
- › Something you made or created
- › A mistake or failure that you learned from
- › A news story or social media post that made you smile or laugh
- › Time with a family member, a friend, or a colleague that you enjoy being with
- › Something outdoors (e.g., the weather, flowers blooming)
- › An object/experience you bought
- › A skill or talent you utilized today
- › Having time for yourself
- › Completing an activity that was good for you (e.g., exercise)
- › How you felt physically today
- › Something or someone that made your day a little easier
- › A personality trait or strength you benefited from today
- › Something you ate or drank that you enjoyed
- › Something that surprised you
- › Good news that you or someone you love received
- › Making progress on a task or obligation you find boring or unpleasant

Tips and reminders:

- › **Format:** Your gratitude journal entries can simply be three single sentences of things you are grateful for today. You do not need to include the detailed reasoning that you might include in other gratitude exercises.
- › **Technique:** Try taking photos of objects or people throughout the day as reminders for when you journal.
- › **Staying on track:** Various apps are available that prompt you with “gratitude notifications” to remind you. You can also keep your gratitude journal right in your cell phone, storing photos and thoughts for each day.
- › **Frequency:** While you can do this activity daily, it is important that gratitude journaling doesn’t become a “chore.” This can offset the positive benefits gratitude can bring. Try for journaling several times a week, or jot down experiences, situations, or objects in the moment and review at the end of each day. Don’t pressure yourself to complete it on a firm timeline.
- › **Remember,** there is no “right” way to keep a gratitude journal. Find what works for your preferences and routines and stick with that.

What three things are you grateful for so far today?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Gratitude in the workplace

Feeling, expressing, and being the recipient of gratitude at work helps us feel more productive, purposeful, and effective in our jobs. The responsibility for fostering a culture of gratitude lies with everyone on the team. Use the cues below to start identifying ways you can show gratitude in your workplace. Think about recognition programs that are in place, ways you enjoy celebrating as a team, or the gratitude exercises you've learned in the seminar today for ideas on your "gratitude moves."

	Who?	What happened?	Gratitude move:
Someone who has helped you at work in the last week			
Someone who you appreciate at work			
Think about the person you interact with the least on your team/department. What do you appreciate about them?			
Think about the person you interact with the most on your team/department. What do you appreciate about them?			
Think about your supervisor. What are you grateful to them for?			
One compliment your work or the work of your team has received in the last month			
One success you've personally experienced at work in the last week			
One success your team has experienced in the last month			