



The power of gratitude

Gratitude is something we are all capable of, but it can be a little elusive. However, when it becomes a daily habit, it can transform your perspective, boost your mood, and improve your overall health and wellbeing.

As humans, we are wired to notice threats in our environment that may impact our safety and happiness. This is called a negativity bias. It's a good thing and helps to keep us alive, but it doesn't help to keep us happy. Gratitude helps us notice the positive things in life, and in turn, can have a positive impact on our overall wellbeing.

Practicing gratitude may not come naturally, but it is circular and continues to build on itself. When we focus on the things we are thankful for, our mindset shifts, and we start noticing more and more things around us to be grateful for – it's a positive feedback loop to our brain that helps us to build a more optimistic outlook on life.

This positive outlook can improve resilience, self-esteem, and help to reduce stress. By acknowledging the good things in your life often, we're also likely to feel fewer negative emotions such as envy, anger or resentment.

Did you know?

Gratitude isn't just good for your mental wellbeing, it can also help you make better social connections, improve your quality of sleep, lower your risk of mental health conditions such as depression and may even improve your cardiovascular health.

With all these benefits, you might consider adding some time for gratitude into your daily routine. The good news is, anyone can practice gratitude, anytime, anywhere. Here are some tips to get you started.

- 1. Gratitude Journal.** Start or end your day by jotting down three things you're grateful for or that brought you joy. They don't have to be big – it's the small moments of joy that can have a big impact overall. What you are grateful for is unique to you, and there is no right or wrong. Perhaps your morning coffee was better than usual, you had a good chat with a friend, you watched the sunrise or sunset, the bus driver waited an extra ten seconds for you so you didn't need to wait for the next bus, your kids drew you a picture, or you finished a book.
- 2. Reminders.** When practicing gratitude, little and often is key, but it can be difficult to make a conscious shift in our busy lives. Leave yourself reminders to have moments of mindfulness throughout your day. For example, you could leave post-it notes on the mirror, next to your computer, and on the fridge. You can set reminders on your phone or even download an app that will prompt you throughout the day. These little nudges can help you pause and appreciate the good things, even when you're busy and, in particular, on the more challenging days.
- 3. Say thank you.** Expressing gratitude not only makes the other person feel appreciated but also strengthens your relationships and boosts your own happiness. Take a moment to thank someone in your life – send them a quick text, a heartfelt note, or a simple "thank you" in person.

Something on your mind?

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