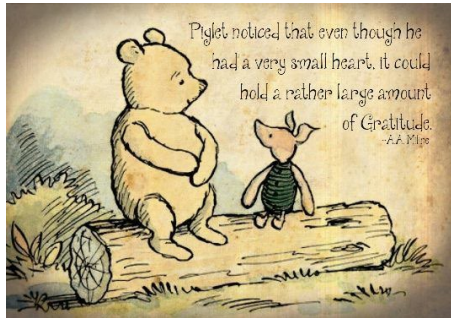


Be Thankful. Be Happier.

Mental Health Moment

By: Meagan Ernestine

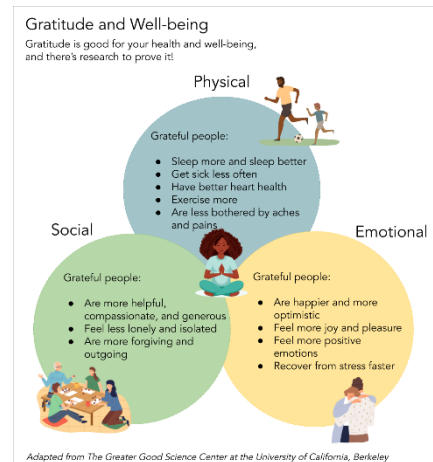
If I told you that there is something that you could do to help you feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve your health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships would you do it? Most people would jump at the chance to make such a positive impact on their lives. All it takes is being a little bit more grateful!



What is gratitude? Gratitude is a thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives. In the process, people usually recognize that the source of that goodness lies at least partially outside themselves. As a result, being grateful also helps people connect to something larger than themselves as individuals – whether to other people, nature, or a higher power.

What does the research say?

In the past two decades, [a growing body of evidence](#) in the field of social science has found that gratitude has measurable benefits for just about every area of our lives. Gratitude appears to contribute substantially to individual well-being and physical health. So much so that the [Greater Good Science Center](#) at the University of California, Berkeley—a leader in research on the science of social and emotional well-being—describes gratitude as the “social glue” key to building and nurturing strong relationships.



Start practicing gratitude right away!



1. Write a letter :Gratitude letters can be incredibly beneficial for the person writing them, as well as the recipient.

2. Be an active listener: Making someone feel truly heard is an excellent way to express your gratitude to them, particularly if they've been a good listener for you in the past.

3. Take a mindful walk: “Stop and smell the

roses” might sound like a cliché, but there’s real truth in how helpful getting outside can be, especially for mental health. Try combining a nature walk with a gratitude practice by taking note of a few small things that give you joy during your walk.

4. Give a thoughtful gift: A truly thoughtful gift can sometimes show how much you understand and appreciate another person. As you decide what to give them, think about

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what the person uses in their everyday life, or about your most special memories together. A gift could also be an experience, rather than a physical object.

5. Start a gratitude journal: Expressive writing through [journaling](#) can help to process negative events and emotions, but it can also help you to hone in on the positives in your life. You could start your gratitude entry by noticing how you feel, both in your body and your mind. Then, try to list 5 to 10 things that you're grateful for in this moment.

6. Be specific: Identifying specific, small things that make your life better is an important part of any gratitude practice.

7. Offer your help: You can also express gratitude through your actions. Think about where your skills lie, and then ask the person what they need.

8. Cook something you love: Cooking is a calming and meditative activity for many people. If that sounds like you, then you might also consider putting your culinary skills to use as part of your gratitude practice.

9. Try visual reminders: Visual reminders of what you're grateful for can be just about anything, such as: photographs of loved ones, a beautiful object that makes you happy, tickets from an event you loved, artwork drawn by your children, Post-It notes or index cards with [mantras](#) or affirmations written on them.

10. Return the favor: In an [ideal world](#), people treat others the way that they want to be treated. So if someone has been a source of support for you, there's a good chance that their behavior reflects how they want others to show up for them.

References:

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