

Gratitude Practice

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts? Heart? Body? None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



MindfulnessExercises.com/Gratitude-Practice

■ PURPOSE / EFFECTS

Gratitude practice is simply being thankful for the good in our lives. By focusing us on positive rather than negative thoughts, it helps us to see the cup of life as half-full rather than as half-empty. It reminds us not to be greedy and to find satisfaction in what we have, though we may strive for more. Gratitude requires no sacrifice but provides great rewards in compassion, happiness, and mindfulness.

■ METHOD

Summary

Every day, acknowledge something for which you are grateful.

Long Version

1. Keep a journal you can use for your gratitude practice. This journal can be separate from the one which you use for Emotional Journaling, or you can use the same one if you wish. Every day, write down five things for which you are grateful, no matter how simple or humble. Be honestly appreciative, and don't patronize yourself with gratitude for, say, "having food unlike all those starving kids in China."

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2. If you don't wish to journal, at the end of every day, say your five things to yourself before going to bed.
3. See the giver behind the gift. When something nice happens, think about the person who made this pleasant experience happen. Did your partner bring you a cup of tea without asking? Did a friend call just to see how you were doing? Did the checkout girl at the grocery store notice a rotten piece of fruit in your bag and tell you so you could exchange it? It doesn't matter if the experience was small. Express your genuine gratitude to this person and remind yourself that people are often surprisingly, overwhelmingly kind. Say thank-you to everyone.
4. If you are a religious person, use your gratitude as an opportunity for praise. Always begin your prayers with thanks to God for your blessings, rather than supplications for favor. Saying grace before a meal is a type of gratitude practice that many of us have experienced; it can even be done by the non-religious.
5. Use the emotional strength that gratitude practice brings you as a tool. Recognizing the beauty of the world does not mean ignoring its flaws. Do your best every day to earn your blessings; Community Service / Charity is a great way to manifest your gratitude.
6. Do this even when you don't feel like it. When you're angry or sad, gratitude is even more important than when you're happy. These emotions are valid, of course, but by reminding yourself of what there is to be thankful for, you can take off their destructive edge.

■ HISTORY

Gratitude practice is part of many of the world's major faiths. The Psalms of the Hebrew Bible are full of thanks and praise to God for all his blessings. Christian worship centers on thanking Jesus for his sacrifice on behalf of the world. The prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, said, "Gratitude for the abundance you have received is the best insurance that the abundance will continue."

The Hindu ritual of puja expresses gratitude to its deities through offerings. And gratitude is an important part of Buddhist lovingkindness practice. The contemporary positive psychology movement recommends gratitude practice as one of the strongest tools for promoting a sense of general wellbeing in all.

Affirmations

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NOTES

It's been shown in clinical studies that people who write down their gratitude for ten weeks had their levels of happiness raised 25% from the control group. It's that simple: being thankful makes us happy.

Here Paramahansa Nithyananda teaches about the importance of gratitude:

