

Gratitude Practice

Gratitude = Happiness

Positive psychology research has consistently found an association between gratitude and increased happiness. According to the Harvard Medical School, gratitude helps us to feel more positive emotions, improves our health, helps us to deal with adversity and builds strong relationships. Three years in we've found that it changes what you notice around you and elevates mood.

There are many different gratitude practice options, including:

1. **Call** someone who has helped you in some way to express your gratitude.
2. Write a **letter** once a month to someone who has made a difference in your life to communicate your appreciation. You could post or deliver it in person and read it with them.
3. **Visualise** thanking a person you're grateful to if they are not around or if you you're unable to do it in person.
4. Write three or more gratitudes in a **diary or journal** on a daily basis.
5. Create a **gratitude group**.

Gratitude Group

This practice was inspired by the work of Pam Grout, author of Thank and Grow Rich, and can be highly effective because of its inherent features.

Benefits of the group structure:

- Accountability
- A reminder when other's texts arrive
- Vicarious joy from others' gratitudes and the privilege of witnessing their lives

Steps for getting started:

- Invite up to four people to join the group (you can progressively grow to that number).
- Ask each person to send everyone involved a daily text containing three things they are grateful for at a specified time, eg. in the evening or following morning.
- Consider not saying the same thing twice over a month (or even ever) as this encourages greater reflection and recognition of the many things we take for granted. There can be a tendency to regularly say things like "family, health and home" without this guideline.
- Ask everyone to commit to sending the gratitudes even if they are not feeling it (that's when it can have the largest effect).
- Meet to debrief after one month to discuss effects observed and whether any changes might be needed, then as regularly as you like but at least every four to six months.