

## Gratitude

The word 'gratitude' comes from the Latin word *gratus*, meaning pleasing or thankful. Gratitude is a feeling and an attitude of appreciation for a benefit, gesture, or favour received.

In its broadest sense, it is simply a feeling of thankfulness. In common usage, gratitude may be either:

- Specific - gratitude could be directed towards someone or something specific, who has done something good for us, perhaps given us a gift; or
- General - gratitude could be a warm feeling towards the world, or towards a deity, for everything in life.

Gratitude includes things such as:

- Thank others for what they do and for who they are.
- Thank yourself, for who we are and what we do.
- Thank life, society, circumstances ... for allowing us to be, do, and have.
- In a very simplified way, gratitude is a way of giving thanks for all the positive things we have in life.

Gratitude is not about giving thanks indiscriminately, but about an exercise of observation and sincerity to identify all that for which we are deeply grateful and it does not have to be extraordinary. In fact, it pays to be thankful for the simple things that we often take for granted. Here are some examples of things for which you might be grateful:

- Being alive and in good health.
- Having a wonderful family.
- Having friends with whom to share good and bad times.
- Living in a country where I can enjoy all kinds of freedoms.
- Having enough money to cover all my basic needs.
- Being able to study.
- To be able to enjoy small moments of happiness with your family and friends
- Receiving a favour from someone who expects nothing in return.
- Exchanging a sincere smile with a stranger.

Research shows that people who are grateful tend to show higher levels of well-being and happiness (in other words, they feel better about themselves and their lives), and improved mental health. They may even sleep better!

Expressing gratitude to those who have given us something, whether that is out of the goodness of their hearts or in the line of duty, also helps them to feel good, and improves their self-esteem.

Gratitude has been shown to improve social ties and promotes behaviour that is more social. It makes other people want to show gratitude too, people tend to want to repay favours, and not just to the person who did them the favour but to other people as well.

Therefore, feeling and expressing gratitude helps you and those around you to feel good, and that tends to result in the good feelings being spread even further.

## **Resources:**

*Gratitude Jar*

*Gratitude Exercises*

*Why I'm Grateful*

*Gratitude Letter*

*Gratitude Letter (2)*

*Gratitude Journal – 3 good things*

*Gratitude Journal*

*Weekly Gratitude Journal*

## **The benefits of gratitude and how to get started**

<https://www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-gratitude-practice#getting-started>

## **How to practice gratitude**

<https://www.mindful.org/an-introduction-to-mindful-gratitude/>