



GRATITUDE



Gratitude is one of the most powerful tools in your personal toolkit. It lowers stress and alleviates a scarcity mindset, or one in which it feels like we never have enough. Gratitude makes it possible to have more meaningful connections and can significantly increase well-being and life satisfaction, as shown in the research by UC Davis psychologist Robert Emmons. A key thing to remember when expressing gratitude is that it should be specific. The more specific, the more meaningful it is to you and to the person receiving it. Try incorporating some of these ideas into your daily routine and make gratitude a regular practice in your life.

1. Start or end each day by sending two or three emails, texts or social media messages to coworkers, friends, and family that you feel grateful for.
2. Take a gratitude walk. As you walk, think through the things you are grateful for at that moment, starting with the basics. For example, “I am grateful for the trees, for the five minutes to take this walk, for the fresh air.” Then move deeper into your gratitude with more specific concepts. Your mind will wander and that’s okay. Simply bring it back to your gratitude as often as possible.
3. Play the game ‘*High, Low, Cheer!*’ with your family at dinner time. Each person shares something that went really well in their day, something that didn’t go well in their day, which gives the opportunity to have connection in one’s hardships too, and something or someone they are grateful for or want to cheer for.
4. Write thank you notes each week and put them in the mail. There is something so special about a handwritten thank you note and you will find that you and the recipient will both appreciate this so much.
5. Practice gratitude meditation. There are free apps available that will take you through gratitude meditations, like *Calm* or *Headspace*. You can search for gratitude-specific apps in the app store of your choice.

Gratitude can be shared, or it can be practiced internally. Either way, it pays dividends. The more you do it, the easier it gets, and the more natural it becomes for your brain to consider what you are grateful for. During this difficult time, it feels like a lot of things are out of our control and stress levels are high. Now, more than ever, be intentional about noticing what is going well and lean into the feelings of gratitude.