

The Zen Den Wellness Gratitude Guide to Boosting Health and Happiness

Gratitude...it's not just for Thanksgiving!

Gratitude is a lens through which we view our internal and external experiences. Through the lens of gratitude we intentionally appreciate what we have, rather than focusing on what we lack. When we do this, we gain tremendous health rewards: decreased stress, worry, irritability, sadness, fatigue and overall improved mood and wellbeing.

Viewing our daily experiences through a gratitude lens takes both intention and practice. It is a new habit of the mind and body. You can get started with right now by following this 24-hour guide to gratitude. Try at least one practice morning, noon, and night. Commit to the practices for 5 days and see what changes you notice!

Wake-Up

Spend two minutes writing down what you are grateful for. Are you grateful for a good night's sleep? A cozy bed? Try to linger in the way gratitude feels in your body as you write. Starting your day with a focus on what you are thankful for sets the tone for the rest of the day.

Taking a morning shower? Let gratitude wash over you. Linger in gratitude for the warm water and fresh soaps. This turns an ordinary activity into a moment of gratitude.

Grab a small item like a pebble, cotton ball, or penny. Place it in your pocket and every time you notice it throughout your day, use it as your cue to pause and think of something to be grateful for.

Mid Day

Set an alarm to remind you to pause for gratitude. Think of someone who has enriched your life or has helped you in some way. Then, thank them with a personal letter, email, phone call or text. Imagine their smile as they read your message.

Create a smile file on your phone or computer- a place where you keep images of whatever you are grateful for - a loved one, a special vacation, or even a cup of coffee. Browse through your smile file once per day.

Turn moments of waiting into moments of gratitude. While waiting in line, at a red light, for a computer to load, or water to boil, use that time to think about what or who you are thankful. Remember to feel grateful for yourself too- your strong body, thoughtful mind, and kind heart.

Bedtime

A-to-Zzzz- As you lie in bed, think of one thing you are grateful for, for each letter of the alphabet. Warning: you may fall asleep by "M"! **This one is Zen Den Kid-Approved!

Dedicate time before bed to reflect on your day and write about what, on this day, you are thankful for. Use a journal to fully describe your moments of gratitude and try to relive the moment, lingering in the feelings of warmth and peace, as you write. Or, simply write a list of the many reasons you have to be grateful. Use the attached Gratitude List Template.

Bookend your day with gratitude! Leave your night time journal entry or gratitude list by your bed and read it when you wake up in the morning.

Tonight I am grateful for....

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

...to be read tomorrow morning...