



Practising Gratitude Journaling

“Be thankful for what you have; you’ll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don’t have, you will never, ever have enough.”

Oprah Winfrey

Gratitude is defined as the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself. It represents a general state of appreciation and thankfulness. Research indicates a clear association between gratitude and a sense of overall wellbeing.

Experiencing thankfulness, appreciation and gratitude tends to cultivate positive feelings, which contribute to one’s overall sense of contentment, wellbeing and happiness. People who tend to be more grateful experience more positive emotions and life satisfaction, and also experience less negative emotions such as depression and anxiety.

Individual experiences of gratitude and appreciation have been shown to improve mood and down-regulate the stress response by promoting parasympathetic activity of the nervous system (rest and digest)

Research also suggests that 50% of our happiness is explained by genetics, 10% by circumstances and 40% is accounted for by our intentional activity. Expressing feelings and thoughts of gratitude through the activity of writing can both sustain and improve happiness.

During week two of the 31 Day Health Transformation we are going to begin the practice of expressing gratitude using a daily journal.

Here are some useful tips to get you started:

- Spend at least 5-10 minutes writing about the things that you feel grateful for. Some people find it easier to write later in the evening so that you can include events and experiences that occurred throughout that day.
- Try to integrate journaling as part of your daily routine, but also consider writing down joyful experiences as they happen.
- There are a variety of things that you can express gratitude for, from basic material things such as your home, your warm bed or the food on your table, to the people, places and experiences that bring you joy and happiness.
- Try to avoid repeating the same entries. This means that the practice of gratitude journaling might become challenging at times, but this exact challenge is what will allow your awareness and sense of gratitude to flourish over time.
- Attempt to find something to be grateful for about the people and the things that you **don't like**. This will help to shift your perceptions and bring you more happiness.
- Be creative – your gratitude journal doesn't only have to be lists and words, it could include photos, pictures, drawings or physical objects (similar to a scrap book).
- Most importantly – don't forget to be grateful for **yourself and your abilities**. Appreciate everything that your mind and body can do, whether that is exercising, walking, reading, cooking or having the will to persevere through some of the more challenging moments of the 31 Day Health Transformation.

We will leave you with a few powerful words to help spark the beginning of your journey towards a life imbued with gratitude.

This a wonderful day. I've never seen this one before."

Maya Angelou