

A Grateful Warrior is a Peaceful Warrior: Practising Gratitude

#WellbeingWarriors

Compiled by Keneilwe Chologi
(Student Counselling and Development)

Quote by Fred De Witt Van Amburgh: "None is more impoverished than the one who has no gratitude. Gratitude is a currency that we can mint for ourselves, and spend without fear of bankruptcy."

We mostly express our gratitude to others when we want to demonstrate that we appreciate them, and when they have done something for us. We often show gratitude when we want others to experience the same appreciation and worthiness that we felt when receiving recognition. Those who regularly practise gratitude may experience more fulfilment in their lives and express more compassion and kindness by merely taking time to notice and reflect upon the things that make them thankful. Expressing gratitude is beneficial for both the person giving and the one receiving the appreciation.

Appreciate the small things

You do not have to wait for 'the big things in life' to be grateful. Merely learning to appreciate the everyday small things and the good moments that you have with others will improve your feelings of happiness. For instance, when last did you sit and think about how fortunate you are to have the people you have around you? Or to reflect on how you have managed to keep your head above water academically with online learning?

Seek gratitude within your challenges

Positive experiences are not the only thing for which we should feel grateful. At times, taking a moment to reflect on the challenges we face allows us to be more thankful. If we do not face adversity in life, then how are we going to grow as people? Think how your relationship with a loved one became better after you went through a disagreement or a misunderstanding. Take time to reflect on the underlying lessons within your experiences. What did you learn from your last challenge? Can you perhaps pass this lesson on to someone else? How have you become a better person as a result of that experience?

Keep a gratitude journal

Taking a moment, every day, to reflect on the good things in your life can help you keep track and refer back to your positive life moments. You may either journal daily or weekly, whichever works for you. There are several resources for you to use. For instance, you can download the *happyfeed* app on the play store or visit this link for a [simple worksheet](#) to get you started with your journaling journey. Remember, gratitude is about focusing on the small and simple things in life.

Express yourself

To experience more gratitude, we need to share our feelings of being thankful to those around us. You can do this by expressing your appreciation to a friend, family member, or even a neighbour. You will be amazed at how much happier you feel once you have brightened someone's day. You may perhaps reflect on what the person did for you previously, that meant a lot to you.

Spend time with those you love

Sometimes it is difficult to feel grateful, more especially during times like these where our movement is restricted. Try spending time with family members at home by doing a fun activity together, playing a fun family board game or video calling your friends. This will not only help you grow closer to each other, but it will allow you to practice showing gratitude.

Resist complaining

Challenge yourself to limit or eliminate complaining and criticizing what happened to you or the people around you. Reflect on how much time and energy you spend on feeling negative. Instead, you can put that energy to better use by finding the unseen benefit at that moment.

Quote by Jim Rohn: "Learn to be thankful for what you already have, while you pursue all that you want."

Quote by Oprah Winfrey: "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."

Experience nature

Do not remain indoors the whole day, make time to go outdoors and get some fresh air. Take time to admire the feel of the sun on your skin, the cold breeze or the beauty of nature. At that moment, focus only on what you see and feel.

What do you take for granted?

Have you taken some time lately to think about how life would be if all the things you take for granted are taken away? Now imagine getting these things back one at a time and consider how thankful you would be. Are you feeling a little more grateful for what you have now?

Volunteer

Volunteering your time or donating money or old clothes can feel like a sacrifice at times. Still, it is more of a blessing that is good for your health and wellbeing. This is because when you volunteer, you will be surrounded by grateful people, and this will make you feel good about yourself. Volunteering can mean going grocery shopping for neighbours who cannot do it themselves (always remember to keep the physical distancing rules) or helping around the house with tasks that are usually not part of your chores.

Quote by Charles Schwab: "The way to develop the best that is in a person is by appreciation and encouragement."

When you are showing gratitude, you engage both your body and mind; this can potentially offer more benefits than simply verbally expressing your gratitude. Be kind to yourself; practising gratitude is a form of self-care that is proven effective in improving wellbeing. If you find it challenging to get started, perhaps talk to a friend, and you can make practising gratitude an activity that you do together. In no time, this practice will become a habit, and you will do it without even noticing.