

RECOVERING RESILIENCE

Growing Gratitude

“Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.”

- Melody Beattie

Today we explore how to grow gratitude mindfully.

Check in: What are you grateful for today?

Ancient Wiring

- We are biologically wired for negativity. It is a survival mechanism which in this day and age we have less use for, than in the hunter-gatherer days of old. It still remains our default pattern, however.
- Rick Hansen says that our brains are like Teflon for positive experiences and Velcro for negative ones! It is easier to be negative than it is to be positive.
- We are wired to default to anxiety and fear. This leaves no space for gratitude in a mind that is constantly anticipating the worst thing.
- However, we can rewire our brains through mindfulness and the practice of gratitude.

Gratitude Alleviates Mental Illness

- In a recent study involving 300 young adults with anxiety and depression, gratitude was explored as a means to alleviate mental illnesses.
- One group was instructed to write a letter of gratitude to a person every day.
- The second group had to write about the negative experiences in their past.
- The third group weren't asked to write anything.
- After 3 weeks, those that were practicing gratitude found that their mental health improved greatly. Whilst those in the other groups experienced no changes.

Expressing Gratitude: The Benefits of a Gratitude Practice

- Assist us to **see the good in the world** around us which increases feelings of security and connectedness.
- **Reminds us to never take anything for granted.** This creates a continuous cycle of generosity for ourselves and others because we never take anything for granted. This cuts us off from abundance.
- **There is less space for negativity and fear** when we are being obsessively grateful. It's like an antivirus for the brain!





“Trade your expectation for appreciation and the world changes instantly.”

- Tony Robbins

Gratitude **Practices for You**

- **Journaling:** Using the power of mindfulness to keep up a daily practice of journaling.
- **Positive Grace:** Focus on all the good things in our lives.
- **Negative Grace:** Reflect on the pain and suffering in the world and how fortunate we may be in comparison.
- **Honour the Broken:** Reflect on hard times and how we practiced resilience in overcoming these challenges.
- **Honour the Good:** Reflect on recalling the good aspects of people, things and places.
- **Sensory Appreciation:** Spend some time enjoying the simple and pleasurable moments of life.

Mindful Eating **Practice**

- Choose something that you like to eat or drink and hold it in your hand.
- Close your eyes and breathe deeply for a moment.
- Open your eyes and look closely at this item as you contemplate the abundance you are living in.
- Use all your senses to appreciate this food object; REALLY smell it, touch it, see it and perhaps even hear it.
- Now take your time as you mindfully bite into it or sip it and REALLY taste it.
- Immerse yourself in this experience and be totally present with the blessings of life that surround you now.
- How amazing is this experience? Let's be uber-grateful for this very moment!
- Gently open your eyes.

Self-**gratitude**

- Can you be grateful for yourself? Why is it so challenging for you to celebrate ourselves?
- In some religious traditions, it is common practice to confess your sins in small rooms called confessionals. This is a good practice to take stock of our shortcomings and where we may have hurt others, as we ask for forgiveness.
- But what about creating a space where we are able to rejoice in the things that we have done right and the many good deeds we have done? Can we create 'rejoicinals', if you will- a place where we unashamedly celebrate ourselves and focus on our good qualities?
- Yes, we can! And it starts by focusing on the good things, our positive attributes and by feeling gratitude for the goodness we bring to the world.
- Do you know that 'You will never be happy if you're not happy'?

*“Always remember
that your focus
determines your
reality.”*

- George Lucas

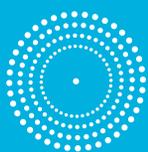
Check in:

What skills and attributes do you value about yourself?

What actions have you performed recently that you are really proud of?

Homework

Journal the things that you like about yourself and the things that you have done for others that you are proud of. Celebrate yourself and start to rewire that inner critic into an inner cheerleader.



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