

The Importance of Practicing Gratitude

2025 WTIU Conference on Aging

Adapted by Joy Harter from the article "10 Ways to a Life of Gratitude" by Joshua Becker

"Create a moment each day to say thank you for the blessings that flow through to each one of us." – Emily Silva

Gratitude is a gift you give yourself. Each time you are aware that an experience or a possession brings you joy or more love into your life, you benefit immensely. There is always something to be grateful for, and when we intentionally identify those blessings, we transform our reality and shift our perspective from scarcity to abundance, pessimism to optimism, and desire to appreciation. By being grateful for what you have, and not dwelling on what you don't have, you invite more abundance and love into your life, that which nourishes you and enables you to share this love with others.

HOW TO CULTIVATE MORE GRATITUDE IN OUR LIVES

View Gratitude as a Discipline: something to practice every day, no matter what the day may bring. When things feel like they are falling apart, that is when gratitude is needed more than ever.

Make the practice of gratitude a worthwhile habit in your life and you will notice the difference.

Embrace the Idea That 'Enough' is a Blessing: Gratitude begins by recognizing and appreciating that we have enough. Don't equate more happiness or a better life with having "more." There is great freedom in realizing we already have enough.

Give Yourself Permission to Want Less: Releasing the desire for more frees us to appreciate what we already have.

Look Back to See How Far You've Come: Remembering our progress, especially through challenging times, helps us see life with renewed appreciation.

Keep Positive Reminders Available: Negativity bias is our mind's natural tendency to focus on negative experiences. Having gratitude is difficult when these negative memories grow. Surround yourself with positive messages, inspiring art or photos, expressions of appreciation, spiritual symbols, etc. Whatever will serve to bring you back on track with positivity, use that!

Notice the Small Things: There is abundant gratitude to be found in the tiniest of details of life – sunshine on your face, a fresh breeze, a warm meal or cup of hot tea, a bird chirping. Don't let these opportunities to feel gratitude pass you by. Melt into the present moment and be grateful.

Thank Someone Each Day: Thank a friend, a family member, a co-worker. Say "thank you for..." and fill in the blank with what moves you to express your gratitude to another human being.

Put Away Distractions: Our lives are filled with constant distractions of all kinds. Those distractions prevent us from slowing down enough to see and be grateful for what is right in front of us. Good advice – set those distractions aside more often and whenever possible!

Remember that the Present is a Gift: Be grateful for what you have in your life right now. Do not dwell on what you didn't have in the past or what you don't foresee having in the future. Stay present minded and be grateful for every day!