

Gratitude and its Importance in Positive Life

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ABSTRACT

The act of showing gratitude for one's belongings is called thankfulness. It is an expression of the value that is not measured in terms of money. It is an innate, unprompted expression of warmth and goodness. This social emotion, which has strong evolutionary roots derived from the necessity of giving and receiving support in order to survive, strengthens relationships. This study focuses on the signs of gratitude, the Impact of Gratitude, Practicing gratitude, Measuring gratitude, benefits of gratitude (emotional benefits, social benefits, personality benefits, career benefits, and physical health benefits), Gratitude's role in recovering (from drug abuse, depression, and coronary health events), and provide the tips to foster gratitude.

Keywords: Gratitude, emotional benefits, social benefits, career benefits, physical health benefits, personality benefits, drug abuse, depression, coronary health events.

INTRODUCTION

According to studies, feeling and expressing thankfulness involves particular brain regions. When given a task that encourages the expression of appreciation, people's brain scans reveal long-lasting modifications in the prefrontal cortex that increase sensitivity to subsequent instances of gratitude. Though it is a natural emotion, research is increasingly demonstrating the advantages of consciously choosing to appreciate one's blessings or practicing thankfulness. According to studies, cultivating gratitude consciously has significant social and personal advantages. You can be thankful for your family, friends, coworkers, pets, the environment, and life in general. Positive vibes emanate from the sensation both inwardly and outside.

Gratitude is a feeling that improves a person's mood. Gratitude is a mental emotion as well as a personality trait. Some individuals simply have a better predisposition to feel appreciated on a daily basis. The positive feelings of gratitude and appreciation are associated with a variety of benefits for both mental and physical health. When you are feeling grateful, you show your appreciation for something or someone in your life by acting in numerous ways that are nice, pleasant, and giving. The word can mean many things depending on who is using it and in what situation. Both a dispositional trait and a transitory emotion, gratitude is. In both scenarios, expressing appreciation entails the act of first acknowledging that a favorable outcome has been attained and then acknowledging that the favorable outcome has an external cause. Psychologists have discovered that, even for people who are already dealing with mental health issues, being appreciative over time increases happiness and promotes both physical and psychological health. According to studies, expressing appreciation lessens the likelihood of ruminating, which is a defining characteristic of depression. Additionally, it lessens the use of words that convey unfavorable emotions and shifts internal attention away from unpleasant feelings like bitterness and jealousy. It is true that grateful people are less prone to experience mental health issues like depression. According to one study, a gratitude intervention helped a group of older adults improve their mental toughness and reduce negative affect. The first step in growing gratitude is acknowledging the positive aspects of life. The best atmosphere for being grateful is not one that encourages constant seeking and sees financial possessions as the source of happiness. It is not, however, an insurmountable barrier to its progress. In the same way, enmity, cynicism, and narcissism steal gratitude. In fact, cultivating gratitude can help heal narcissism, at least in part. Simply being in the presence of your loved ones can make you feel more grateful. Additionally, feeling more grateful is pushed by increasing your appreciation for life and decreasing your cynicism. Some people wouldn't mind having to make a difficult decision at other times, so viewing it as a gift can be helpful.

The degree to which each of us is predisposed to experience and express thankfulness varies depending on the individual. Because rain washes everything clean, it may be as simple as a healthy spring shower. People feel good about themselves when they perform a more particular action, like volunteering to assist others.

The benefits of being grateful for others, which is a social feeling, are multiplied. The feeling practically pays for itself. And it hardly matters if people express their gratitude or express it back to you.

The objective of the study

1. To study the signs, and impacts of gratitude.
2. To study the emotional, social, personality, career, and physical health benefits.
3. To provide tips to improve gratitude.

Signs of Gratitude

- Experiencing gratitude is frequently a spontaneous feeling. Experts advise that you can cultivate it and learn to practice it more frequently even if some people are more naturally prone to it than others.
- Think for a while about the things in your life for which you are thankful.
- Taking a moment to appreciate and reflect on something beautiful or amazing you see every day
- Expressing gratitude for your health
- Expressing gratitude to someone for their beneficial influence on your life
- Expressing your thankfulness through being polite to other people
- concentrating on the simple things in life that bring you joy and peace
- Gratitude-focused meditation or prayer
- The advantages of gratitude for our emotional and physical well-being are supported by rising scientific evidence, and it is a Thanksgiving tradition.
- The empirical evidence for gratitude's positive effects on physical health is still weak, despite prevalent messaging to the contrary.
- We can only hope that future studies on gratitude will be enhanced in ways that assist us to comprehend its potential advantages for our physical health. Figure 1 shows the signs of Gratitude.

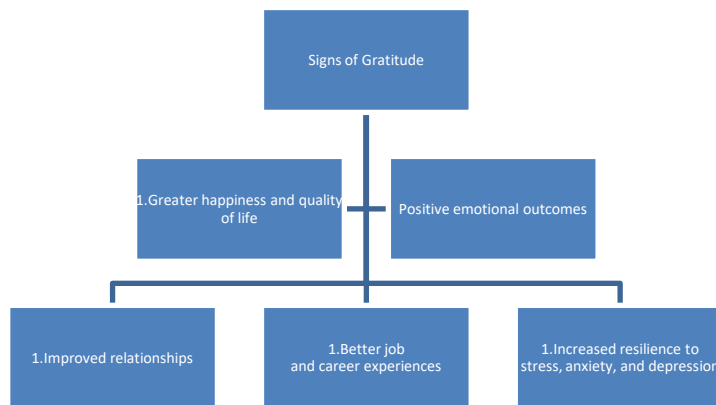


Figure-1 Practice Gratitude

- Your interpersonal connections, especially those with your partner, can be impacted by how well you express your gratitude to others. When their partner doesn't show thanks in return, people with high levels of thankfulness notice a substantial fall in their level of marital pleasure. 4
- Gratitude can enhance the caliber and satisfaction of your interactions with those around you.
- Recognize the present: Spend a moment concentrating on your experience and your feelings. Make a list of your senses and consider what is assisting you in coping. Are there any particular persons or items that have helped you manage stress, feel good about life, or do the tasks you need to complete? The mindfulness technique, which emphasizes increasing present-moment awareness, may also prove to be useful.
- Note this down: You might find it beneficial to start a gratitude diary in which you list a few things each day for which you are grateful. When you are having trouble feeling appreciative, it can be helpful to be able to reflect on these findings.
- Enjoy the moment: Give yourself enough time to fully take everything in. Put your attention on the experience and give yourself permission to feel wonderful.
- Create rituals of gratitude: You might feel more grateful by taking a moment to notice something and express your gratitude for it. Rituals that can promote a better sense of gratitude include meditation, prayer, and chanting.
- Giving gratitude is all about recognizing and appreciating the people, things, experiences, abilities, or gifts that enhance our lives and provide us happiness, peace, or comfort. Express your gratitude. You can express your

gratitude by thanking someone or just taking a moment to mentally acknowledge everything that you have. Figure 2 illustrates how to practice gratitude.

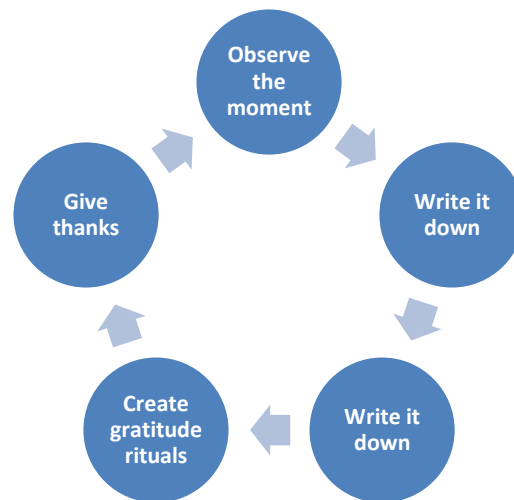


Figure-2 Measuring Gratitude

- Although there are many diverse advantages to being grateful, there are also some instances where it may not be the best choice. For instance, if you see it as a circumstance that results in debt, it may give you a sense of responsibility that might make you feel stressed.
- Stress can also be a result of feeling under pressure to be thankful, especially during holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- And occasionally, focusing all of your attention on feeling appreciative can lead you to overlook things that do need some criticism. You might miss or tolerate some behaviors that are detrimental to your well-being if, for instance, you are so preoccupied with feeling grateful for your relationship. Figure 3 represents measuring gratitude.

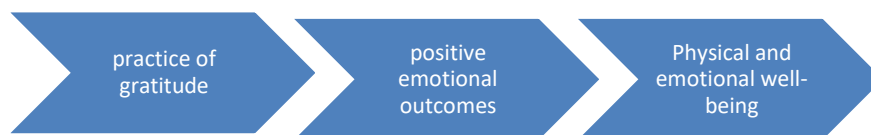


Figure-3

Impact of Gratitude

- *You feel better about the daily stresses and frustrations we all experience and your health improves when you adopt an "attitude of gratitude":*
- *improved sleep Spend a few minutes listing your blessings before going to bed to get a better night's sleep.*
- improved physical condition. Some of the physical advantages include reduced blood pressure, boosted immune system, and less fatigue.
- improved mental state. Gratitude helps people feel happier and can lessen depression. It can raise resilience as well.
- improved willpower Before a meal, consider the things for which you are grateful to help you resist the need to overeat.
- a higher sense of self. Positivity about oneself and one's talents can be attained by cultivating feelings of thankfulness and concentrating on all the wonderful things in one's life.
- better connections. Relationships with your significant other, family, and friends can be improved by saying "thank you" and expressing appreciation. Additionally, it might assist you in creating new, wholesome interactions and friendships.
- better self-care. Being conscious of the positive aspects of your life can encourage actions like regular exercise, a healthy diet, planning time for "me time," and self-care. Figure 4 represents the impact of gratitude.



Figure-4 Benefits of Gratitude

One of the easier ways to improve emotional well-being, general life satisfaction, and overall pleasure in life is to practice thankfulness. People who are more grateful tend to have stronger relationships because they value their loved ones more, and when loved ones see that appreciation, they are more likely to work harder to earn it. And because people who are appreciative tend to be happier, sleep better, and have healthy relationships tend to be healthier people. Figure 5 shows the benefits of gratitude.

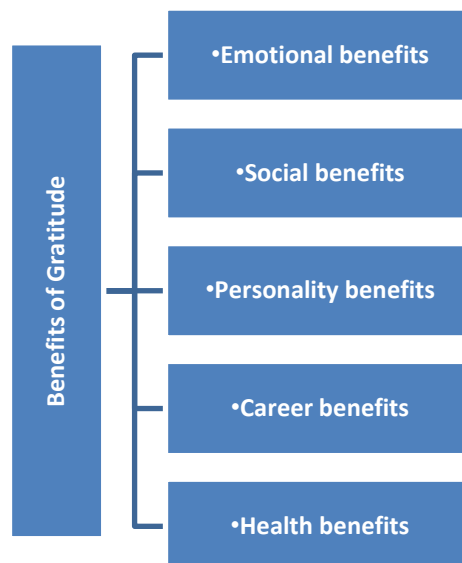


Figure-5 Gratitude and Emotional Benefits

- Our long-term happiness can increase by almost 10% just by writing down our blessings in a gratitude diary for five minutes each day (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). It turns out that acknowledging our blessings can help us feel happier about our lives, which makes a certain amount of sense: People are more likely to feel positive about their lives when they focus on the positive aspects of their lives rather than the negative ones.

- Chih-Che Lin (2017) discovered that even after adjusting for personality, having a high level of thankfulness has a significant favorable effect on depression, self-esteem, and psychological health. This basically indicates that the greatest way for us to experience the advantages of gratitude is to actually embody it and live a life of appreciation, which is a state that we may achieve with consistent practice and dedication.
- Envy is kept at bay if you feel thankful every day! According to research, being grateful fosters positive feelings lessens envy and increases our resilience (Amin, 2014). After all, there is no room for envy to enter if we are thankful for what we have.
- Participants who finished a four-week thankfulness contemplation course expressed more life satisfaction and self-worth than those in the control group (Rash, Matsuba, & Prkachin, 2011). Being grateful can make you feel better about your situation, which can improve how you feel about yourself.
- Gratitude is a protective factor against suicidal ideation in anxious and depressed people, according to a study on the impact of gratitude on depression, coping, and suicide (Krysinska, Lester, Lyke, & Corveleyn, 2015). Enhancing our personal thankfulness routine can offer protection when we need it most. Figure 6 represents the gratitude and emotional benefits.

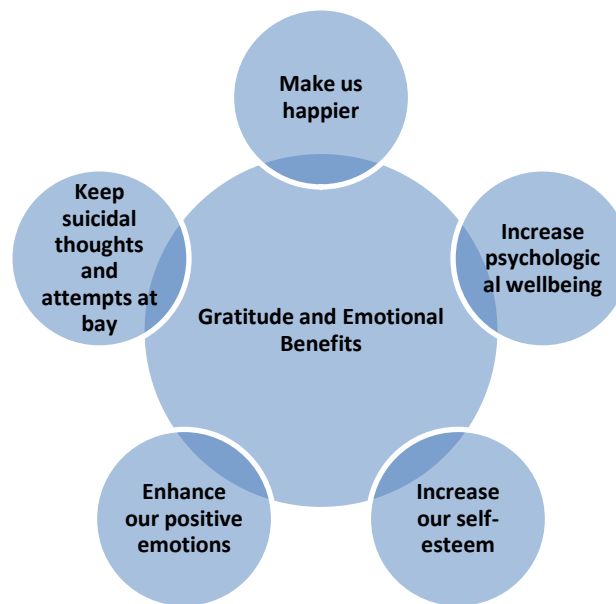


Figure-6 Gratitude and Social Benefits

We become happier, more content, and more optimistic as a result of our thankfulness. Therefore, it makes sense that all of these advantageous consequences also have beneficial social implications. After all, it's enjoyable to be around cheerful, healthy individuals! Regularly expressing thankfulness can have positive social effects, including..

- ❖ On average, those that are more appreciative have greater access to their social network, more friends, and better connections (Amin, 2014). This is probably due to the impact that gratitude has on how people see us in terms of our reliability, social skills, and appreciation.
- ❖ According to a recent study, showing our significant others our gratitude makes our relationships stronger (Algoe, Fredrickson, & Gable, 2013). It's a terrific approach to make everyone feel good—us, them, and the relationship—to express our gratitude to those we care about!
- ❖ Expressing thankfulness to our friends can strengthen our friendships, just as it has a positive impact on romantic relationships. People who express their thankfulness to their friends are more inclined to discuss issues and worries with them and have a more favorable opinion of them (Lambert & Fincham, 2011).
- ❖ Given the obvious social advantages of appreciation, it comes as no surprise that those who are more appreciative have greater access to social support. Higher levels of gratitude are associated with lower levels of stress and depression, according to the same study that supported this finding (Wood, Maltby, Gillett, Linley, & Joseph, 2008). This suggests that gratitude not only makes it easier to obtain the social support you require to get through challenging times but also reduces the need for social support altogether.
- ❖ Children of sick parents are shielded from worry and despair by gratitude, which prevents the internalization of symptoms (Stoeckel, Weissbrod, & Ahrens, 2015). Finding the good in life helps teenagers and young adults cope with challenging circumstances, such as a major sickness in the family. Figure 7 illustrates the gratitude and social benefits.

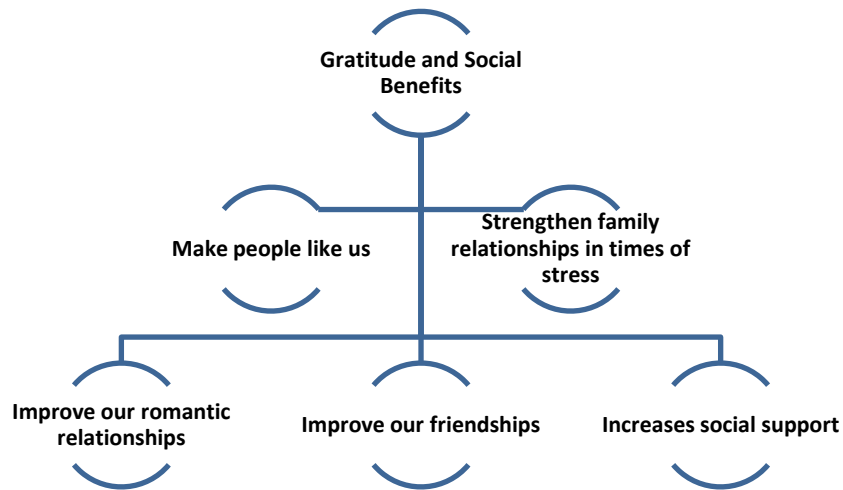


Figure-7 Gratitude and Personality Benefits

In addition to the psychological and social advantages that thankfulness can offer, regular expression and a general "attitude of gratitude" can even have an impact on your personality. Gratitude has been shown to influence a few of the following. Positivity can...

- Not only can expressing thankfulness make others feel better, but it also improves our own outlook. According to research (Amin, 2014), keeping a regular gratitude notebook can enhance optimism by 5% to 15%. This suggests that the more we give thanks, the more we have to be thankful for.
- Gratitude exercises will help you shake off your spiritual blues if you are feeling a little too "worldly" or spiritually adrift. Being appreciative is more likely to come naturally to people who are more spiritual, and vice versa (Urgesi, Aglioti, Skrap, & Fabbro, 2010).
- Gratitude can lessen our self-centeredness, which is another advantage for both ourselves and others. Evidence suggests that encouraging thankfulness in participants increases their propensity to share, even when doing so at the expense of themselves or a total stranger (DeSteno, Bartlett, Baumann, Williams, & Dickens, 2010).
- It should come as no surprise that those who express the greatest gratitude also tend to be less materialistic. This is probably because those who value what they already have are less prone to become fixated on acquiring more. The fact that people who are thankful and less materialistic experience more life happiness is probably not a surprise either (Tsang, Carpenter, Roberts, Frisch, & Carlisle, 2014).
- A thankfulness intervention led to stronger tendencies toward positivity and an enhanced capacity for happiness and optimism, according to a study on the impact of gratitude on positive affectivity and optimism (Lashani, Shaeiri, Asghari-Moghadam, & Golzari, 2012). Figure 8 shows the gratitude and personality benefits.

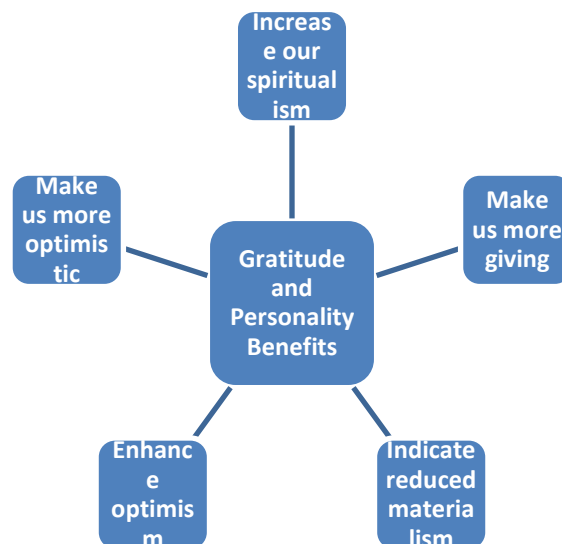


Figure-8 Gratitude and Career Benefits

They have been gratefully imparting various advantages to both businesses and employees in the workplace. Although many of the social, emotional, and personality advantages of consistently exercising thankfulness can also apply to work life, some consequences are especially felt during the course of a typical workday. The power of thankfulness in the workplace

- ✓ According to research on gratitude, expressing gratitude improves your managing talents, boosting your capacity to motivate others and serve as a mentor and advisor to the personnel you manage (Stone & Stone, 1983).
- ✓ People who are more appreciative than others also tend to be less impatient while making economic decisions, which results in better decisions and less pressure from the need for instant gratification (DeSteno, Li, Dickens, & Lerner, 2014). Decisions made to satiate short-term cravings rarely produce excellent professional results or a boost to your career, as everyone who has ever worked a difficult job knows!
- ✓ People who feel fulfilment and meaning in their job are frequently more productive and happier throughout their careers. Along with using their strengths, good emotions and flow, hope, and discovering a "calling," gratitude is one of the things that can help people find purpose in their work.
- ✓ According to research, showing appreciation and respect to co-workers can make them feel a part of the company, valued, and welcomed (Ng, 2016). This is crucial in the beginning of a career when new hires are still figuring things out and are less likely to receive respect from their more seasoned or senior peers.
- ✓ The emotional health, stress, and turnover of employees can all be significantly impacted by practicing thankfulness at work. The participants randomly assigned to the thankfulness group reported reduced depressive symptoms and stress, according to thorough research on the impact of appreciation on stress and depression symptoms among hospital employees (Cheng, Tsui, & Lam, 2015). Even in difficult occupations, finding things to be thankful for can help shield employees from the bad effects of their work. Figure 9 shows the gratitude and career benefits.

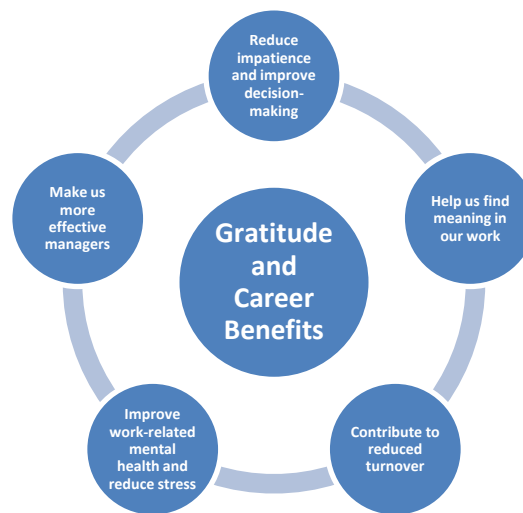


Figure-9 Gratitude and Physical Health

There is also a huge amount of research to support the idea that being grateful can enhance your physical health in addition to balancing your emotions, fostering better relationships, and advancing your job. For instance, appreciation has been demonstrated to...

- In contrast to those who practice gratitude writing, who reported a similar reduction in depressive symptoms for as long as the journaling continued, participants in a study on gratitude visits reported a 35% reduction in depressive symptoms over several weeks (Seligman et al., 2005). This is a remarkable discovery that implies thankfulness writing may be a useful addition to depression treatment.
- Patients with hypertension who "count their blessings" at least once a week saw their blood pressure significantly drop, improving their general health (Shipon, 1977). You desire a strong heart. Your benefits are many!
- A two-week appreciation intervention improved participants' well-being by lowering blood pressure and improving the quality of their sleep (Jackowska, Brown, Ronaldson, & Steptoe, 2016). Try a brief thankfulness journaling practice before bed if you're having difficulties falling asleep or simply wake up feeling tired. It might make the difference between feeling foggy and terrific in the morning.
- It's true that having gratitude will make you more fit! It has been demonstrated that study participants who regularly practiced appreciation for 11 weeks were more likely to exercise than those in the control group, despite the fact that it may not be a very effective "quick weight loss" approach (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

- According to research, those who are more appreciative are more likely to experience better physical and mental health (Hill, Allemand, & Roberts, 2013). Evidently, thankful people are in good health! Figure 10 represents gratitude and physical health.



Figure-10

DISCUSSIONS

The majority of the study is on gratitude. All participants in one study were obliged to write a few sentences every week with an emphasis on particular topics. One team wrote about the things they were thankful for during the course of the week. While the second group wrote about daily irritations or events that had made them sad, the third group wrote about experiences that had inspired them (with no emphasis on them being positive or negative). After 10 weeks, those who wrote about gratitude felt happier and more positive about their lives. Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania and another eminent expert in this area, examined the effects of several positive psychology interventions on 411 individuals and compared each to a control assignment of writing about earliest recollections. Participants' satisfaction scores immediately increased significantly when their task for the week was to compose and deliver a letter of thanks to someone who had never been adequately appreciated for their kindness. This intervention had a bigger impact than any other, and the positive effects persisted for a month.

Obviously, research like this one cannot establish causation and effect. However, the majority of studies that have been done on this subject are in favour of a link between happiness and gratitude.

The most recent systematic review of gratitude intervention trials on overall physical health benefits, and the majority of these investigations featured just one study looking at each physical health outcome (2). Improved sleep quality was the gratitude intervention effect that was most consistently beneficial (5 out of 8 trials showed positive results). Even yet, this result was restricted to self-reporting rather than actual, quantifiable alterations in sleep patterns. Clinical research conducted in 2021 to compare a 6-week gratitude intervention to a matching writing exercise found no differences between the groups in the immune system or brain-based neuroimaging measurements (3; the authors did find changes in a subgroup in the gratitude condition who engaged in more support-giving behaviors). An 8-week gratitude intervention among heart failure patients receiving the treatment demonstrated improvements in some of the hypothesized immune and heart rate variability outcomes in comparison to patients receiving treatment as usual in one of the few clinical trials (4) that enrolled patients with established cardiovascular disease (gratitude as a physical health treatment shows the strongest support in the area of cardiovascular health). The most immediate and dependable effects of appreciation are probably psychological and social, rather than physical, according to even in-depth online reviews of the subject from well-known websites. Regularly practicing gratitude and/or positive visualization might increase the effect, a measure of life quality. It may be challenging to inspire people to continuously express thankfulness.

FINDINGS

Gratitude's Role in Recovery

Gratitude has been used to support recovery from a number of diseases and diagnoses in addition to simply enhancing physical health. Whether a person is suffering from a physical illness or drug addiction, gratitude may be able to help them regain control over their lives and heal. Positivity may...

Assist those recovering from drug abuse

majority of the research on gratitude has been undertaken by two psychologists, Dr. Robert A. Emmons of the University of California, and his colleague. It appears to be helpful because it promotes the growth of personal assets like strengths and other resources that people can use on their path to a better life (Chen, 2017).

Improve healing after coronary health events

According to a Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital study, patients with acute coronary syndrome who approached recovery with gratitude and optimism showed greater improvements in health-related quality of life and greater decreases in depression and anxiety (Millstein, Celano, Beale, Beach, Suarez, Belcher,...& Huffman, 2016).

Assist those suffering from depression in recovering

According to a case study of a woman with depression, adopting Buddhist beliefs and practices—with a focus on using gratitude as a tool for recovery—helped her to recover (Cheng, 2015). There is plenty of evidence that practices and exercises adapted from Buddhist teachings can offer significant advantages for practitioners, therefore this case study should be viewed with caution.

CONCLUSION

The majority of clinical studies investigating the effects of gratitude use various gratitude interventions (not all gratitude practices may have the same health effects), and are conducted over brief time periods (gratitude, like exercise or nutrition, may show greater benefits when practiced consistently over months or years but not necessarily over weeks), and have different health outcomes (For some health issues, appreciation may be more useful than for others).

- ❖ There are currently no scientific studies demonstrating that thankfulness treats or prevents physical health conditions (e.g., reversing hypertension, lowering infectious disease risk, reducing the risk of cardiovascular events, etc.). These will hopefully be the focus of future studies on gratitude.
- ❖ Studies on the effects of gratitude treatment that use more robust control groups are clearly needed. It is currently hard to determine, for instance, whether any of the alleged physical health advantages of thankfulness are specific to gratitude or whether they are general advantages that could arise from similarly relaxing practices like rest, deep breathing, prayer, or meditation.
- ❖ Most current assertions made about gratitude's impact on physical health are based on observational studies. In observational studies, participants' well-being and levels of thankfulness are only assessed at one or more points in time rather than being arbitrarily assigned to participate in gratitude practice as a treatment.

TIPS TO FOSTER GRATITUDE

Keep a thankfulness diary and take a few minutes every day to write down something for which you are thankful. It doesn't have to be tough or take a long time. It can be helpful to just make a list of two or three things every day and concentrate on feeling grateful for them. In one study, "three nice things" journals kept by healthcare workers showed that they had lessened emotional weariness and despair, had a better work-life balance, and were happier overall. Rephrase your experiences: Comparing current circumstances to unpleasant former experiences is another method for boosting thankfulness. By doing this, you can both reflect on how your abilities helped you get through past situations and help yourself pay attention to the present-day blessings. Emmons advises taking some time to concentrate on your senses—what you can see, hear, taste, touch, and feel. This can give you a better understanding of the world and what it's like to be alive. Your blessings are many. Every week, set aside some time to reflect on your blessings by writing about what went well or what you are grateful for. Selecting a certain number of items to name each week, like three to five, can sometimes be helpful. Be descriptive and consider the emotions you experienced when something positive happened to you as you write. Pray. Those who practice religion can develop their thankfulness through prayer. Meditate. One aspect of mindfulness meditation is being present at the moment without making judgments. While it's common for individuals to concentrate on a word or phrase (such as "peace"), you can also choose to concentrate on what you're grateful for (the warmth of the sun, a pleasant sound, etc.).

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