

# Train Your Brain To Look For The Good: The Science of Gratitude

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## Why Are You an Appreciation Ambassador?

- I trained my brain to look for the good!



## What Will I Learn Today?

- Why gratitude is so important & specifically how it improves your life
- What gratitude is defined as scientifically
- How gratitude research is conducted at The Greater Good Science Center
- The most effective ways to incorporate a daily gratitude practice into your life
- The 5 main types of obstacles to experiencing gratitude



## What Good is Gratitude?

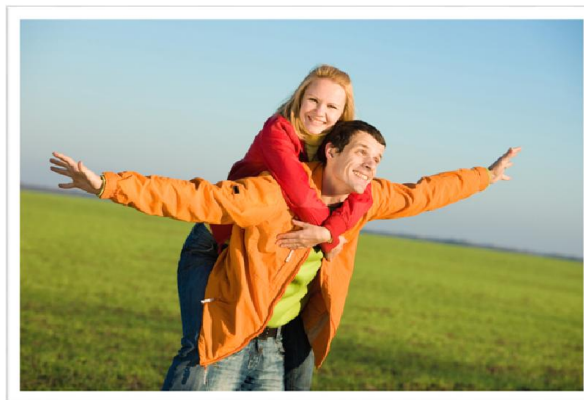
Four categories of benefits:

Psychological

Physical

Interpersonal

Spiritual



## What Good is Gratitude?

### Psychological benefits of practicing gratitude

- Increases optimal functioning
- Appreciation prevents depreciation
- Blocks toxic emotions



## What Good is Gratitude?

### Psychological benefits of practicing gratitude

- Reduces anxiety and stress
- Boosts resiliency to trauma
- Accelerates goal achievement
- Adaptive default perspective





## What Good is Gratitude?

### Physical benefits of practicing gratitude

- Become less bothered by aches and pains
- Boosts health and immune system
- Reduces symptoms of illness
- Reduces blood pressure
- Increases sleep quality
- Increases exercise



## What Good is Gratitude?

### Interpersonal benefits of practicing gratitude

- Strengthens social ties
- High perception of support
- Avoid taking people for granted
- More equitable division of labour
- Promotes forgiveness



## What Good is Gratitude?

### Spiritual benefits of practicing gratitude

- Pay-it-forward mentality
- Become more helpful, humble, loving, and giving
- Promotes pro-social behaviours
- Experience a stronger connection with divinity/universe/spirit/source/God



## How Do We Define Gratitude?

### Gratitude is:

- An acknowledgment of goodness in your life
- Attributing that goodness to a source outside of yourself



## How Is The Research Conducted?

### The Greater Good Science Center (GGSC)

- Dr. Robert Emmons, world's leading expert on gratitude, co-director of GGSC, psychologist & professor at University of California - Davis
- Random assignment, placebo controlled, 3000+ participants aged 8-80, average trial duration of 3 weeks



## How Is The Research Conducted?


### The Greater Good Science Center (GGSC)

- Hypothesis: Gratitude can heal, energise, & change lives
- Investigation: Can we cultivate gratitude? If so, what are the effects on human functioning?
- Findings: Yes, & measurable adaptive changes!
- Repercussions: Develop a daily gratitude practice and spread the word





## How Can I Cultivate Gratitude?

- Journal
  - Visual Cues
  - Meditation
- 
- George Baily effect: a feeling of increased gratefulness when considering the alternative



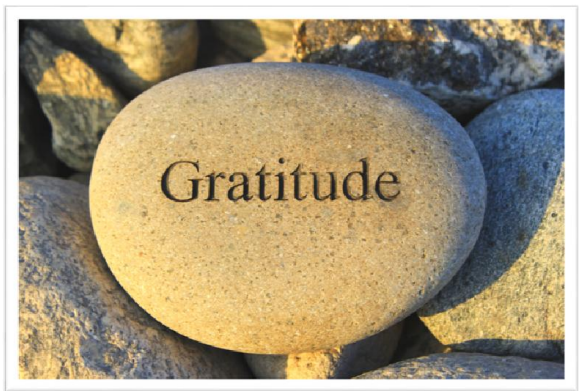
## Why Doesn't Everyone Do it?

### Obstacles to Cultivating Gratitude:

- Pervasive negativity
- Self-serving bias
- Entitlement
- Traumatic life events
- Conflicting emotions



# THANK YOU!



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