

## ACTIVITY: Gratitude Practice

Gratitude is a feeling of thankfulness or appreciation for what we have. Research studies have linked gratitude practices with greater happiness. Gratitude can help us become more optimistic, overcome adversity, and strengthen our relationships.

The first step in practicing gratitude is to notice the good in your life. This takes practice because we tend to take things for granted if they are easy, go as planned, or lack novelty. We spend more time focused on things that are difficult, troublesome, or unique.

Gratitude practices, such as giving thank you notes to others or writing down something we are grateful for every day, help us by focusing our attention on the good and increasing the positive emotions we feel. These practices also help us to create a new habit so that we will begin to naturally notice and spend more time on the positive aspects of any situation (and life in general).

### Try This!

- At the end of each day write down one thing you are grateful for. Be specific. You can use the attached "Gratitude Tracker" handout or just write in a journal or notepad.
- Do this every day for a month.
- At the end of thirty days, spend some time writing about the experience (or sharing with a friend). What did you notice? How did you feel?

If you are feeling ambitious, you can also try this version of the activity:

- Every day for thirty days, write down 3 things you are grateful for and what caused each to happen.

Why Gratitude is Good. Robert Emmons.

[http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why\\_gratitude\\_is\\_good/](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good/)

In Praise of Gratitude. Harvard Mental Health Letter.

[http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter\\_article/in-praise-of-gratitude](http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/in-praise-of-gratitude)



# Gratitude Tracker

Write one thing down that you are grateful for every day for thirty days.

A large writing area with horizontal lines, divided into four color-coded sections: light blue (10 lines), light purple (10 lines), light orange (10 lines), and light green (10 lines). A large, faint leaf graphic is overlaid on the bottom half of the page.