



TAADA PRESENTS: THANKS AGAIN: HOW PRACTICING GRATITUDE IMPACTS OUTCOMES ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Presented by: Betty White, MEd., LPC-S, CSC

Copies of power-point available at:

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Email me at: bettywhitelpc@gmail.com



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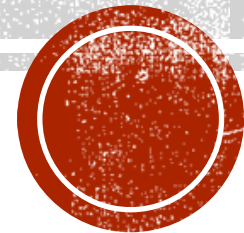
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BEFORE WE START

- Even though we cannot participate verbally, we will share throughout this webinar through the chat box. You will better understand the impact of gratitude practices if you try a few of your own.
- You will need: blank paper, pencil, pen, crayons or markers or colored pencils



OBJECTIVES

- We will explore various definitions of gratitude and learn how gratitude is commonly interpreted and expressed in today's culture.
- We will evaluate that current research says about the use of “gratitude practices and exercises” in therapy to promote physical and mental well-being across the lifespan.
- We will participate in a variety of gratitude exercise and evaluate how these might be used in our own counseling practice and how their use might impact us in our own lived experiences.
- We will share within the group the impact of these exercises and the potential for use following the session.



WHY GRATITUDE

- Practicing gratitude is a frequent intervention with those who practice positive psychology, and there are good reasons for including gratitude practice (or gratitude interventions) in a counseling practice. Research has consistently shown that practicing gratitude engenders more positive emotions and fewer negative emotions (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), better health, stronger relationships (Algoe, 2012), and greater life satisfaction (Emmons & Stern, 2013).



GRATITUDE QUIZZES

- Greater Good at Berkley Quiz:
 - https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take_quiz/gratitude
- The GQ-6- A very brief 6 item quiz developed by Michael McCullough, PhD., Robert A. Emmons PhD. and Jo-Ann Tsang PhD
 - https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/The_Gratitude_Questionnaire.pdf



GRATITUDE QUIZ

- The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6)
- Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how much you agree
- with it.
- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = disagree
- 3 = slightly disagree
- 4 = neutral
- 5 = slightly agree
- 6 = agree
- 7 = strongly agree



GRATITUDE QUIZ

- ____ 1. I have so much in life to be thankful for.
- ____ 2. If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.
- ____ 3. When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.*
- ____ 4. I am grateful to a wide variety of people.
- ____ 5. As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.
- ____ 6. Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone.*



SCORING

- Scoring Instructions:
- 1. Add up your scores for items 1, 2, 4, and 5.
- 2. Reverse your scores for items 3 and 6. That is, if you scored a "7," give yourself a "1," if you scored a "6," give yourself a "2," etc.
- 3. Add the reversed scores for items 3 and 6 to the total from Step 1. This is your total GQ-6 score.
- This number should be between 6 and 42.



INTERPRETATION

Interpretation:

- Based on a sample of 1,224 adults who took the GQ-6 as part of a feature on the Spirituality and Health Web Site, here are some benchmarks for making sense of your score.
- **25% Percentile:** Someone who scored a 35 out of 42 on the GQ-6 scored higher than 25% of the people who took it. If you scored below a 35, then you are in the bottom 1/4th of our sample of Spirituality and Health Visitors in terms of gratitude.
- **50th Percentile:** Someone who scored a 38 out of 42 on the GQ-6 scored higher than 50% of the people who took it. If you scored below a 38, then you are in the bottom one-half of people who took the survey.
- **75th Percentile:** Someone who scored a 41 out of 42 on the GQ-6 scored higher than 75% of the 1,224 individuals who took the GQ-6 on the Spirituality and Health web site one year ago.
- If you scored a 42 or higher, then you scored among the top 13% of our Spirituality and Health Sample.



HISTORY OF GRATITUDE STUDY

- Positive psychology has spent the last 20 years exploring human strengths and virtues. A meta-analysis performed in 2019 demonstrated the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions in work-related outcomes, including stress reactions, engagement, and pro-social behaviors. The trait of gratitude emerged as a multidimensional concept that included an emotion, a personality trait, and a coping response. **People who participated in “gratitude interventions” more than 4 times throughout the course of their engagement with a counselor experienced significant improvement in perceived stress and depression.**



GRATITUDE HYPOTHESES

- Four hypotheses have been proposed about gratitude:
 - **The schematic hypothesis:** Grateful people have characteristic schema that influence their interpretation of situations more positively
 - **The coping hypothesis:** Grateful people make more positive coping appraisals and are less likely to behaviorally disengage and deny that the problem exists
 - **The positive effect hypothesis:** Positive emotions, including gratitude, have a protective effect on various mental disorders, leading to improved well-being
 - **The broaden and build hypothesis:** Positive affect states broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires to help them develop additional resources to enhance long term well-being
- (Wood et al 2010)



EFFECTS OF GRATITUDE PRACTICE-KIDS

▪ 1. **Expressing Gratitude Improves Mood**

- Simply writing or stating a reason to be thankful can improve mood. Encourage kids and teens to make a habit of expressing gratitude and they are more likely to report positive emotions such as happiness and satisfaction. This can help to improve symptoms of anxiety and depression.

▪ 2. **Gratitude Increases Social Connection.**

- In a recent study of high school adolescents' social media use and gratitude, results suggest that gratitude may be associated with the use of social media for meaningful conversations but does not increase overall social media use (Maheux et al., 2021). Encouraging more #gratitude posts can help teens develop stronger friendships.

▪ 3. **Gratitude Reduces Suicide Risk.**

- Research shows that gratitude reduces suicide risk in young adults by reducing depression and increasing self-esteem (Lin, 2015). In a later study, positive self-compassion that includes gratitude helped to reduce suicide risk among adolescents following a traumatic experience (Liu et al., 2020).

▪ 4. **Practicing Gratitude Improves Sleep.**

- Both anxious and depressed children tend to experience disturbances in sleep, and gratitude may be the answer. Thinking about the things we are grateful for just before bed can improve sleep quality and duration (Wood et al., 2008).

▪ 5. **Parents And Caregivers (And Teachers) Can Model Gratitude.**

- When parents are more grateful, their children often express more gratitude (Rothenberg et al., 2016; Hussong et al., 2018).



EFFECTS OF GRATITUDE PRACTICE-ADULTS

- Gratitude practices in adults have been linked to many benefits. Physically, better sleep, lowering blood pressure, increasing healthy practices, preventing overeating, increasing exercise, strengthening the immune system, improving pain tolerance, keeping glucose levels under control, extending the lifespan, and reducing inflammation.
- Gratitude increases patience, boosts self-confidence, increases resiliency, reduces envy and jealousy, increases optimism, decreases materialism, helps in addiction recovery, reduces depression, enhances vitality and spiritualism, and helps us to be more forgiving.
- Gratitude improves mood, helps manage grief, helps us see memories in a more positive light, and contributes to overall happiness.

THE POWER OF GRATITUDE



EFFECTS OF GRATITUDE PRACTICE-ADULTS

- Gratitude strengthens romantic relationships, helps improve friendships, strengthens family support, and helps maintain a healthy social circle.
- In the workplace, gratitude improves retention, enhances productivity, builds relationships with colleagues, improves management capabilities and decisions making skills, helps foster a sense of fulfillment, and improves the working environment.
- For a more detailed discussion of these benefits, including research citations, go to:
- <https://research.com/education/scientific-benefits-of-gratitude>



it is not happiness that makes
us grateful, it's gratefulness
that makes us happy.

Brother David Steindl-Rast



EFFECTS OF GRATITUDE PRACTICE-SENIORS

- Senior adults who engage in gratitude practice regularly experience the following benefits:

Physical Advantages of Being Grateful

- stronger immune systems
- fewer noticeable aches and pains
- lower blood pressure
- increased energy and desire to exercise
- longer and more refreshing sleep

Psychological Advantages of Being Grateful

- higher levels of positive feelings and emotions
- increased alertness, vitality, and being awake
- more joy and pleasure in everyday life
- increased optimism and happiness

Social Advantages of Being Grateful

- more helpful, generous, and compassionate
- more forgiving
- more outgoing
- less lonely and isolated

From Robert A. Emmons, UC Davis

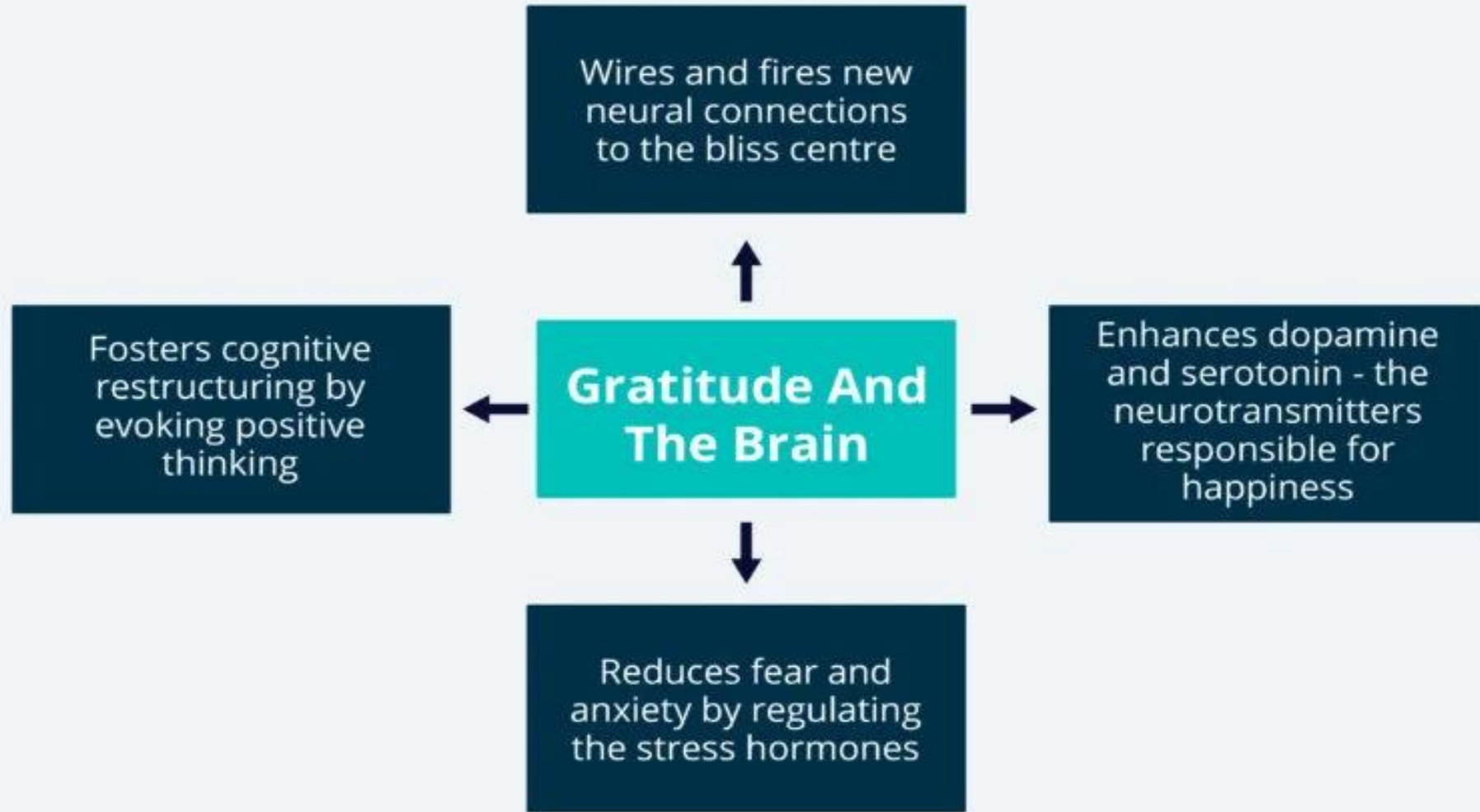


YOUR THOUGHTS

- Were there any surprises in the previous few slides on the effects of gratitude practices? Share your thoughts in the chat box.
- What has been your observations with clients who practice gratitude? Share in the chat box.

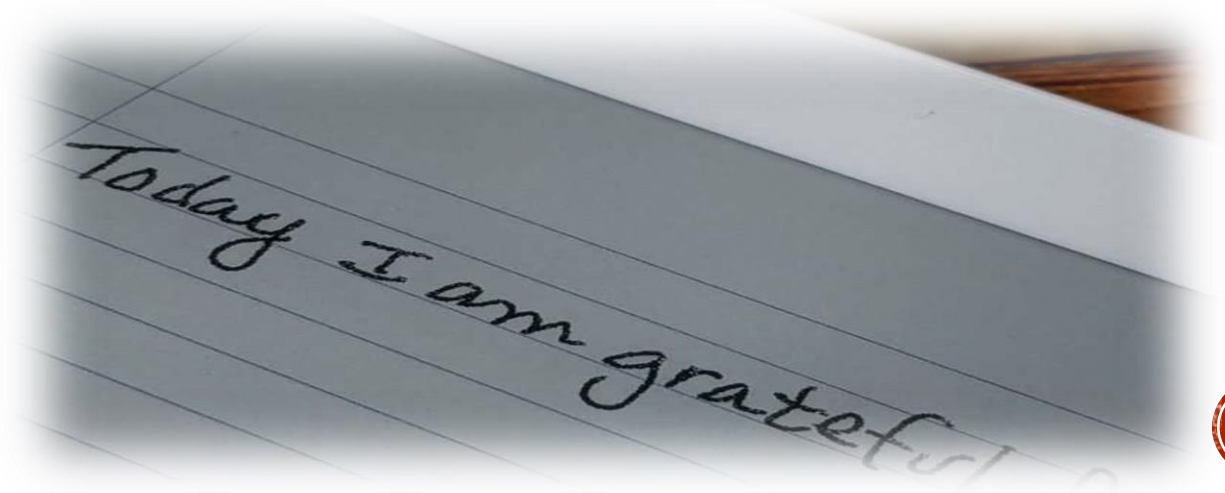
SURPRISE!





GRATITUDE INTERVENTION

- Gratitude intervention involves having clients participate regularly in brief activities designed to cultivate a sense of gratefulness, one of the most effective positive psychology interventions



BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE INTERVENTIONS

- **Gratitude opens the door to more relationships.** Saying “thank you” constitutes good manners, but showing appreciation can help you win new friends, according to a 2014 study published in *Emotion*. The study found that thanking a new acquaintance makes them more likely to seek an ongoing relationship. However you choose to express gratitude, acknowledging other people’s contributions can lead to new opportunities and better relationships.
- **Gratitude improves physical health.** Grateful people have fewer aches and pains and report feeling healthier than other people, according to a 2012 study published in *Personality and Individual Differences*. Grateful people are also more likely to take care of their health. They exercise more often and are more likely to attend regular check-ups, which likely to contributes to longevity.
- **Gratitude improves psychological health.** Gratitude reduces a multitude of toxic emotions, from envy and resentment to frustration and regret. Robert Emmons, a leading gratitude researcher, has conducted multiple studies on the link between gratitude and well-being. His research confirms that gratitude increases happiness and reduces depression.



BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE INTERVENTIONS

- **Gratitude increases empathy and reduces aggression.** Grateful people are more likely to behave in a prosocial manner, even when others behave less kindly, a 2012 study by the University of Kentucky found. Participants who scored higher on gratitude scales were less likely to seek retaliation, even in the face of negative feedback. They showed more sensitivity and empathy toward others and a reduced desire to seek revenge.
- **Grateful people sleep better.** Writing in a gratitude journal improves sleep, according to a 2011 study published in *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*. Spend just a few minutes jotting down a few grateful sentiments before bed, and you may sleep better and longer.



BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE INTERVENTIONS

- **Gratitude improves self-esteem.** A 2014 study published in the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* found that gratitude increased athletes' self-esteem, which contributes to optimal performance. Other studies have shown that gratitude reduces social comparisons. Rather than feeling resentful toward people who have more money or better jobs- grateful people are able to appreciate other people's accomplishments.
- **Gratitude increases mental strength.** For years, research has shown gratitude not only reduces stress, but it may also play a major role in overcoming trauma. A 2006 study published in *Behavior Research and Therapy* found that Vietnam War veterans with higher levels of gratitude experienced lower rates of post-traumatic stress disorder. A 2003 study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* found that gratitude was a major contributor to resilience following the terrorist attacks on September 11. Recognizing all that you have to be thankful for—even during the worst times—fosters resilience.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

▪ **Growing Gratitude Through Counterfactual Thinking**

- This exercise grows gratitude through imagining how an outcome of an adverse life event might have turned out differently. For example, if you invested in a stock that then made money, you might think, “I thought about buying more. I should have bought twice as much. If I had, I would have ____ dollars.” You compare yourself to a hypothetical “better self”, which is known as upward counterfactual reasoning. This usually results in regrets. A better approach is to compare yourself to a hypothetical worse self, known as “downward counterfactual reasoning”. What if you thought, “I could have chosen not to buy any stock at all. I am so glad that I did and made _____ dollars.” This approach cultivates gratitude.
- A twist on this exercise involves imagining life without the person, event, or thing rather than simply being thankful for them. For example, instead of ,”I am thankful for my son.”, think, “Imagine if my son had never been born.”
- Evidence suggests that counterfactual thinking heightens the meaningfulness of life events (Kray et al., 2010). Kray and colleagues examined the relationship between counterfactual thinking and personal meaning. They found that thinking about how pivotal events and relationships might have unfolded differently solidifies their meaning and significance in one’s life.



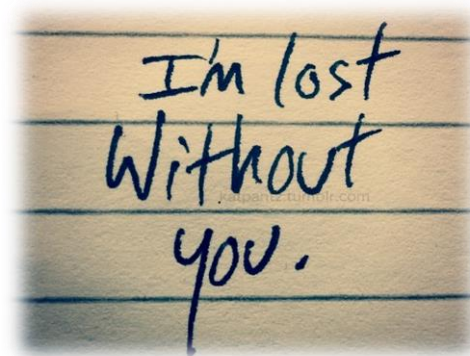
PRACTICE

- Take a moment and think about an event in which you would normally express disappointment in yourself. (example-you lost your temper with a child, you did not respond to a client with your best counseling technique, you failed to take full advantage of an opportunity, etc.).
- Apply the “downward counterfactual reasoning technique” to write about how you can be thankful for what happened. (example: I planned to be in shape for a half marathon by a certain date but have not been able to log enough miles. DCR: “I have been running and I am in better shape than I was a few weeks ago. I am so glad I did not give up when I realized I would not reach my first goal. I am much better off than I would be if I had quit.”)
- Look carefully at what you have written and allow the significance to sink in. Share in the chat box.



PRACTICE

- Think about a person or event that you are thankful for. Take a moment, close your eyes, and imagine your life without that person or event. Not the physical sensations throughout your body and the emotions that occur when you visualize what your life would have been without this person or event. Take a moment and write down the most significant of these. Share in the chat box.

A piece of lined paper with handwritten text in blue ink. The text reads: "I'm lost
Without
you." The paper is slightly blurred and has a soft shadow.

I'm lost
Without
you.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- **Growing Gratitude by Mental Elimination**
- This exercise, developed by Frijda in 1988, and tested in a study by Koo in 2008, found that clients affective states improved more when they mentally eliminated positive events from their lives. This encouraged individuals to look at the positive aspects of the event and to appreciate the impact of the positive event. It also helps with eliminating the “take-it-for-granted” life view we are all prone to.
- In this exercise, individuals were asked to think of a positive event in their lives. They were then tasked with writing about ways in which the event might never have happened and how the event was surprising.



PRACTICE

- This practice will be a twist on the Frijda and Koo exercise. For this, think about some mundane everyday thing that you probably take for granted but that you frequently use. Now, write about how your life would be different if you had never had access to that thing. Focus on the emotions you feel as you write about your changed life. Share in the chat box.

LIFE
WITHOUT



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- **Growing Gratitude Through Naikan Reflection**
- Naikan reflection was developed in the 1940's by Ishin Yoshimoto. The translation of Naikan is "looking within". In this exercise, individuals look at relationships one at a time using the following three questions.
 - 1. What did this person give to me? (What have I received today (lately)?)
 - 2. What did I return to this person? (What have I given today (lately)?)
 - 3. What trouble did I cause this person? (What troubles or difficulties have I caused today (lately)?)
- Using this approach both helps individuals to appreciate others and helps them to evaluate their relationships in terms of giving, receiving, and hurting. Seeing their "balance" between giving and receiving often triggers a desire to give and serve others and a recognition of their own humanity. When introducing this to a client, delineate a time frame. It can be done regarding a specific person or just people in general.



PRACTICE

- Choose one relationship that is ongoing in your life. Think about that relationship, and write an answer to each of the following questions:
 - **1. What did this person give to me? (What have I received today (lately)?)**
 - **2. What did I return to this person? (What have I given today (lately)?)**
 - **3. What trouble did I cause this person? (What troubles or difficulties have I caused today (lately)?)**

Take a moment to reflect on your answers., then answer the following:

How balanced is this relationship?

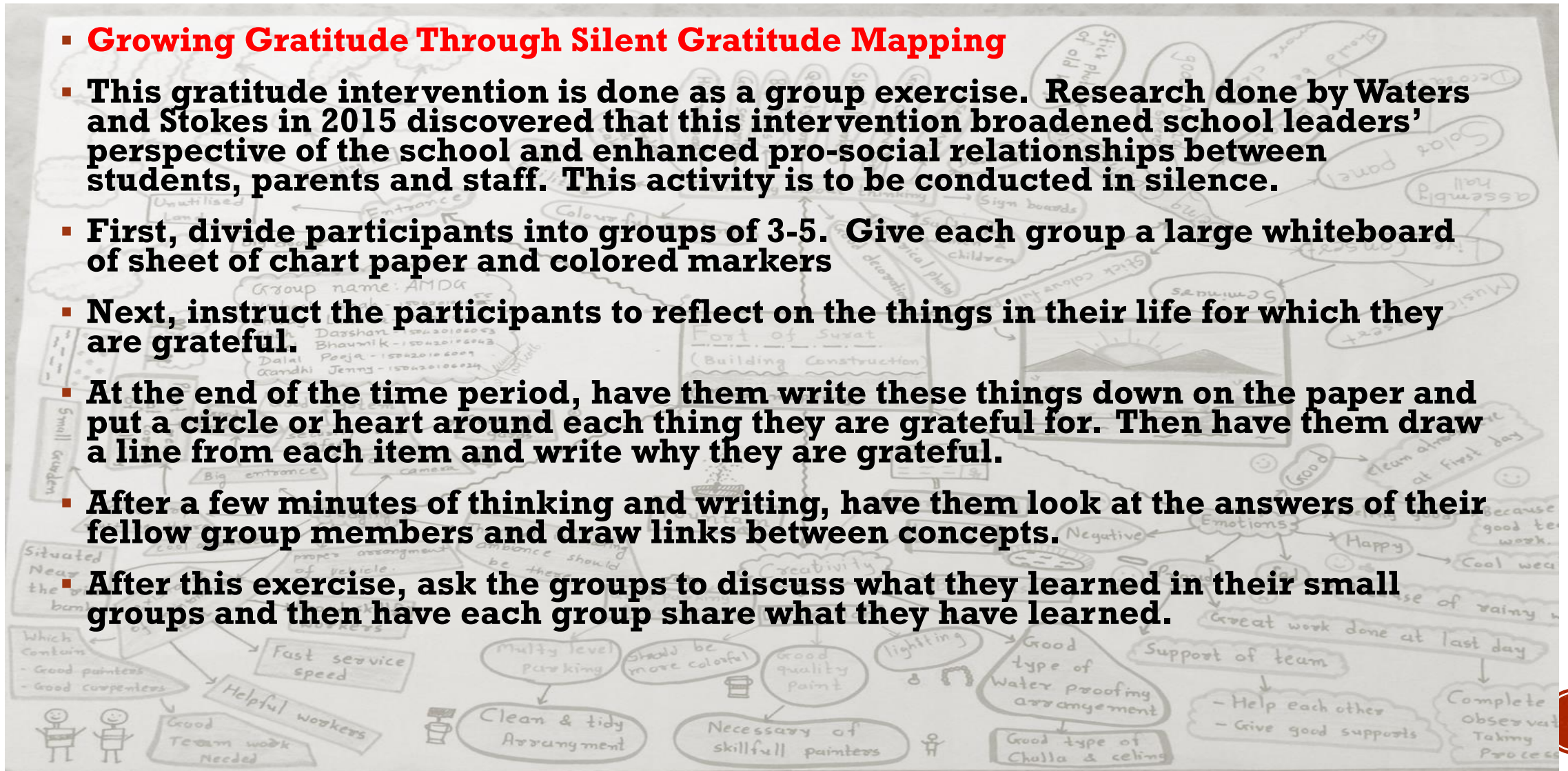
Share in the chat box.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

▪ Growing Gratitude Through Silent Gratitude Mapping

- This gratitude intervention is done as a group exercise. Research done by Waters and Stokes in 2015 discovered that this intervention broadened school leaders' perspective of the school and enhanced pro-social relationships between students, parents and staff. This activity is to be conducted in silence.
- First, divide participants into groups of 3-5. Give each group a large whiteboard of sheet of chart paper and colored markers
- Next, instruct the participants to reflect on the things in their life for which they are grateful.
- At the end of the time period, have them write these things down on the paper and put a circle or heart around each thing they are grateful for. Then have them draw a line from each item and write why they are grateful.
- After a few minutes of thinking and writing, have them look at the answers of their fellow group members and draw links between concepts.
- After this exercise, ask the groups to discuss what they learned in their small groups and then have each group share what they have learned.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- **Growing Gratitude Through Journaling**
- Journaling is one of the most popular of all the gratitude exercises. The purpose of this journaling is to reflect on a specific period of time (the past day, the past few days, the past week) and focus on 3-5 things that you are grateful for. Some tips:
 - Choose a journal and a writing instrument that speaks to you.
 - Experiment with timing for writing in the journal. Some people write every night before bed, while others write in the morning.
 - Experiment with frequency. Some find it helpful to journal daily, while others journal every few days or weekly. Intervals beyond weekly are not as beneficial.



PRACTICE

- Think about some of your favorite journal prompts that you either use for yourself or that you share with clients. Share one example in the chat-box.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- **Growing Gratitude Through the Use of a Gratitude Jar or Box**
- Like journaling, this practice is simple. First, find a jar or a box with a lid. Decorate it in any fashion that appeals to you. Keep it in a prominent place where you will be reminded each day. Keep a writing instrument and small slips of paper with the container.
- Finally, the most important step. Each day, think of three things for which you are grateful. Write them on slips of paper, and put them in the jar. Soon, you will have a container full of reasons to be thankful. When you are feeling despondent and need a quick pick-up, open the jar and read the slips. When the jar is full, empty it, reading the slips as you go. Save or dispose of the slips and start over.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- **Growing Gratitude Through the Use of a Gratitude Rock**
- This exercise seems silly, but is powerful. Choose a rock-one that appeals to you. It needs to be small enough to fit in a pocket, but large enough to be easily seen. You may keep it in your pocket, on your desk, in the console of your car if you drive a lot, or wear it on your person. Whenever you see or touch the rock, think about at least one thing you are grateful for. It can be something very small or something large-just use the rock to consciously remind you to be grateful. At the end of each day, hold the rock for a few moments as you remember all the things you are grateful for throughout the day. Another way to use a gratitude rock is to put it on your pillow each day when you make your bed, and on the nightstand at night. Before you go to bed, let the rock remind you to find three things to be thankful for.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- **Growing Gratitude With Gratitude Prompts**

- Sometimes it is difficult to get started with a gratitude practice. One way to start is with gratitude prompts. These can be written on slips of paper and placed in a container, or used as a list that the client chooses from each day. The goal is to identify at least three things in each category that a person is thankful for. These are more powerful when written, but simply becoming mindful of them also helps build “gratitude muscles”. Here are some sample prompts:

- I am grateful for these three blue things.
- I am grateful for these three friends.
- I am grateful I can do these three things.
- I am grateful for these three things in my home.
- I am grateful for these three teachers.
- I am grateful for these three family members.
- I am grateful for these three pets.



PRACTICE

- Write down three sample prompts that you might add to the list above. Share one of them in the chat-box.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- Growing Gratitude Through a Gratitude Walk
- Walking is in itself therapeutic. It increases endorphins that decrease stress, improves heart health, improves circulation, increases flexibility, and decreases blood pressure. Coupling walking with a gratitude practice nurtures a positive mind and body. (Rickman, 2013.) The goal of a gratitude walk is to observe the things you see around you as you walk and make it a point to be grateful for them. Notice the colors, sights, sounds, and smells as you walk in a pleasant place for 15-20 minutes. Couple this walk with a friend to whom you can express gratitude and you increase the benefits.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- **Growing Gratitude Through Gratitude Reflection**
- Reflection is a part of mindfulness meditation, which is a cornerstone of wellness. To practice gratitude reflection, do the following:
 - Settle into a relaxed posture. You can be seated or lying down. Be sure that your body is well supported so that you can relax.
 - Take a few deep, centering breaths, breathing in and out to a slow 6 count.
 - Bring your awareness to your immediate environment—all the things you can see, hear, touch, taste, or smell. Say to yourself, “For these things, I am grateful.”
 - Next, bring your awareness to the people in your life with whom you are close. This will include you family, partner, and friends. Say to yourself, “For these people, I am grateful.”
 - Next, center your awareness on yourself. You are unique and special, gifted in amazing ways. You are able to overcome your past, relish in your present, and look forward to your future. Say to yourself, “For these gifts, I am grateful.”
 - Finally, bring your attention to the world. Recognize that life, civilization, and culture are fabulous gifts and that you are tremendously lucky to exist in such a time. Say to yourself, “For all these things, I am grateful.” (Still Mind, 2014)



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- **Growing Gratitude with a Gratitude Tree**

- The Gratitude Tree is a good exercise for children, as well as for people who need a more concrete representation of ideas. It is also a great idea for the Thanksgiving season. You can use an actual bare tree branch anchored in a jar of pebbles, marbles, or plaster, or an outline of a bare tree on a wall.

- Make leaf cut-outs. You can trace an actual leaf, free-hand leaves, or, for the lucky ones who work in school, use a die cut. Craft stores also have leaf cut-outs for purchase.
- Each leaf cut out will need a hole punched in the top if you are using a branch. If you are using a bulletin board or wall, you will need tape, pins, or glue dots to anchor each leaf.
- On each leaf, write down one thing for which you are grateful. You can do all the leaves at once, or use the tree as a long-term project where it leafs out more and more each day.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

▪ Growing Gratitude With Five Fingers

- This mindful practice utilizes your hand. Use your five fingers to help you remember and focus on things you are grateful for—to bring your attention to the people, places, things, and events you appreciate in your life.
- For this practice, you will use both hands. Hold up your non-dominant hand where you can see it in front of you. Using the index finger of your dominant hand, trace slowly around your hand, starting at the base of the thumb and ending up at the base of the palm on the pinky finger side. As you trace each finger, think of something you are grateful for **in this moment**. This will help you to focus on the smaller things you often take for granted. For example, if you are sitting in your car waiting in line at the bank, you might focus on the appreciation you have for a car that runs, the feel of the air-conditioner, the fact that you have a bank account, the comfort of your shoes, and the feel of sunlight on your skin. Doing this exercise several times a day during “slack” moments provides the benefits of gratitude practice with minimal effort.



PRACTICE

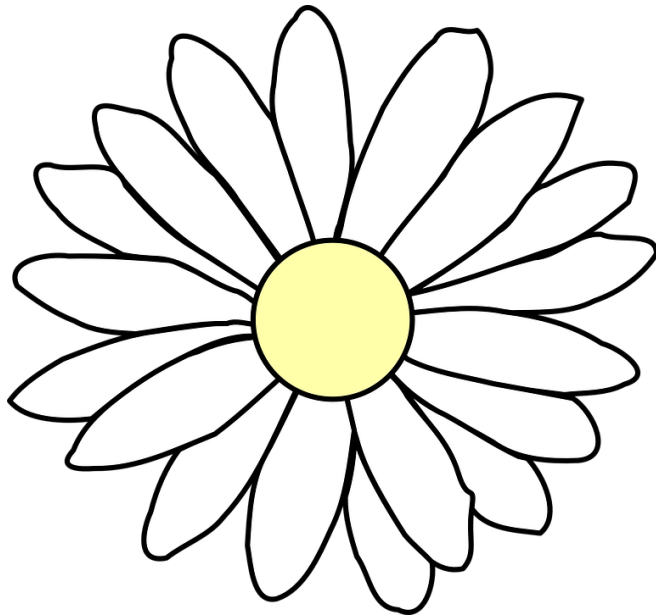
- This exercise is a modification of the one above. Trace your non-dominant hand on a piece of paper, choosing a color that is pleasing to you. Starting with the thumb, write one thing you are thankful for (in the moment) on each digit. Use a different color for each statement, thinking about which color resonates. On the palm, write: For these I am thankful. Share your pinkie in the chat box.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- **Growing Gratitude With a Gratitude Flower**

- This exercise is similar to the Gratitude Tree, but is a bit simpler. It can be done with colored paper or with an outline drawing of a flower on a sheet of white paper. If using colored paper, first cut a circle from yellow, orange, or white paper. This will be the center of the flower, and will be labeled, "I thankful for." Then, cut out flower petals, and write one thing that you are thankful for on each petal. Lightly creasing the petals lengthwise will add dimension to the flower. Glue or tape the petals to the center. A pipe cleaner or straw can be used for a stem.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

▪ **Growing Gratitude Through Meditation**

- **1. Begin by finding a comfortable position**, your eyes can either be closed or open with a soft gaze for this practice. Be sure that you're sitting comfortably and sit with a straight or supported spine. Move gently until you feel perfectly comfortable. Feel your body relax.
- **2. Now, take a few slow breaths.** Do not focus on any particular breathing pattern. Just let your breath move in and out naturally. Relax and let go of any tension or stress. Feel yourself relaxed and fully present in this moment, in this place.
- **3. Start by noticing.** Notice your current state of mind. What is your current mood mood? Notice without judgement how you are feeling right now.
- **4. Now, let's begin** Mentally take an inventory of everything you have in your life to be grateful for. Feel gratitude for the people and opportunities that led you to this moment. Offer gratitude to ancestors. Give gratitude for the opportunities you've had in life, education, travel and work experience.
- **5. Next, think about your health.** Offer gratitude for the health of your body, mind and intellect. Appreciate your talents and skills. Concentrate on how wonderful your body and mind are and all of the things they allow you to do.
- **6. Now, consider your gratitude for the people in your life.** Offer your gratitude to your immediate or family members. Feel gratitude for your extended family. Feel appreciation for your coworkers and friends. Extend gratitude toward those in your life who helped you become the person you are today.
- **7. Now, consider your gratitude for the earth.** For water, food, air, animals, and the beautiful scenery that you can view every day. Now choose one thing from the earth that you are most grateful for, and concentrate on that.
- **8. Let's dive into gratitude through a short visualization.** Begin by bringing to mind someone in your life who you care for deeply. A parent. A spouse. A child. Or a close friend. Imagine them in your mind's eye. And recall a moment when you felt a particularly strong sense of connection with this person. This moment could be recent or in the distant past. Allow your mind to go back to this sacred moment of connection. Remember where you were. Picture the scene, the location, the people, the time of day, anything else that you see.
- **9. See if you can go back to what you were feeling in that moment.** Love, presence, contentment, peace, support, or deep connection. Notice any sensations or emotions that arise in your mind and body. Let go of judgements and try to allow your feelings to come and go.
- **10. Focus on one aspect of this moment that you feel particularly grateful for.** The person. The setting. Your emotional state. The connection. Let gratitude flood your mind and body. Take just a few more breaths. Continue to focus on this one quality of gratitude.
- **11. Let it settle in.** . Enjoy this feeling of gratitude for just 15 seconds. Allow it to penetrate deeply. When you're ready, open your eyes. Slowly come back into the room. Move any parts of your body that might feel stiff from the time you have been sitting.
- **12. And as you go through the rest of your day,** consider expressing your appreciation for the person you chose in this practice, it could be a text, an email, a card or simply a mental wish for them. Then notice how this expression of gratitude changes your day.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

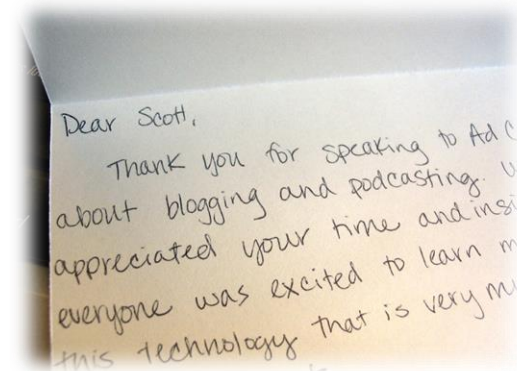
- **Growing Gratitude Through the Ordinary**

- This exercise encourages clients to move away from the “big” things we always express gratitude for: health, family, jobs, faith, and so on, and helps them to focus on the ordinary things that we should all be thankful for. This exercise involves consciously connecting to daily tasks and activities and thinking about all of the things we can be grateful for. For example, while washing dishes, being thankful for food and the plates to put it on, for running, warm water, for the feel of the soap and water on our hands, and so on. While choosing clothing for the day, being thankful for choices, for clean clothes and a washer to clean them in, and for a closet in which to put them. While walking around the neighborhood, being thankful for a home to live in, for neighbors, and for a safe place in which to walk. Expressing gratitude for these humble things can greatly benefit mood and boost appreciation for the bigger things as well.



GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- Growing Gratitude by Thanking Others
- The gratitude letter or note is a powerful way to both increase a client's mood and well-being and a way to boost the mood and well-being of those who are receiving the letters. There is a powerful connection between the mind and the written word, and physically writing letters (on paper with a writing instrument) has more benefits than a verbal thank-you or even an electronic note. Vincent (2014) details the effects of this writing in a study of a writing project at Kent State University. There is no set format-some therapists have clients write each day for a set number of days, or weekly, or by category (family, friends, bosses, teachers, etc.). It is even beneficial to write letters to people who have died or cannot be reached, with the addition of a ritual to “send” the letter along.



GRATITUDE RESOURCES

- There are many websites and resources for growing a gratitude practice. Here are a few:
 - <https://gratefulness.org/>
 - [https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/what we do/major initiatives/expanding gratitude](https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/what-we-do/major-initiatives/expanding-gratitude)
 - [https://www.rochester.edu/human-resources/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Gratitude 30day checklist.pdf](https://www.rochester.edu/human-resources/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Gratitude-30day-checklist.pdf)
 - <https://www.lookforthegoodproject.org/>
 - <http://365grateful.com/>
 - <https://welovegratitude.com/>
 - <https://gratitudedays.com/>



GRATITUDE APPS

- Here are a few free gratitude apps:
 - <https://bliss31.com/> Available in the app store as Bliss-Gratitude Journal- daily prompts for journaling. Also has a paid version with more content. Apple and Android
 - <https://gratefulness.me/> Available in the app store as Gratitude. Has a journal, vision board, affirmations, challenges, and so on. Paid version with more options. Apple and Android
 - <http://www.izzymcrae.com/gratitude/> Available in the app store as Gratitude Garden. This app adds a “gaming” feature that allows you to plant a garden with points earned for activities. Apple and Android
 - <https://thinkup.me/> Available in the app store as Think Up. Has affirmation, motivation, mindfulness, and gratitude. Free and paid versions for Apple and android
 - Morning!-Gratitude Journal-both free and paid-allows you to choose your journal prompts in advance. Both Apple and Android



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