



# GRATITUDE

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## Science of Gratitude

Gratitude helps to rewire our brains and creates feelings of happiness by activating “feel good” neurotransmitters, dopamine and serotonin.

Regular practice can help train your brain to focus on and retain positive experiences and deflect negative ones.

## Benefits of Gratitude

- Increased happiness
- Reduced depression
- Strengthens resiliency
- Reduced blood pressure
- Less chronic pain
- Increased energy
- Longer life
- Higher self-esteem
- Better sleep

## Cultivating Gratitude

- **Practice kindness** - help someone out, volunteer, share a smile.
- **Try meditation** - practicing meditation can help quiet the brain to focus on the positive.
- **Journal** - take time to reflect and write about what you are thankful for.
- **Notice** examples of gratitude by others.
- **Celebrate** positive experiences, no matter how small.
- **Practice gratitude** before bed by thinking of at least 3 things you were grateful for each day.
- **Actively express** your gratitude for others, the world around you, and yourself.



# TEACHING GRATITUDE

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## Ask Questions

- How do we get the things we have? We have enough food, clothes, toys, books...how do you think we get these?
- If we have enough of something should we buy more? What do you think?
- What do you think of as enough? Do you have enough toys? Shoes? Snacks?
- When someone says “we take things for granted” what do you think that means?

## Share Out Gratitude

- Share how you show gratitude or how you’d like to do it more.
- Brainstorm some ways you could show gratitude as a family or individual.
- Help kids find what matters to them.
- Look for things and people to be thankful for everyday and point those out to children.

## Make it a Habit

- The more we do something the more routine it becomes.
- Create rituals around giving.
- Create a daily/weekly ritual where you and your child share what you are thankful for.
- Encourage children to write or draw thank you notes.
- Practice how to express gratitude when receiving a gift.

## Gratitude Book Recommendations

- **Gratitude is My SuperPower** by Alicia Ortego
- **Teach Your Dragon Gratitude: A Story about being Grateful** by Steve Herman
- **For Kids that Want Everything: Do I Need More?** By Dr. Haitham Ahmed
- **The Three Minute Gratitude Journal** by Modern Kid Press
- **Grateful Ninja’s Thanksgiving** by Mary Nhin
- **Can Grunt the Grizzly Learn to Be Grateful?** By Misty Black and Ana Rankovic