

Stress Management and Mindfulness

Gratitude – INSTRUCTOR SCRIPT

Cultivating gratitude in your life can improve your health. Research has shown that grateful people are often better at maintaining relationships and, according to the Harvard Medical School, giving thanks can make you happier!

Today, we'll spend a few minutes turning our minds toward the positive and uplifting so that we can enjoy the physical and mental benefits of a gratitude practice. Let's get ready to explore some of the things in our lives that make us thankful.

Find a position where you can relax and be comfortable. Allow your eyes to close or bring your gaze into a soft focus.

Breathing slowly and deeply, bring attention to how the breath feels as you inhale – and what it feels like as you exhale. Feel your belly rise and expand with your inhalation, allowing it to gently sink with each exhalation.

Inhaling calm and peace – exhaling tension and tightness. Notice the heaviness of the body as it relaxes and sinks and the lightness of mind as the brain remains active and thoughtful.

As you enter this time of focus and mindfulness, remember that you already possess marvelous gifts:

Take a moment to be thankful for your life, which is a precious gift. Be grateful for what you've learned and experienced. Bring to mind something you appreciate in your life.

Take a moment to be thankful for your body. The body that takes you through your day, allowing you to move, to eat & drink. Call to mind something you appreciate about your body.

Now, consider those that you know who enrich your life – family members or friends that cheer you on and encourage you, those who are there when you need support – either an ear to listen, a shoulder to lean on or a hand to help you. How do you feel when you think about the special individuals in your life? Whatever it is you are feeling right now, take a moment to enjoy the sensation, the positive emotion that is brought forward.

As you gratefully reflect, is there an especially happy or fulfilling moment that comes to mind? Take a breath or two and remember a time when you felt especially content. As you remember that time, be purposely thankful for that time of happiness or joy. Draw a detailed picture in your mind, giving it depth and vivid color.

What emotions do you feel when you ponder a happy event? Perhaps you feel contentment or joy, peace, love... Whatever it is you are feeling right now, take a moment to enjoy the sensation, the positive emotion that is brought forward.

Let these good feelings expand outward, filling your heart, your belly, arms and legs, filling your mind. With each inhalation, this feeling grows and grows until these good sensations radiate from you.

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As you begin to notice the rhythm of your breath once again, pay attention to how you feel right now, physically and mentally. Simply notice, without judgement - Do you feel better than you did when you first began this practice?

Begin to gently move and stretch your arms, legs, hands and feet, taking a moment to wake the body bringing your attention back into the room. Feel free to open your eyes or focus your gaze whenever you are ready.

As you return your attention to the day and its potential, remember the sensations of gratitude. Allow them to uplift your spirit and give you grace and strength as you meet any challenges. Remember, you can contemplate gratitude any time you have a free moment or two. Thank you for practicing gratitude with me.