

THE GIFT OF GRATITUDE!

Have you ever noticed how much happier people seem to be in the month of December? It is such an exciting time of the year! There are festive lights all around, holiday music playing everywhere and lots of anticipation about the gifts that the season may bring. People make more of an effort to show others how much they mean to them. Wouldn't it be great if people could feel this way all year long?

A psychologist named Martin Seligman thought it was so great that he developed a field of study called positive psychology. Positive psychology scientifically studies what makes people feel happy and stay happy. Martin Seligman and his colleagues made a discovery that expressing gratitude helps people stay happy.

What is Gratitude?

Gratitude is a state of feeling grateful or thankful. It is appreciation for something, like a gift or a nice gesture, or appreciation for someone, like a family member or friend. Gratitude has been defined as a warm or deeply appreciative feeling for someone else's generosity. It is a good feeling inside. The best thing about gratitude is that the feeling is contagious – if you express your gratitude to someone else, they feel good too! Think about the Grinch from *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* – even he catches the contagious feeling of joy and gratitude by the end of the story!

How Can Gratitude Help People be Happy?

Expressing gratitude can improve peoples' lives by making them feel happy. Remember Ebenezer Scrooge from *The Christmas Carol*? – At the beginning of the story Ebenezer is greedy and miserable, and other people suffer as a result of his greed and misery. However, by the end of the story Ebenezer finds happiness by giving to others and expressing his gratitude for all the people in his life. Ebenezer shows that he is thankful for his success by giving his time and money to people in need, which results in him saving Tiny Tim's life and his own. In the end, Ebenezer Scrooge lives a healthier, happier life because of his endless good mood, which is a direct result of him expressing his gratitude.

How Can I Become More Grateful?

You can be the giver of that warm, contagious feeling! On the back, think of people you are grateful for and brainstorm a list of ways that you can show that person your gratitude. Remember, it doesn't have to cost money to show gratitude; the best gifts are from the heart.



Color Me!

Person I am grateful to have in my life...	Possible ways I can show my gratitude...

Challenge! Now that you have a few ideas of how to show your gratitude, do it! Choose a person from this list that you are thankful for and follow through with one of your ideas. Start spreading the joy of gratitude and watch people light up like a strand of festive lights. Joy and happiness are what makes this the most wonderful time of the year, and you have the power to spread those feelings. In this holiday season, remember to keep a positive perspective and be grateful for what you have. Reflect on the good things in your life, never be envious of others and always show your gratitude!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

