

Being Thankful

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In the upcoming months many of us begin to consider appreciation, gratitude, and extending thanks. What are you thankful for? Have you found yourself asking this question on a daily basis? Have you shared these thoughts with others? Or have you found yourself focusing on the deficits and negativity in your life. We often act how we feel, and we often feel how we think. Our behavior is integrally connected to the way we perceive and feel in our world. Connection, improved mental health, deeper sense of involvement in our world, and ability to express ourselves to others are all skills that come from extending thanks. So how can we do this?

1. Start a gratitude journal- write in this every night as you reflect on the day. Challenge yourself to think of a new thing to write each day. Need help with this? Try The Secret Gratitude Book by Rhonda Byrne as an excellent journal resource.
2. Make a “no reason” meal for a neighbor. Drop this off and tell them you appreciate being their neighbor.
3. Start a gratitude piggy bank with your kids. Give allowance in the form of coins. As they put the coins in the bank ask them to share what they are thankful for (ie: quarters are people, nickels are experiences, and dimes are skills/talents).
4. Start a blessings jar at your home. Have family members write these blessings on pieces of paper to keep in the jar. Share them with one another! When you eat dinner talk with the family about what you are writing to put in the blessings jar that day.
5. Volunteer! Get involved in giving back to the community by sharing your skills and talents with others.
6. Develop a thankful mantra (ie: I have a lot to offer this world and I am so thankful for what I have.” Start to say this to yourself every day.
7. Write a note to a friend, relative, or co-worker. Tell them you appreciate them and WHY! Let them know the meaning they have in your life and how you are positively influenced by their presence.
8. Begin to read about being thankful. A few resources are : Gratitude is the Only Attitude: Be Thankful and Watch Your Life Change by: Katie Lenhart. For Kids- The Thankful Book by Todd Parr, I’m Thankful Each Day by P.K Hallinan
9. Try a walking meditation. Walk in your neighborhood, your office, or even your home and silently take in the sights, sounds, and smells around you. Focus on being in the moment and noticing things that you may normally pass by.
10. Don’t forget about personal characteristics. Remember how unique you are and celebrate you, with the individuality you bring to the world!

Thanksgiving is a holiday, but it’s also a lifestyle. An added bonus- it’s contagious! Gratitude gives us energy to magnify what we have. Challenge yourself to think, live, and offer thanks with an attitude of gratitude each and every day.