

# The top 10 evidence-based prescriptions for becoming more grateful

## 1. Keep a Gratitude Journal (p. 189)

- Write down the blessings you are grateful for.
- Create a habit of becoming aware and paying attention to gratitude-inspiring events.
- Be as specific as possible. Try not to just list people and events but rather list what exactly a person did what aspects of an event you are grateful for.
- Watch out not to keep repeating the same list day after day, make a conscious effort to think of new things you are grateful for.
- “Take the time to be especially aware of the depth of your gratitude.” (p. 191)

## 2. Remember the Bad (p. 191)

- “When we remember how difficult life used to be and how far we have come, we set up an explicit contrast in our mind, and this contrast is fertile ground for gratefulness.” (p. 191)

## 3. Ask Yourself Three Questions (p. 192)

Reflect on the following three questions daily for about 20min in the evening:

- “What have I received from \_\_\_\_\_?” – recognizing the gifts we have received
- “What have I given to \_\_\_\_\_?” – how connected we are to others
- “What troubles and difficulties have I caused \_\_\_\_\_?” – acknowledging the pain we cause

## 4. Learn Prayers of Gratitude (p. 194)

- Pick a prayer of gratitude that suits you, your faith, your religion, or the absence thereof.
- One suggested by Robert A. Emmons is by Thich Nhat Hanh that will suit any faith as well as the faithless:

“Waking up this morning, I see the blue sky.

I join my hands in thanks

for the many wonders of life;

for having twenty-four brand-new hours before me.” (p. 196)

(Robert found in his studies that prayer helps with achieving goals)

## 5. Come to Your Senses (p. 197)

- Being grateful for our senses of touch, see, smell, taste, and hear, just like we are grateful for our health.

## 6. Use Visual Reminders (p. 198)

- Forgetfulness and the absence of mindful awareness are two primary obstacles to being grateful. (p. 199)
- Work desk, fridge, bathroom door, computer, cell phones, car, wallet ...
- Having an accountability partner with whom you share or swap gratitude lists is a good way not to forget. (p. 200)

## 7. Make a Vow to Practice Gratitude (p. 201)

- You increase the likelihood of practicing gratitude and sticking with it when you let your friends and family know, make it a public pronouncement, and post reminders of it.

## 8. Watch Your Language (p. 203)

- Words we use when we talk to others and to ourselves create much of our perception of reality.
- Express your gratitude to others.

- Change your mood by changing what you say to yourself. Engaging in “gratitude self-talk that draws our attention to the positive contributions that others have made to our lives will simultaneously favorably impact our environmental well-being while strengthening our social bonds.” (p. 205)

**9. Go Through the Motions** (p. 205)

- Do things that will help you be grateful.
- Spend more time with grateful people.
- Say, “Thank You.”
- Write gratitude letters.
- Express your gratitude to others.
- Count your blessings.
- Doing these things even when you don’t feel grateful is better than not doing them at all. Research shows feelings will follow your behavior. You behave grateful and you will start feeling grateful.

**10. Think Outside the Box** (p. 206)

- Express gratitude to those who harm you.
- Be grateful to those whom you benefit.

Emmons, R. A. (2007). *Thanks!: How the new science of gratitude can make you happier* (illustrated, annotated ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.