CREATE MORE GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a sense of appreciation for what you have in your life and the world around you. Things that can inspire gratitude include current circumstances, relationships, memories, having a hopeful and positive outlook, major life events, or even small day to day things like fresh air on a beautiful day.

BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE

For the individual:
- Increased happiness and positive mood.
- More satisfaction with life.
- Less materialistic.
- Less likely to experience burnout.
- Better physical health.
- Better sleep.
- Less fatigue.
- Lower levels of cellular inflammation.
- Greater resiliency.
- Encourages the development of patience, humility, and wisdom.

For groups:
- Increases prosocial behaviors.
- Strengthens relationships.
- May help employees’ effectiveness.
- May increase job satisfaction

ACTIVITIES AND TIPS

WRITE DOWN AT LEAST 3 THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR

Noting what we’re grateful for trains our minds to focus on the positives in life. Our minds like to dwell on all that is wrong (or could go wrong). Experts repeatedly say noting what is positive or writing down 2 or 3 things we are grateful for increases happiness and reduces stress. Post it somewhere and read it regularly. Try it and see what happens! It takes very little time.

10 Ways to Be More Grateful: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ten_ways_to_become_more_grateful1
SEND A NOTE OF THANKS OR GRATITUDE TO SOMEONE

Send an email, post a note on social media or hand write a note. What’s most important is that it’s sincere and specific. Here is some guidance for expressing gratitude: https://positivepsychology.com/how-to-express-gratitude/

SPEND 15 MINUTES DOING SOMETHING KIND OR ENJOYABLE FOR YOURSELF

Self-care is important for maintaining healthy relationships with yourself and with others. It means reducing stress by doing things to take care of your mind, body, and emotions. This enhances our ability to live fully, vibrantly, and effectively. The practice of self-care often reminds you and others that your needs are valid and a priority.

Ideally, we’re all engaged in regular self-care, doing activities that make us feel cared for mentally, physically, and emotionally, but when we’re busy, this doesn’t always happen. We may need to stop and take the time to remind ourselves that we are important too. Learn more about how to make self-care a priority: https://stopthehurt.org/making-self-care-a-priority/.

Here are some ideas for 15 minutes of self-care:

• Sit outside and enjoy nature.
• Listen to your favorite play list.
• Take a soothing shower or bath.
• Read just for enjoyment.
• Use a foam roller, tennis or other small ball to roll out tight muscles.
• Journal.
• Draw, paint, play music, sing or engage in some other creative activity.
• Make a list of your personal strengths.
• Get a mini-massage from a professional, a friend, or yourself.
• Wrap up in a favorite blanket and do nothing.
• Smooth on lotion.
• Find some positive affirmations to post where you can see them often.
• Try Kristin Neff’s free self-compassion meditations: https://selfcompassion.org/category/exercises/#guided-meditations

DO A RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS

Giving to others often brings good feelings to both the giver and the receiver. Who can you make feel good today that also makes YOU feel good?

Check out these resources for more ideas on random acts of kindness:

• https://positivepsychology.com/random-acts-kindness/
• https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas

liveWELL inspires a culture of well-being and campus excellence, providing employees with the opportunity to thrive.
MAKE A LIST OF 5 ACTIVITIES THAT BRING YOU JOY

Take time today to do notice what brings you joy and do something joyful. This is another great way to show yourself love and self-care. Check out these resources for simple ideas:

- https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/now-is-everything/201106/50-ways-add-joy-your-day
- https://www.mindfulness-project.org/2020/03/10/bring-more-joy-in-your-daily-life/
- https://www.lifehack.org/articles/money/30-absolutely-free-activities-that-can-make-you-happy-today.html

SUPPORT SOMEONE IN NEED

Volunteer, make a donation, or reach out to someone who is having a rough time and offer support. Helping others helps them and is a good thing to do, but it also makes us happier and healthier too. Giving provides connection to others, creates stronger communities and builds our self-confidence. There are many ways to give: our time, ideas, energy, skills, money, and donated items.

Volunteer opportunities:

- http://foundation.uiowa.edu/volunteer/ or http://volunteer.unitedwayjwc.org/

More info on supporting others:

- https://www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys-to-happier-living/do-things-for-others
- https://dosomethingcool.net/helping-others-life/

MORE RESOURCES

- https://www.happify.com/hd/the-6-skills-that-will-increase-your-well-being/
- https://positivepsychology.com/category/gratitude/

We know that some challenges are larger than these simple gratitude activities. You can’t self-care yourself through mental health problems like anxiety or depression or through external factors such as trauma or systemic oppression. If you are experiencing significant challenges, the University of Iowa has professional resources to support you.

- UI Employee Assistance Program: https://hr.uiowa.edu/employee-well-being/employee-assistance-program
- Mental Health at Iowa: https://mentalhealth.uiowa.edu/