

Gratitude!

By Dr. Margaret Rea

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, it seemed that November would be the appropriate month to consider the practice of gratitude as a wellness strategy. I think we could all agree that receiving thanks feels good. However, research data highlights that practicing gratitude has enormous impact on our physical and emotional health. One of the key leaders in researching gratitude is here at UC Davis, Robert Emmons. Take a moment to review his summary of some of the central research findings on gratitude and this YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRmfGf5aWE>

http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/medicalcenter/features/2015-2016/11/20151125_gratitude.html



Gratitude has impact on two topics important to students- sleep and cognition. Dr. Emmons wrote, "Research suggests that grateful people have more positive "pre-sleep cognitions" and less negative pre-sleep cognition. Negative, critical thoughts (e.g., about bad things happening in the world) tend to induce sleeplessness. But grateful people's minds are awash in pleasant thoughts (e.g., about enjoyable things that happened to them during the day), and this promotes sleepiness.... Gratitude promotes innovative thinking, flexibility, openness, curiosity, and love of learning. Grateful people have an interest in learning new information and skills, and they seek opportunities to learn and develop.

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/three_surprising_ways_that_gratitude_works_at_work

As you consider practicing gratitude, note that it means honoring and being thankful for everything from the mundane to the magnificent. You can be thankful for the person who gave you their cart at the grocery store as well as the person who gave you a loving embrace at the end of your difficult day. Consider the many bounties we often take for granted- our access to fresh water, clothing, and food. Paying attention to the things and people around you that you are grateful for can help you to learn to be more grateful. You start seeing more and more factors in your life that instill gratitude within you. In turn, you will feel more positive emotions, decrease your stress level, sleep better, and even have a better immune system. This practice does not mean we ignore our imperfections our stress, pain or suffering, but it can help us balance our world view.

In my effort to practice what I preach to you, I want to share my gratitude for the many students, staff and faculty that are part of my work here at UC Davis and whose support, insights and comradery enrich my every day. Dr. Emmons reminds me to be specific when I give thanks, so for this month, I thank Woubelijg who every month helps put together my newsletter, and Lao who is always there to support the wellness events in the School of Medicine, and Ksenia at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing, who is always patient with me when I ask yet again what room I am supposed to be in for the wellness event.

As a token of my thanks, please take a moment to watch this lovely gratitude video that never fails to inspire and fuel me:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4115qFsdWKQ&t=168s>

Wellness Events

Work Life and Wellness Events

<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/hr/wellness/index.html>

UC Living Fit Forever

http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living_fit_forever.shtml

Emotionally Preparing for the BSE

Dr. Stephen Simonson, Psy.D.
Monday November 28, 2018
12-1pm Edu Bldg. 3205
First 30 students receive lunch

New Wellness Resource

Check out this exciting new Wellness Resource
<https://healthy.ucdavis.edu/>

Wellness Tip: A 5-Minute Gratitude Practice

This 5-minute mindfulness practice cultivates gratitude for life's small delights as you move through the senses.

1. Use the breath to anchor yourself in the present moment. Our minds are always so easily pulled to busyness. Bring particular attention to feeling the breath, or something in the body, as you bring your shoulders down & orient your attention toward gratitude.

2. Next, bring to mind a sight you are grateful for. Move through your senses, & find one thing to start with that you appreciate that comes to you from the world of sight, if you have this available. It could be a color...a shadow...a shape...a movement. Remember, it will never be like this again. What do you see right now, and can you feel grateful that you get to see this, whatever it is?

3. Now, shift to a scent you appreciate. As you continue to work with your senses, now take time to tune in with appreciation to an aroma. What do you notice? What about that glorious or interesting or subtle smell is making you smile? It could be gratitude for something familiar: a scent that brings comfort, upliftment; or maybe it's something you've never smelled before, and it just piques your curiosity, ignites you, enlivens you.

4. Moving on, tune into any sounds around you. Allowing the world of smell to gently recede into the background, on an in-breath, shift your attention to your ears and the world of sound. Maybe notice what it feels like to really listen. How many sounds can you notice, and can you feel grateful that you're able to experience sound, if you are? What can you notice about these sounds—far away? close? Perhaps you could play a piece of mu-

sic that brings you joy, and have gratitude that it's so available?

5. The world of touch and texture beckons us next. We find so much to be grateful for in touch! If there's someone near who you can hug or who can hug you, notice how this makes you feel filled with gratitude for the joy of human contact. Or perhaps you have a beautiful pet that you can stroke and cuddle, or some lovely material with a texture that feels warm to the touch, soft, evocative. Let your senses ignite your gratitude! There's so much to be appreciative of.

6. Shift to noticing and appreciating objects around you. Now take a moment to look around: Look down, look up, and from side to side. Appreciate how much effort must have gone into anything at all you own or use. Someone conceived of the need and many people worked on the details of the design. Much care even went into the packaging to deliver your item to you safely. What do you feel when you let yourself be grateful that all that talent went into making your life a little easier?

7. As you end this practice, carry this attitude of gratitude with you. One last little grateful tip: Why not offer your thanks to each person who does anything at all for you today? Even if it is their job to help you? When you're grateful, when you let your heart open up and be filled with appreciation, notice how being grateful makes you feel.

8. Close with gratitude. I'm so grateful that you tuned in to this gratitude practice, and I appreciate your time, your effort, and your energy to be present, awake, and alive to your precious life. Have a beautiful day.

All students, staff and faculty are encouraged to contribute wellness stories, tips or recipes to the newsletter.

Monthly Recipe from the UC Davis Community

This month's recipe comes from Caroline Miller, Student Affairs Officer from the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing. "I am a lousy cook. I love to host people at my house for casual gatherings and game nights, but when it comes to actually preparing a meal, I'm a few herbs short of a full spice rack. Sometimes I order takeout, but my favorite hosting hack is the potluck salad bar - as the host I provide lettuce and salad dressings, and everyone brings a few salad toppings. No need for planning or a sign-up sheet, and you've automatically got healthy vegetarian, gluten-free and allergy-sensitive options. I've found that most of my friends are like me - eager for social gatherings and happy to pitch in with a little effort, but no-one wants to do the heavy lifting alone.

My favorite salad topping is [roasted garbanzo beans](#). I use them instead of croutons for a great crunchy texture.



<https://www.geniuskitchen.com/recipe/roasted-garbanzo-beans-chickpeas-331939>

Wellness App: Sleep Pillow

Gratitude Journal ~ the original!

Below are two apps that can support a gratitude practice. They both prompt you to log something every day that makes you feel grateful



<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/gratitude-journal-the-original/id299604556?mt=8>

Gratitude 365

<http://gratitude365app.com/>

