

GRATITUDE & INTENTIONS

Reduce stress, have a more fulfilling life, and reach your goals.



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All of us probably have some areas where we could boost our health and happiness. Whether that includes food and exercise, managing our stress, or any other goals to increase the fulfillment we feel in our lives.

Sometimes making changes can be difficult and intimidating. This coaching session is all about how to use practical and simple steps to help you reduce your stress, have a more fulfilling life, and reach your goals using gratitude and intention setting.

Gratitude is thankfulness and appreciation.

According to Harvard Health:

“Gratitude helps people refocus on what they have instead of what they lack. By acknowledging the goodness in their lives, expressing gratitude often helps people recognize that the source of that goodness lies at least partially outside themselves. This can connect them to something larger—other people, nature, or a higher power.”

Commitment

What you are grateful for can be personal. Some things may be your health, home, the caring people around you. They can be large or small. Gratitude is a fundamental part of many cultures, religions, and traditions. It can be applied to the past (recalling positive memories), the present (being thankful for what we have now), and the future (being hopeful and optimistic).

When we are grateful, we understand that even when things don't work out the way we'd hoped, there are still good things in our lives. It helps us to appreciate what we do have, and not feel like there is always more, no

matter what we have already. We can feel less stress, more fulfilled, and be more motivated to reach our goals.

Be Open

What's interesting is the new research all about "positive psychology." According to Harvard Health, positive psychology encompasses:

"a variety of techniques that encourage people to identify and further develop their own positive emotions, experiences, and character traits."

There is growing evidence showing that gratitude is good for the brain and body. People who have a regular gratitude practice tend to experience more positive emotions like happiness, as well as stronger relationships and improved health.

I truly believe that what you focus on is what you get. If you focus on the positive in your life, and practice being grateful, you'll find you get more of what you want (and less of what you don't want).

One review of several studies on happiness and longevity found that happier people who are more satisfied with their lives actually live longer. Up to 10 years longer!

Another study showed that people who wrote out things they were thankful for:

- Were more optimistic
- Felt better about their lives
- Exercised more
- Had fewer doctors' visits

Another study asked people to personally write and deliver a letter of gratitude to someone they feel they hadn't properly thanked for their kindness. This resulted in a large boost in the "happiness scores" of those people who wrote and delivered the letters, and for some, lasted a month. In terms of relationships, people who expressed gratitude for their partner felt more positive toward them.

Even something as simple as saying "thank you" to employees made them feel more motivated to work harder.

Are you ready to get started?

Gratitude and setting intentions are things that anyone can do. Here are ways you can incorporate them into your life:

Count your blessings. It can be easy to remember negative events or emotions and ignore the positive ones. So, sit down regularly and think about some of your blessings. Be specific about what they are. Make this a habit, or put it into your schedule.

Every day think of 3-5 things you're grateful for from that day. This is especially true on days that aren't particularly positive or memorable. Try to remember the best parts of your day. Think about how you felt for each one. Don't forget your "everyday pleasures." Do this with your children too (if you have them).

Keep a gratitude journal. You can go beyond just thinking about what you're thankful for... write them down.

Think about something who did something nice for you. Remember what they did and thank them mentally.

Write a thank-you letter. Tell someone (in writing) how much you've enjoyed or appreciated their effect on your life. It could be someone who is special to you, gave you something, or helped you in some way. It can help to make you happier and nurture your relationship with them.

Use special occasions or holidays to do something extra-special for someone who you appreciate.

Mindfully meditate. Focus on the present moment without judgment. Notice the sights, sounds, and smells.

Donate. When shopping for groceries, pick up a few items for the food donation box. Donate to a cause you believe in. Go through the things you have (e.g. clothes, books, toys, etc.) and give away what you don't need. Invite the rest of your family members to do the same with their things.

Help others. By connecting with others and helping them, you not only build your relationship and skills, but you can become happier yourself too. It can help us feel more fulfilled when we focus on others' needs and struggles and give them a helping hand.

Leverage your strengths. Your strengths are things you can do that come easily for you. In fact, you may take them for granted and not even recognize them as a strength. It may be helpful to ask someone who knows you well, or remember compliments people give you. Once you've identified your strengths, use them often in your day-to-day life.

Have a start date. When making goals, choose a date to start working on the daily actions you're going to do.

Set yourself up for success. Whatever your goal is, there may be things you're going to need to reach it. Be it a stock of fruits and vegetables,

exercise gear, or motivational podcast, whatever you're going to need, make sure to get it before your start date.

Start your day with your intention. Every day is a new opportunity to live consciously. How you start your day can set the stage for how your day plays out. Perhaps you have a daily affirmation or goal. Every morning ask yourself what your intention is, and feel free to repeat it throughout the day.

Don't just have a "to do" list, make an "I did it" list too. Put more focus on things that you've accomplished and be proud of them. Keeping a gratitude journal is perfect for this too.

Break down big tasks. This can help to deal with difficult situations, but also to overcome challenges and reach your goals. One way to do this is by breaking down big things into smaller ones that can be addressed (and checked off your list) one at a time.

Be accountable for our goals. By tracking and reporting progress we are more likely to reach our goals. Sometimes that includes announcing your goals to someone (or everyone). Whether that's documenting our progress on a calendar or in an app, working toward goals with a partner, or having an accountability coach, being accountable can help you to reach your goals.

Recognize our triggers. By noticing what triggers us to ignore our goals we can create strategies to avoid the triggers. This can help to keep us on the path to accomplish the intentions we've set in order to reach our goals.

Give up perfection. Of course we want to do well and reach our goals, but we don't need to strive for perfect execution. This is unnecessary stress that we sometimes put on ourselves, and it can hold us back on taking action towards what we truly want.

When setting intentions or goals, don't be afraid to re-adjust them if they're unrealistic or make you feel overwhelmed. Make sure you monitor your stress levels and do some relaxation when you need to. Whether that's deep breathing, a quick walk, or other exercise.

Pay attention to the benefits. Whatever our goals are, look at how they're benefitting our lives. Whether it's a health or personal goal, by recognizing how it's helping us, it can be our motivation to continue working toward that change. When we see the benefits, it encourages us to keep on with it, and even to make bigger and better goals.

Invest in yourself. By recognizing the skills you have, and those you need to develop, you can see what resources or learning can help you to reach your goals. It's fun to learn new things!

Don't forget to be thankful for yourself too. Having regular self-care activities can help to alleviate stress. Whether it's any of the above actions, or eating nutritiously, getting enough sleep and exercise, spending time in nature, or doing your favorite hobby. Routinely taking care of yourself is also important. If you're really busy, it may help to schedule self care in your calendar. Sometimes, the hardest part is setting aside the time, so if it's on your calendar, it's more likely to happen.

To do

- Count your blessings.
- Every day think of 3-5 things you're grateful for from that day.
- Keep a gratitude journal.
- Think about something who did something nice for you.
- Write a thank-you letter.

- Use special occasions to do something extra-special for someone.
- Mindfully meditate.
- Donate.
- Help others.
- Leverage your strengths.
- Have a start date.
- Set yourself up for success.
- Start your day with your intention.
- Don't just have a "to do" list, make an "I did it" list too.
- Break down big tasks.
- Be accountable for our goals.
- Recognize our triggers.
- Give up perfection.
- Don't be afraid to re-adjust goals.
- Pay attention to the benefits.
- Invest in yourself.
- Don't forget to be thankful for yourself too.

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