



5. Gratitude Journal

Building your wellbeing

Positive emotions play an important role in developing emotional resilience and being able to handle stress with more resourcefulness. The ratio of positive to negative emotions you have is very important for emotional resilience. Barbara Fredrickson, a key researcher in the field, has found that a ratio of **3 pleasant emotions to every 1 unpleasant one** is the tipping point for flourishing.

TIP 1: GET A SPECIAL JOURNAL YOU'LL ENJOY WRITING IN

Find yourself a notebook that you will specifically use only for the purpose of writing a gratitude journal. As you are using it to build self-confidence, choose a really nice one that you enjoy writing in and touching.

TIP 2: WRITE DOWN AT LEAST 3 THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR EVERY DAY

For example, you might be grateful for:

- The things that you have in your life
- The things that have gone well that day
- Your own relatively good health
- The kindnesses that people have given to you or done for you
- The specific people in your life, whether your friends, colleagues, family, or others
- The beauty in your home, garden or in the natural surroundings nearby
- The tasks that you have completed
- The colleagues you have helped
- The patients you have served
- The food you've eaten, the water you've drunk, and everything else that has nourished you

TIP 3: WRITE SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF EACH ITEM

In your journal, do not just list an item, e.g. *"my dog"* or *"my job"*. Instead say something specific that you appreciate about your dog or job that day.

- "I am so grateful my dog is so thrilled to see me every time I get home"
- "I am so grateful that my children are able to be taken care of"
- "I'm so grateful my colleagues gave me time to make a cup of tea!"
- "I am really grateful we have a Practice Manager with so much experience"
- "I'm really grateful we are supporting each other so well"



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TIP 4: WRITE FULL SENTENCES OF GRATITUDE

Write a sentence in full for each item rather than listing single words or phrases. Write out whole sentences starting with phrases such as:

- "I am grateful for ..."
- "I am thankful for ..."
- "I appreciate the way that ..."

This means you will write full sentences each time. This makes practising gratitude more easily developed as a habit, and developing emotional intelligence requires you to develop good habits.

TIP 5: VARY WHAT YOU ARE THANKFUL FOR

Vary what you express thanks for each day. If each day you write the same thing, the impact of the gratitude will diminish.

By writing about different items, it will also mean that you will search for new things to be grateful for, and thus expand your ability to appreciate the different aspects of your life. Then you are increasing your chance of flourishing and having a 3:1 ratio of positive to negative emotions.

TIP 6: RE-READ YOUR JOURNAL

Regularly read back through your gratitude journal. If you practise writing at least three things a day that you are grateful for, you'll soon have a lot of items to read back through. At first you might re-read them each week, then maybe each month.

Just think how much appreciation you'll have. Your life will feel better, your positive emotions will develop, and your positivity ratio will take you on the route to flourishing and building greater resilience.

HOW GRATEFUL ARE YOU?

Start writing your gratitude journal today and watch the changes in your emotional intelligence and emotional self-management.

