

Month  of
GRATITUDE
4th Annual

OFFICIAL

Gratitude Guide

Ideas, Inspiration, and Resources for the intentional practice
of gratitude at work and at home.

family 
resource
home care

Month of GRATITUDE

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Enclosed in this guide you will find tools to help you plan for a Month of Gratitude.

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"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity. It turns problems into gifts, failures into successes, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow." - Melody Beattie

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The Science of Gratitude

Gratitude is so much more than a lighthearted concept - it has proven benefits to enhance our lives. Scientific studies prove that practicing intentional gratitude, and even more specifically writing down our thanks, provides a multiple of health and mental benefits ranging from improved happiness to better sleep, lower blood pressure, and improved energy.

Here are some key findings about the power of gratitude:

- Improved sleep quality
- Lower blood pressure
- Less physical pain
- Fewer physical symptoms and ailments
- Increased time spent exercising
- Enhanced stress management and ability to relax
- Greater vitality and energy

Don't believe it? Check out these excellent resources to learn more about the benefits of gratitude (click for links)!

- [How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain](#)
- [5 Reasons Keeping a Gratitude Journal Will Change Your Life](#)
- [31 Benefits of Gratitude: The Ultimate Science-Backed Guide](#)
- [7 Scientifically Proven Benefits of Gratitude](#)
- [Giving thanks can make you happier](#)
- [An Experiment in Gratitude | The Science of Happiness](#)
- [28 Benefits of Gratitude & Most Significant Research Findings](#)
- [Is Gratitude Good for Your Health?](#)

*“He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.” -
Epictetus*

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Gratitude as a Business Strategy

The benefits of gratitude in everyday life are great, but in the workplace, they are equally as compelling. Here are the benefits of gratitude in the workplace:

- 1. Gratitude increases motivation and productivity.** Surveys show that over 80% percent of employees who were recognized at work felt more motivated in their jobs, increasing productivity by 10% or more.
- 2. Gratitude improves retention.** Employees who feel appreciated are shown to have greater commitment and desire to stay at the company.
- 3. Gratitude increases engagement.** Employees who are empowered to give recognition to peers were more than twice as engaged as those who were not. Additionally, organizations, where recognition occurs, have 14 percent better employee engagement than those without, and engaged employees are more productive and more profitable.
- 4. Gratitude increases emotional and physical well-being.** Over time, gratitude leads to lower stress and depression, and higher levels of social support, reducing illness and missed work.
- 5. Gratitude increases and deepens social connections.** Relationships and friendships are critical to the modern work experience, and research finds that the more friends employees have at work, the more they love their companies and trust leadership, and the less inclined they are to jump ship.

“In ordinary life, we hardly realize that we receive a great deal more than we give, and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich.” -Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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Gratitude as a Business Strategy Continued

6. Gratitude boosts our career. Gratitude makes for more effective managers, helps you network, increases your decision-making capabilities, increases your productivity, and helps you find mentors and proteges – all of which lead to career advancement.

7. Gratitude makes us vulnerable and authentic. This effect creates a powerful, human connection between the giver and the receiver. In her book, *The Future of Happiness: 5 Modern Strategies to Wire Your World for Greater Productivity and Wellbeing*, Amy Blankson says, “By scanning the world for the positive, we can begin to transform our past failures, hurts, and fears into a source of potential growth—a process that paves the way for long-term happiness.”

8. Gratitude creates a virtuous cycle of recognition and success. In his book *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*, best-selling author Daniel H. Pink explains how gratitude generates positive momentum, resulting in a daisy chain of gratitude and contentment. The more we praise, the more success we create. And the more successes there are, the more there is to praise.

9. Gratitude may bridge the gap between necessary transactional components of our jobs and the desired human connection. Gratitude motivates a desire for continued interactions even if they are transactional in nature.

10. Gratitude makes people more extroverted, agreeable, open, and conscientious. When in this state of mind, greater creativity and problem-solving emerge, enhancing workplace solutions, relationships, and outcomes.

"Gratitude is the fairest blossom that springs from the soul." - Henry Ward Beecher

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Planning Your Month of Gratitude

Successfully holding a month of gratitude takes a bit of pre-planning!

1. **Consider timing** - when might this effort have the greatest impact and be well-received by those you invite to participate?
2. **Determine whom you wish to include**...employees, clients/residents/patients, business associates, your family, etc. Think about what meaningful efforts might inspire each audience.
3. **Set up your structure** - do you wish to roll out new activities weekly or all activities at the beginning of the month?
4. **Decide on an overarching theme** - use consistent language, colors, and fonts/graphics to give your month the feel of a coordinated campaign.
5. **Who is best to lead?** Design your activities and determine who will lead the efforts.
6. **Get buy-in!** Before you start your campaign, kick it off by sharing the 'why' of gratitude and how it can make a meaningful impact. People will be more inclined to participate if they understand the value that gratitude can bring to their lives.
7. **Communications!** Send out weekly emails with updates about the campaign and inspirational ideas and quotes, like those featured in this guide.

“Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Challenge 1 - Make a Goal of Gratitude

Amidst a hectic day, gratitude may not always come naturally. However, consciously acknowledging and expressing gratitude can significantly contribute to its presence. This week's challenge is to document your intentional gratitude practices for the month ahead. Utilize the provided Month of Gratitude planning page or any piece of paper to jot down ways you intend to cultivate gratitude.

This week's challenge is to create a goal to engage in intentional gratitude:

1. Start my day with gratitude and write a list of things I'm grateful for.
2. Practice attentive listening when others are speaking, allowing them to feel heard and understood. Validate their thoughts and feelings, and express gratitude for their trust in sharing with me.
3. Lift others up with gratitude and challenge myself to send at least 1 shoutout for how grateful I am for someone on my team.
4. Extend kindness and empathy to my team and colleagues, acknowledging their humanity and offering support when needed. Small acts of kindness can create ripples of gratitude and compassion throughout the world.
5. Post weekly on social media my gratitude for a co-worker, family member, or friend or just little things in life that I appreciate in order to spread the message of gratitude

"Wear gratitude like a cloak, and it will feed every corner of your life."

-Rumi

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Challenge 2 - Inner Reflections of Gratitude

Acknowledging and appreciating our own worth can be more challenging than expressing gratitude towards others. However, without self-gratitude, it becomes difficult to genuinely experience gratitude. Practicing self-gratitude involves recognizing and being thankful for our strengths, unique qualities, and contributions to the world. By celebrating our talents and small achievements daily, we stay motivated and empowered to express gratitude towards others and the life around us. Cultivating self-gratitude as a habit can transform our mindset to be more positive and beneficial.

Below are some additional ideas about how to practice self-gratitude. Challenge yourself to engage in one or more of these activities this week:

1. Practice self-care by engaging in self-nurturing activities. It's said you're supposed to do 1 thing for yourself every day to maintain a healthy balance of self-care in your life.
2. Celebrate your accomplishments and recognize how hard you've worked.
3. Practice positive self-talk, by acknowledging when you are speaking badly and ask yourself, "Would I talk to a friend or loved one like that?"
4. Prioritize self-reflection by getting in regular moments of solitude to reflect on your day-to-day experiences and challenges
5. Set healthy boundaries with the intent to give yourself the respect you deserve in any aspect of your life.

"Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."

-Marcel Proust

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Challenge 3 - Projecting Gratitude Outward

The practice of gratitude often involves giving, as it not only brings personal satisfaction but also sets off a ripple effect of gratitude. When we give to others, they not only express gratitude towards us but are also more likely to extend gratitude to others. This week's challenge is to bring gratitude to life by engaging in acts of affirmation, gift-giving, acts of service, or quality time with others. You can choose from the suggested activities below or create your own.

Suggested activities to trigger a circle of gratitude (Remember, even small gestures can create a significant impact in nurturing a culture of gratitude.):

1. Acts of affirmation:

- Create personalized affirmation cards or notes for your loved ones, highlighting their unique qualities and expressing your appreciation for them.
- Write a heartfelt letter or email to someone, expressing how their presence has positively impacted your life.

2. Unique gift-giving ideas:

- Hand-make a thoughtful and personalized gift, such as a scrapbook of memories, a custom piece of artwork, or a playlist of meaningful songs.
- Plan a surprise outing or experience tailored to the interests and preferences of the person you want to appreciate.
- Give the gift of learning by enrolling someone in a course or workshop that aligns with their passions or goals.

"We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives."

- John F. Kennedy

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Challenge 3 - Projecting Gratitude Outward Continued

Suggested activities to trigger a circle of gratitude (Remember, even small gestures can create a significant impact in nurturing a culture of gratitude.):

3. Acts of service:

- Offer to run errands or provide practical assistance to a friend or family member who could use some support, such as grocery shopping, pet-sitting, grabbing a quick lunch for a co-worker, or helping with household chores.
- Volunteer together with a group of friends or family members for a local charity or community organization, making a collective impact and bonding through service.
- Offer to help a co-worker, friend, family member or stranger with a specific project or task that aligns with your skills or expertise, providing valuable assistance and guidance.

4. Quality time ideas:

- Plan a themed movie or game night with friends or family, complete with snacks, decorations, and activities related to the chosen theme.
- Organize a picnic or outdoor adventure where you can spend quality time together in a natural setting, enjoying nature and each other's company.
- Schedule a technology-free day or evening dedicated to deep conversations, connecting on a more meaningful level, and fostering genuine bonds.

5. Acts of kindness:

- Leave uplifting or inspirational notes in public places, such as a library book, a park bench, or a restroom mirror, spreading positivity to unknown recipients.
- Pay for the meal or coffee of the person in line behind you or for a co-worker that has been working hard to brighten their day.

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life." - Melody Beattie

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Challenge 4 - Spreading Gratitude Globally

In a rapidly interconnected world, expressing gratitude at a global level can foster a sense of unity and appreciation for the diverse tapestry of humanity. Reflect on the interconnectedness of our lives and the contributions of individuals and cultures from around the globe. Consider how you can express gratitude to people and places beyond your immediate surroundings. Write down a list of creative and meaningful ways to extend gratitude globally. This could involve supporting international causes, engaging in cultural exchange programs, or spreading kindness and appreciation through social media platforms. Emphasize the importance of embracing global perspectives and celebrating the richness of our global community through gratitude.

Below are some additional ideas about how to practice self-gratitude globally:

1. Practice sustainability and small environmental changes: Show gratitude for the Earth by adopting eco-friendly habits. Reduce waste, recycle, conserve energy, and make sustainable choices to contribute to the well-being of the planet. One powerful way to show gratefulness is by actively engaging in volunteer work, such as dedicating time to a community garden. By contributing your efforts to nurture plants and promote sustainable food production, you demonstrate appreciation for the Earth's resources. Additionally, embracing practices like recycling, composting, and opting for more sustainable modes of transportation further exemplifies gratitude by actively caring for the environment and making choices that minimize harm.

“Gratitude turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity...it makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.” -

Melody Beattie

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Challenge 4 - Spreading Gratitude Globally Continued

Below are some additional ideas about how to practice self-gratitude globally:

2. Embrace diversity and cultural gratitude: Cultivate an inclusive mindset that appreciates and celebrates the diverse cultures, perspectives, and backgrounds that exist globally. Seek to learn from others, challenge stereotypes, and foster unity. Embrace a mindset of curiosity and open-mindedness that appreciates the richness and diversity they offer. Take the time to learn about different traditions, customs, and beliefs, and engage in respectful conversations to foster understanding and appreciation for the beauty and uniqueness of each culture. Try supporting a minority-owned business and try a new cuisine or learn about the history of the cultures represented in your city.

3. Community Change: Gratitude can spark community change by taking actionable steps such as creating something meaningful for your neighbor, whether it's a homemade gift or offering assistance. Additionally, volunteering at local community events, donating to grassroots organizations that align with your values, and committing to random acts of kindness all contribute to building a culture of gratitude and making a positive impact in the lives of others.

"When it comes to life the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude." -G.K. Chesterton

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Other Ways to Incorporate Gratitude

Depending on the size and type of your company, there are many additional ways to carry out your Month of Gratitude.

Here are a few ideas:

1. Use your social media pages or website to share messages of gratitude or thank employees, etc.
2. Provide a gift for all employees during your month of gratitude. Perhaps the opportunity to order a logo'd item of clothing or a few hours of free PTO to do volunteer work.
3. Send out a dedicated newsletter about gratitude to your employees or external audiences.
4. Decorate office windows with the names of all your employees written on pieces of paper with lettering that says Thank You.
5. Start each meeting during the month with a quote about Gratitude.
6. Assign each employee to watch a video about gratitude or read an article or book about it and share what they learn.
7. Host a 'gratitude power hour' and invite employees to join and talk about what they are grateful for in person or over a video chat.
8. Create a system of the 'gift of gratitude' where employees can send in thanks about other employees and draw a person at random each day/week/month for a prize.
9. Invite employees to paint or write on a rock something they are grateful for and then leave the rock outside your place of employment or if remote, in their neighborhood.
10. Host a gratitude trivia game. Have employees anonymously send in one to three things they are grateful for - ask them to be somewhat specific (i.e. not just 'family'). Compile the list and have co-workers guess who submitted which sentiment.

"How do you spell 'love'?" - Piglet
"You don't spell it...you feel it." - Pooh

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