

Counseling Newsletter

Greentree Elementary School

November 2018

Why choose gratitude today?



You've probably heard about choosing an "attitude of gratitude" as a way to change our thinking patterns, especially when struggling with challenging situations. This month, is ALL about being grateful. As parents, we are in a unique position to teach and model to our children what it means to

be grateful. Being grateful doesn't just have to be about feeling grateful towards others, its also giving ourselves permission to be personally grateful. When is the last time you were grateful for your body for letting you move, work, love and navigate life? When is the last time you thought about how amazing your mind is because it lets you reason, communicate and show gratitude? When is the last time you were grateful for making time for yourself to just breathe in a moment(s) of mindfulness?

This month, I challenge you to try any (or all) of the gratefulness suggestions discussed in our newsletter.

Benefits of being grateful

Wait! Are there benefits of being grateful? Research suggests that there are many benefits to being grateful, including (psychologytoday.com, 2018):

1. Gratitude opens the door to more relationships.

Not only does saying "thank you" constitute good manners, but showing appreciation can help you win new friends, according to a 2014 study published in *Emotion*.

2. Gratitude improves physical [health](#).

Grateful people experience fewer aches and pains and report feeling healthier than other people, according to a

2012 study published in *Personality and Individual Differences*.

3. Gratitude improves psychological health.

Gratitude reduces a multitude of toxic emotions, from [envy](#) and resentment to frustration and regret.

4. Gratitude enhances [empathy](#) and reduces aggression.

Grateful people are more likely to behave in a prosocial manner, even when others behave less kindly, according to a 2012 study by the University of Kentucky.

5. Grateful people [sleep](#) better.

Writing in a gratitude journal improves sleep, according to a 2011

study published in *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*.

6. Gratitude improves [self-esteem](#).

Rather than becoming resentful toward people who have more money or better jobs—a major factor in reduced self-esteem—grateful people are able to appreciate other people's accomplishments.

7. Gratitude increases mental strength.

Recognizing all that you have to be thankful for—even during the worst times—fosters resilience.

Some ways to show gratitude

1. Be an active listener

Show your gratitude to others by really listening to what they have to say.

2. Give out compliments

Make someone's day by giving out compliments on little things like a great shirt, a nice smile, or on a job well done.

3. Make eye contact

When interacting with people, make eye contact and show you are really present in the conversation.

4. Give a detailed example of appreciation

Let someone know exactly why you are grateful to have them in your life by citing an example of things they have done or said on your behalf.

5. Be thoughtful of others

While you must take care of you, it is important to also think of others first. Consider someone else's feelings with every action and word.

6. Volunteer for unpleasant tasks

Offer to do a chore or errand. By doing these tasks for someone you make their day easier.

7. Give a hug

Make a true connection with those you love and are grateful to have in your life by giving hugs when greeting, saying goodbye, or saying thanks.

8. Just be there

Spend time with others especially during difficult times and just be there without your phone and other distractions.

9. Be gracious when challenged

When someone challenges your actions or words, still show grace by listening to what they say and being polite. You never really know what someone else might be going through so don't take their actions personally and show them kindness (even if it's really hard to do).

10. Offer congratulations

When someone you know is celebrating an achievement, offer your sincere congratulations even if you are not the winner.

11. Show off their gifts

When someone is gracious enough to give you a gift make sure you wear the clothes in their presence, display their craft on your desk, or make it known you appreciate the gift by using it.

12. Share their joys

Celebrate other's joys as if they were your own.

13. Be patient

Patience is not everyone's virtue but give it your best effort to remain patient with those you love and remember that everyone has their own struggles.

14. Share their praise

When you are on the receiving end of great service or fine hospitality let others know about the job well done such as telling supervisors about the excellent service your wait staff provided.

15. Select small, thoughtful gifts

When you are out and about, select a few small but thoughtful gifts for those you love just to show you are thinking about them.

16. Write handwritten notes of thanks

When you receive a gift, handwrite a thank you note that mentions the gift you received and your appreciation.

17. Handwrite 'thinking of you letters'

Forget emails when sending personal sentiments that lets loved ones know you are thinking of them.

18. Handwrite letters of encouragement

Skip the texts. When family and friends are having a rough time, handwrite letters of encouragement and inspiration or, give them a call and let them get it all out.

19. Write a love letter

Address a love letter to those you love – from your spouse, to your parents, to your children you will provide them with proof positive they are loved and appreciated. It also helps remind you what you have to be grateful for every day.

20. Journal your blessings

Take a few moments each night before bed to write down the things you appreciated throughout the day. It can be a wonderful way to reflect on how far you've come over the years.

21. Be a support system

When people are in need, step up to be the go-to person they can rely on for support regardless of your differences.

22. Share your talents

If you are a whiz at scrapbooking, money management, or resume writing, share your talents with those in need.

23. Perform a random act of kindness

Kindness is still very much appreciated in the world today so perform a random kindness for those you love or a total stranger without looking for praise such as buying a homeless person lunch.

24. Pay it forward

When you order a coffee, pay for the person behind you. When you are at the drive through, pay an extra \$5 for the next person in line. Drop a few extra coins in the toll booth on your travels.

25. Tip well for good service

When you receive good service, be sure to offer a good tip that shows those in the service industry

how much they are appreciated. It is often a low-paying, unappreciated job others continue to do.

26. Donate to charity

Skip a pedicure and allocate that money to a charity in your local community.

27. Volunteer your time

Spend a few hours at a food bank, an animal shelter, or your church helping others. Sharing your time with those in need can help put your own life into perspective.

28. Host a gathering for your dearest friends

For no reason at all, host a gathering of your nearest and dearest as a way to say thank you for all they've done.

29. Help a stranger in need

While more risky now than in decades past, helping a stranger can certainly make you feel great. If you can't change a flat tire, at least hang out nearby until the tow truck arrives. If you pick a "weird vibe" or anything else that makes you funny, trust your gut and get outta there. You can always show gratitude later that day.

30. Share your material possessions

Don't be stingy with the things you do have. Be willing to share your possessions with those you love and those that are not as fortunate.

31. Say you're sorry

No matter how mad you get or how right you are, be willing to say you are sorry to those you truly love and appreciate. Be willing to compromise in life. There's a saying that goes, "You can either be right or you can be happy."

32. Visit the sick and/or elderly

Spend time with those who may not have anyone else. A Saturday morning visit to the nursing home or the sick ward at the local hospital can brighten everyone's day. Think about how you might appreciate that when you're elderly yourself.

33. Always say Thank You

No matter how small or how big the favor was, always say thank you. Say it to family, friends, co-workers, and kids. A heartfelt thank you can go a long way. I always try to say it to the bus driver as I get off the bus because their job seems so thankless.

34. SMILE

All the time! Share a smile with loved ones and strangers on the bus. While not everyone will smile back, it is certainly worth the effort to keep doing it. Smiles are contagious so do your part to make happiness and gratitude go viral.

(adapted from <https://andthenwesaved.com/34-ways-to-show-gratitude/>)

Did you know...?



Speak up, we care!

Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) has rolled out a new mental health campaign district wide. The theme for this quarter is Link Up! In which we invite parents and students to link up to resources about mental health. For more information, please visit: <http://iusd.org/wecare>

November 13th is World Kindness Day!

Although everyday can be a great day to show kindness not just towards others but to ourselves, on Tuesday, the world recognizes this as a day to be a little bit kinder. For more ideas or resources on things you can do on that day, please go to: <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

Parent Night

We will be hosting a parent's night on November 26, 2018 at 6:30p to discuss what social-emotional learning (SEL) means both at home and school. We will be discussing the **Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) 5** and what is the significance of learning more about it. During this workshop, we will also explore what research says about mindful parenting and some tools/techniques that you can use at home.

Please RSVP to the workshop at: marielapacheco@iusd.org

Childcare (for children 5 years and older) will be provided as well as some light snacks.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Parenting workshops

Springbrook Elementary (655 Springbrook North, Irvine) has partnered with Western Youth Services to present parenting workshops throughout the 2018-2019 school year. We had an amazing turnout for our first one on November 8, 2018 and we encourage you to join us for the upcoming ones:

- Empowering Your Child's Self-esteem (12/6/18)
- Social Media & Internet Safety (1/10/19)
- Healthy Coping (2/14/19)
- 40 Developmental Assets (3/7/19)
- Peer Pressure (4/11/19)
- Developing Health Children (5/2/19)

To RSVP and for more details about the workshop, please email: marielapacheco@iusd.org

Snacks, drinks and a raffle will be available on the day of the workshop.

Please join us!
