

What does gratitude really mean?

Research shows it has many benefits

- Stronger immune system
- Lower blood pressure
- Better sleep
- More positive emotions
- Better self care
- More generous and compassionate
- More forgiving and patient

But gratitude needs to be developed, nurtured and cultivated. Doesn't necessarily come easy.

We humans have what's called a negativity bias which makes us grasp onto negative thinking. We can get mired in thinking of the worst case scenario. And boy does that ever have relevance right now.

Sick with covid19

Lost a job

Overnight child's teacher and for us that could also mean speech OT and physical therapists

Can't get home food delivery for another 3 weeks

When will life ever be normal again

That's A LOT of real anxiety and worry

But let's remember the benefits of gratitude and say, okay, let's start right now for the things I can be grateful for at this moment. Connecting to each other on this zoom call. My safe home. The beauty of Spring around us. Our clean drinking water. My soft pillow. My next breath. There is always something to be grateful for.

And once we identify something to be grateful for, the next important step is the way we practice the gratitude. You can think about things that you are grateful for but we will take it one step further to identify how being grateful makes us feel. That is where the benefits and real transformation takes place. You want to identify the feelings of gratefulness in your body.

To develop a gratitude practice, you can try keeping a gratitude journal and write a few things that happened during the day. They don't have to be big things. Or even thinking of a few things at the end of the day. This helps to develop more grateful thinking, eliminating negative thoughts and building those benefits of a gratitude practice. We cannot have two opposite emotions inside of us at the exact same time. So gratefulness is a bridge to develop positive emotions, get us out of ruminating thoughts and bringing us to the present moment.

Being happy makes you want to share happiness. My story. Gratitude also teaches us that sometimes it's okay to accept life just as it is and find even those small moments we can be grateful for.