

Gratitude Journal

Why a gratitude journal

The miracle of gratitude is that it shifts your perception to such an extent that it changes the world you see. ~Dr. Robert Holden

Keeping a gratitude journal may be one of the most powerful practices you can undertake to transform persistent negative and anxiety producing thinking into thoughts that stimulate greater contentment and happiness. Gratitude is a gateway to emotional well-being and does help create more positivity and a healthier mental attitude.

How to start a gratitude journal

Since you will have a relationship with your gratitude journal, I encourage you to think about getting one that feels special to you. Nice design, cover, etc. In reality, however, the “form” doesn’t matter. A spiral notebook or legal pad will work just as well. When I first started, I used a dollar store spiral notebook where I tore out pages that had already been used! Just make sure that it is big enough so you can write easily. It doesn’t matter if it has lines or no lines. Choose what is comfortable for you.

Best practices

- For absolute best results (and you will experience them), commit to writing for 10-15 minutes per day, even when you are having a bad day.
- Writing means pen to paper the whole time. No stopping to think about what to write.
- Begin by writing, “I am grateful for” at the start of each line. Do not use ditto marks or leave off the opening as you write. Each line begins with, “I am grateful for...”
- Write one to three sentences for each item, not more. This is not a traditional journal entry where you write an idea and then explore it. Instead, line after line, “I am grateful for...”
- If you get stuck, repeat the line you wrote before or say “I am grateful for the pen in my hand.” It is not about the depth of what you are writing. It is about the practice.
- Related to the above, there is no judgment regarding the content of your gratitude journal. There is nothing wrong with you if you struggle to access gratitude in the beginning or have a really challenging day and can’t think of what to write. “I am grateful there is air to breathe” is just fine.
- Stay with it. This practice does not have impact if you engage with it one day and then leave it, returning to it only when things are really tough and hoping for a miracle cure. It is just like exercise. You do not get in shape from one day of exercise when you are feeling really out of shape. You gain the benefit when there is a regular practice.