

Science Says

I'm not suggesting we must be grateful for everything in our lives. In fact, that may be practically impossible. And, there's no need to feel guilty if we are not thankful. However, two decades of research suggest that the more we choose to be grateful, the better the benefits are for us.

Below are some of the best research examples discovered to date.

The Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley issued a white paper, *The Science of Gratitude*, in May 2018. I found it to be an excellent, comprehensive overview of the benefits of gratitude. If you're interested, you will find a link to it on my website: www.thegratefulway.ca

Three separate studies have demonstrated that counting blessings instead of burdens is an effective way to enhance quality of life (Emmons and McCullough 2003).

Considerable evidence shows that gratitude builds social resources by strengthening relationships and promoting prosocial actions. (Emmons & Mishra 2011).

Science has demonstrated that gratitude enhances peace of mind, reduces rumination and alleviates depressive symptoms (Liang, Chen, Li, Wu, Wang, Zheng, & Zeng, 2018).

Expressing gratitude strengthens our resilience and promotes health and well-being (Sirois 2019; Lyubomirsky, S., & Della Porta, M. D. 2010).

Research reveals gratitude increases our self-control, which helps us stick to the ‘better choice’ for our long-term health, financial future, and well-being (DeSteno et al., 2014).

Being grateful improves self-esteem. When we feel grateful, we often view ourselves as benefiting from another person’s generosity, leading us to feel valued (Lin, 2015).

Gratitude has been linked to psychological, or ‘eudaimonic’ wellbeing, which is a sense that one’s life has meaning and that a person is living their life to the fullest (Wood et al., 2010).

Expressing gratitude increases our empathy and can decrease our self-centeredness, making us more likely to share with others (DeSteno, Bartlett, Baumann, Williams, & Dickens, 2010).

A Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital study found acute coronary syndrome patients experienced greater improvements in health-related quality of life when they approached recovery with gratitude and optimism (Millstein, Celano, Beale, Beach, Suarez, Belcher, ... & Huffman, 2016).

And, while daily expressions of gratitude are often recommended, at least one study has found that heartfelt, intermittent, intentional practice is better than constant passive, automated expressions of thankfulness (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005).

For links to the above studies and the latest research, please see: www.thegratefulway.ca