



Gratitude

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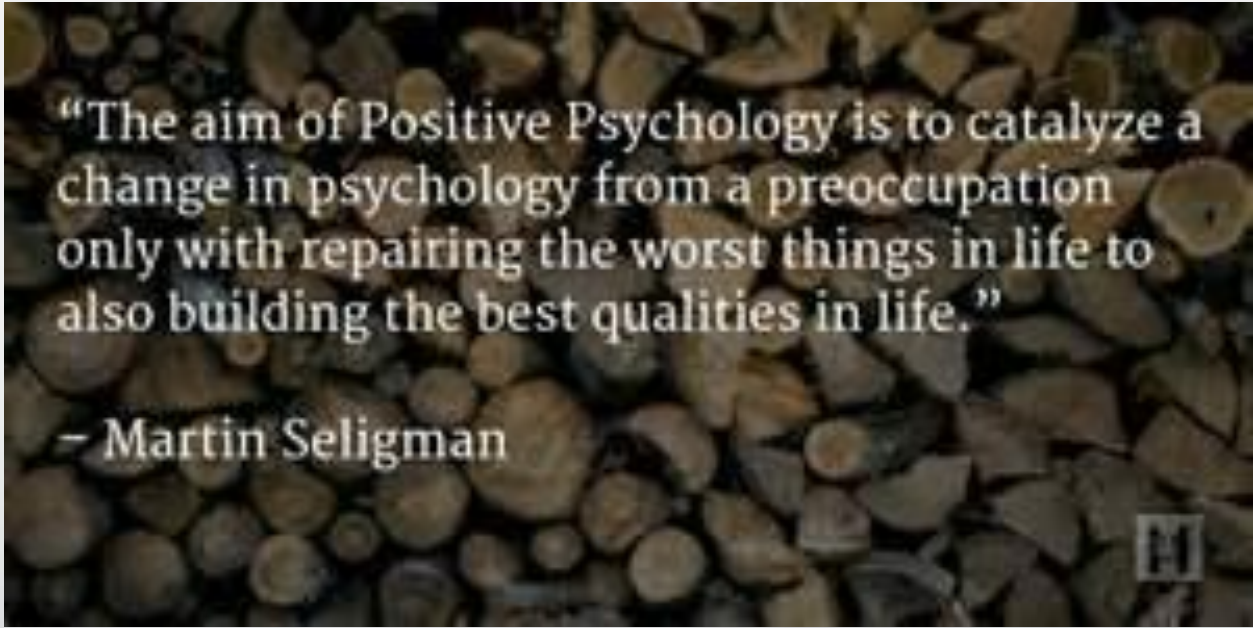
Dept. of Cognitive Science

- “The ship of my life may or may not be sailing on calm and amiable seas. The challenging days of my existence may or may not be bright and promising. Stormy or sunny days, glorious or lonely nights, I maintain an attitude of gratitude. If I insist on being pessimistic, there is always tomorrow. Today I am blessed.”

Maya Angelou, Letter to My Daughter p. 67



Positive Psychology



"The aim of Positive Psychology is to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life."

– Martin Seligman

The **PERMA** Model of Well-Being

Positive Emotion

Positive emotions are an essential part of our well-being. Happy people look back on the past with gladness; look into the future with hope; and they enjoy and cherish the present.

Relationships

Everyone needs someone. We enhance our well-being and share it with others by building strong relationships with the people around us - family, friends, coworkers, neighbours.

Accomplishment

Everyone needs to win sometimes. To achieve well-being and happiness, we must be able to look back on our lives with a sense of accomplishment: 'I did it, and I did it well'.

Engagement

When we focus on doing the things we truly enjoy and care about, we can begin to engage completely with the present moment and enter the state of being known as 'flow'.

Meaning

We are at our best when we dedicate time to something greater than ourselves. This might be religious faith, community work, family, politics, a charity, a professional or creative goal.

From Martin Seligman's *Flourish*, 2011



Flourishing

- Content of flourishing:
 - Happiness
 - Flow
 - Meaning
 - Love
 - Gratitude
 - Accomplishment
 - Growth
 - Better relationships

5 INGREDIENTS TO A Flourishing Life

P

Positive Emotions

-experience happiness, joy, hope, love gratitude, etc.

E

Engagement

-use your strengths to meet challenges; be in the moment.

R

Relationships

-connect with others; love and be loved.

M

Meaning

-connect to meaning; find your purpose.

A

Accomplishment

-pursue and accomplish goals; strive for greatness.



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PERMA Theory from Martin Seligman's
"Flourish: A Virtually New Understanding
of Happiness & Well-Being" (2012) - John Brock

Quote

- “Be happy in the moment, that's enough. Each moment is all we need, not more.”
— [Mother Teresa](#)



What is Gratitude?

grat·i·tude: 

the quality of being thankful;
readiness to show appreciation
for and to return kindness.

I am grateful for Jimmy Fallon and Paul McCartney



What is Gratitude?

- Robert Emmons, leading scientific expert on gratitude
- 2 Key Components to Gratitude
 - 1. It's an affirmation of goodness. We affirm that there are good things in the world, gifts and benefits we've received
 - Does not ignore complaints, burdens or hassles
 - 2. Figuring out where that goodness comes from...outside of ourselves. True gratitude involves a humble dependence on others...we acknowledge that other people (or higher powers) give us many gifts to help us achieve the goodness in our lives



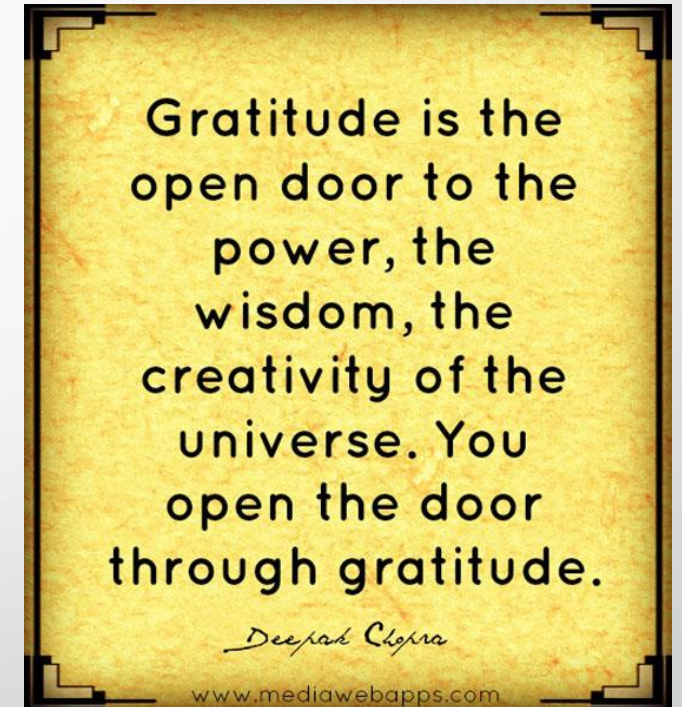
http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good

Gratitude | Louie Schwartzberg



Physical Benefits of Gratitude

- Stronger immune systems
- Less bothered by aches and pains
- Lower blood pressure
- Exercise more and take better care of their health
- Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking



http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good

Social Benefits of Gratitude

- More helpful, generous, and compassionate
- More forgiving
- More outgoing
- Feel less lonely and isolated.



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Psychological Benefits of Gratitude

- Higher levels of positive emotions
- More alert, alive, and awake
- More joy and pleasure
- More optimism and happiness

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good

Emmons: How Does Gratitude Work?

- **1. Gratitude allows us to celebrate the present.** It magnifies positive emotions.
- Research on emotion shows that positive emotions wear off quickly. Our emotional systems like newness. They like novelty. They like change. We adapt to positive life circumstances so that before too long, the new car, the new spouse, the new house—they don't feel so new and exciting anymore.
- But gratitude makes us appreciate the value of something, and when we appreciate the value of something, we extract more benefits from it; we're less likely to take it for granted.
- In effect, I think gratitude allows us to participate more in life. We notice the positives more, and that magnifies the pleasures you get from life. Instead of adapting to goodness, we celebrate goodness. We spend so much time watching things—movies, computer screens, sports—but with gratitude we become greater participants in our lives as opposed to spectators.

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Emmons: How Does Gratitude Work?

- **2. Gratitude blocks toxic, negative emotions**, such as envy, resentment, regret—emotions that can destroy our happiness. There's even recent evidence, including a 2008 study by psychologist Alex Wood in the *Journal of Research in Personality*, showing that gratitude can reduce the frequency and duration of episodes of depression.
- This makes sense: You cannot feel envious and grateful at the same time. They're incompatible feelings. If you're grateful, you can't resent someone for having something that you don't. Those are very different ways of relating to the world, and sure enough, research I've done with colleagues Michael McCullough and Jo-Ann Tsang has suggested that people who have high levels of gratitude have low levels of resentment and envy.

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Emmons: How Does Gratitude Work?

- **3. Grateful people are more stress resistant.** There's a number of studies showing that in the face of serious trauma, adversity, and suffering, if people have a grateful disposition, they'll recover more quickly. I believe gratitude gives people a perspective from which they can interpret negative life events and help them guard against post-traumatic stress and lasting anxiety.

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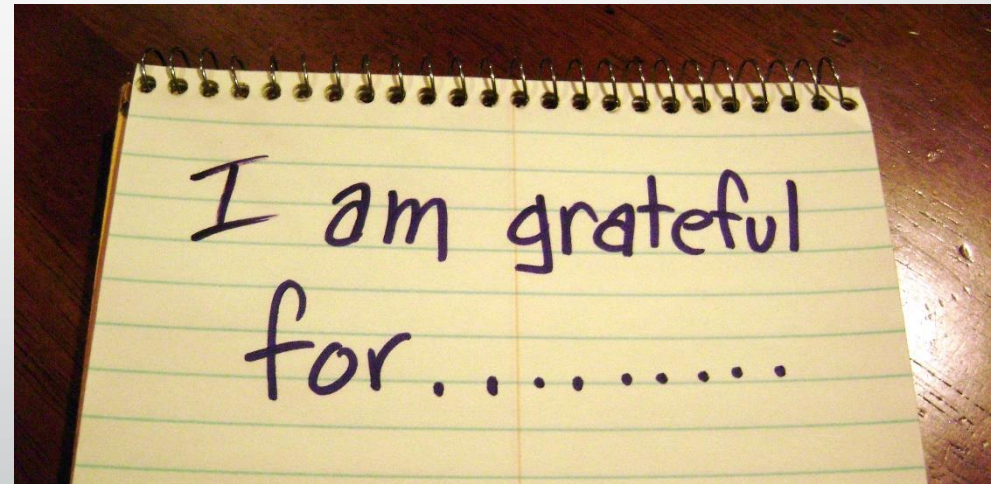
Emmons: How Does Gratitude Work?

- **4. Grateful people have a higher sense of self-worth.** I think that's because when you're grateful, you have the sense that someone else is looking out for you—someone else has provided for your well-being, or you notice a network of relationships, past and present, of people who are responsible for helping you get to where you are right now.

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How Can We Cultivate Gratitude?

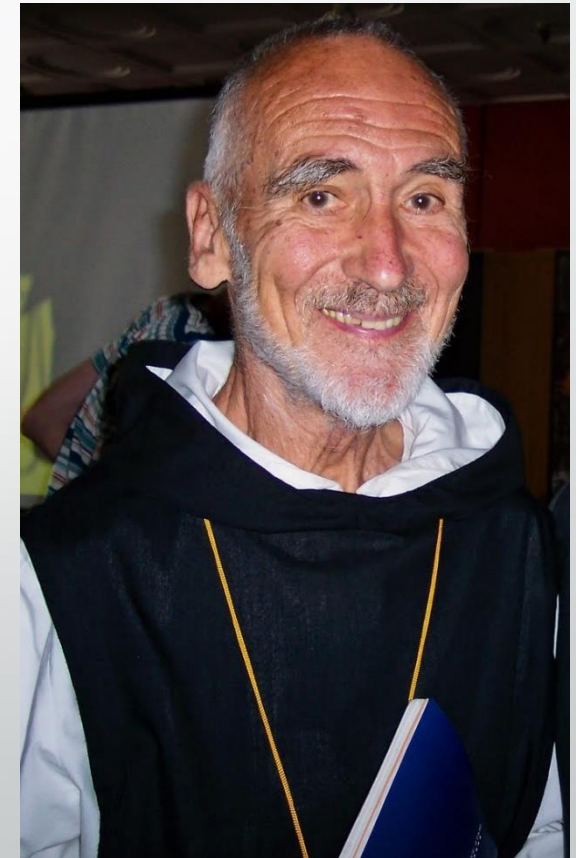
- Gratitude Journal/Three Good Things
 - Nightly or weekly
 - Detail what you are grateful for
 - Explain why you are grateful



How Can We Cultivate Gratitude?

- Gratitude Letter
 - Think of someone who you are truly grateful for but to whom you have not expressed your thankfulness
 - Write as if you were addressing this person directly
 - Describe what the person did, why you are grateful and how their behaviors influenced you
 - You could describe what you are doing now and how often you think about this person
 - Deliver the letter in person (if possible), or video chat, or send in mail

Want to be happy? Be grateful



An Antidote to Dissatisfaction



How Can We Cultivate Gratitude?

- Savoring
 - Savoring the good in your life



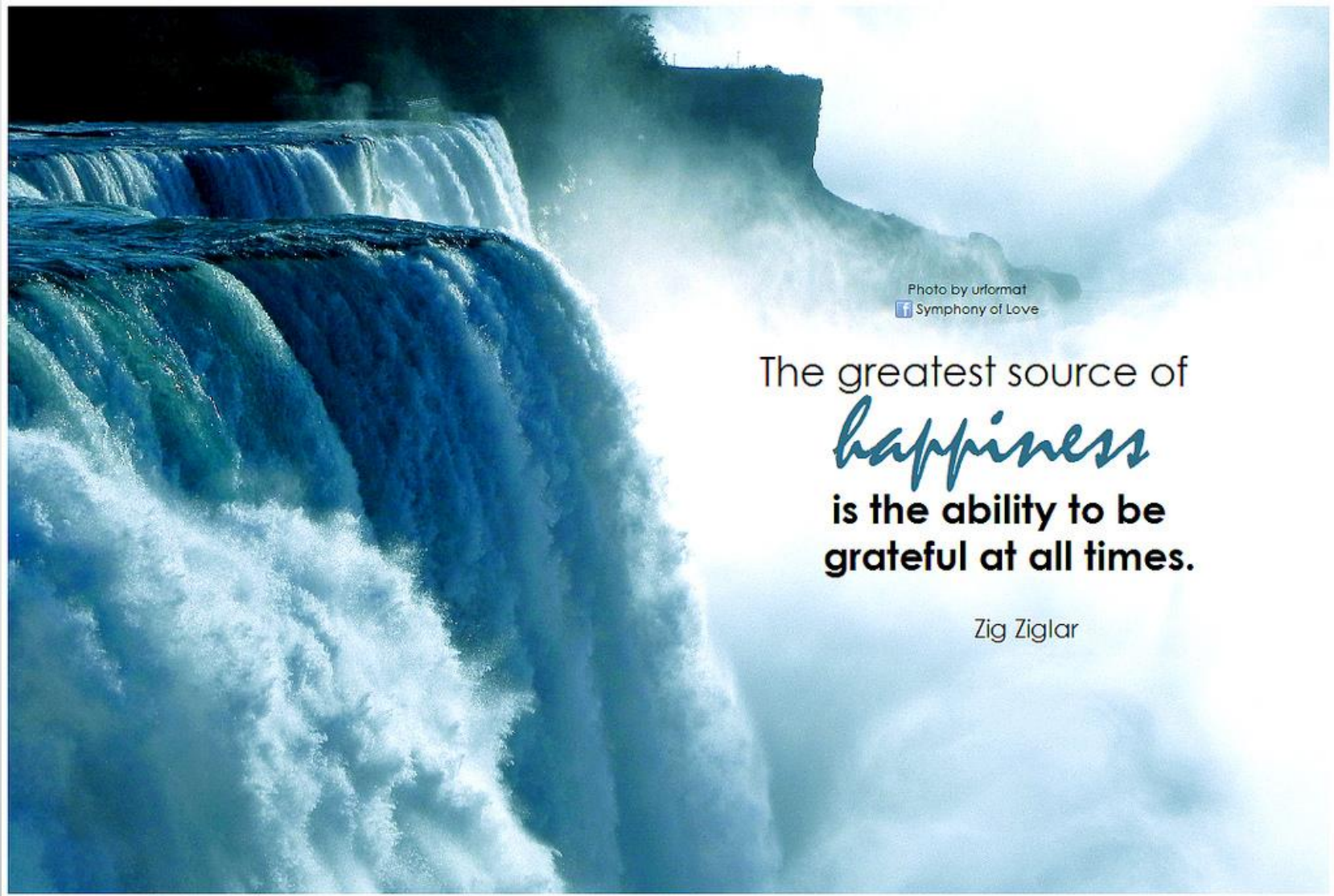


Photo by urformat
f Symphony of Love

The greatest source of
happiness
is the ability to be
grateful at all times.

Zig Ziglar

Fred Bryant: 10 Ways to Develop Savoring Skill

1. Share your good feelings with others
2. Take a mental photograph
3. Congratulate yourself
4. Sharpen your sensory perceptions
5. Shout it from the rooftops

1. Compare the outcome to something worse
2. Get absorbed in the moment
3. Count your blessings and give thanks
4. Avoid killjoy thinking (i.e., positive thoughts just as important as avoiding negative ones)
5. Remind yourself time flies...relish the moments



Thank You!