

Lesson 5

Attitude of Gratitude

Introduction

Showing appreciation to others is not only rewarding for them, but it brings handsome rewards to your own life and impacts your happiness.

There'll always be things you can be thankful for, but you might have to look for them to begin with. Once you've started, you'll see opportunities everywhere.

Being grateful allows you to place the focus outside of yourself, and as such, helps strengthen relationships, and gives you a sense of belonging to something bigger than you.

Having an attitude of gratitude means that the insignificant negatives that happen in your day will be cancelled out by the appreciation you give, for instance, the kind words that you say to someone, the thanking of people when they show good manners, the gratefulness you feel when waking up without pain, and pausing to absorb the wonder of a cloud-peppered sky.

The science

Research shows that gratitude brings a wide range of physical and mental health benefits, including, reduced illness symptoms, lower blood pressure, stronger immune system, greater life satisfaction, optimistic thinking, and happiness, and it reduces anxiety and depression.

People who show more gratitude tend to sleep better and interpersonal relationships are stronger.

Why this helps

One of the best reasons for expressing gratitude is that it's catching – the more you express your gratefulness to others, the more likelihood is that it will be taken on board by the recipient, who'll then share it with people they know... and the happiness spreads.

Exercise

Take a few minutes to write down a list of five things you're grateful for. To notice how effective this exercise is, simply note your mood before and after. Simple right?

Bonus Tip

To start with, you might like to use the following prompts:

- I am
- I have
- I can

An alternate way of expressing gratitude is writing a letter to someone, showing your appreciation for something they did for you, others, or the environment.

What have you learnt?

Being thankful and expressing it serves the greater good and it has benefits for yourself too.

Have a go at writing five things down every day this week on things you are grateful for, rate your mood, and judge for yourself if it affects your happiness.