



The Gifts of Gratitude



A daily dose of gratitude may be just what we all need to improve our mental health and buffer against the effect of stress. Being grateful helps us be mindful of what is around us and shifts our focus outward – focusing on what we have rather than what we lack. Research shows adults who regularly practice gratitude over time have:

- More happiness
- Stronger relationships
- More optimism
- Better exercise and sleep
- Less pain and fewer visits to physicians
- Healthier hearts

Managers who remember to express appreciation to workers find that people perform better. Just like any other practice it can feel awkward at first, but over time the brain begins to wire toward searching for the “grace” in our lives rather than getting stuck in the strife.

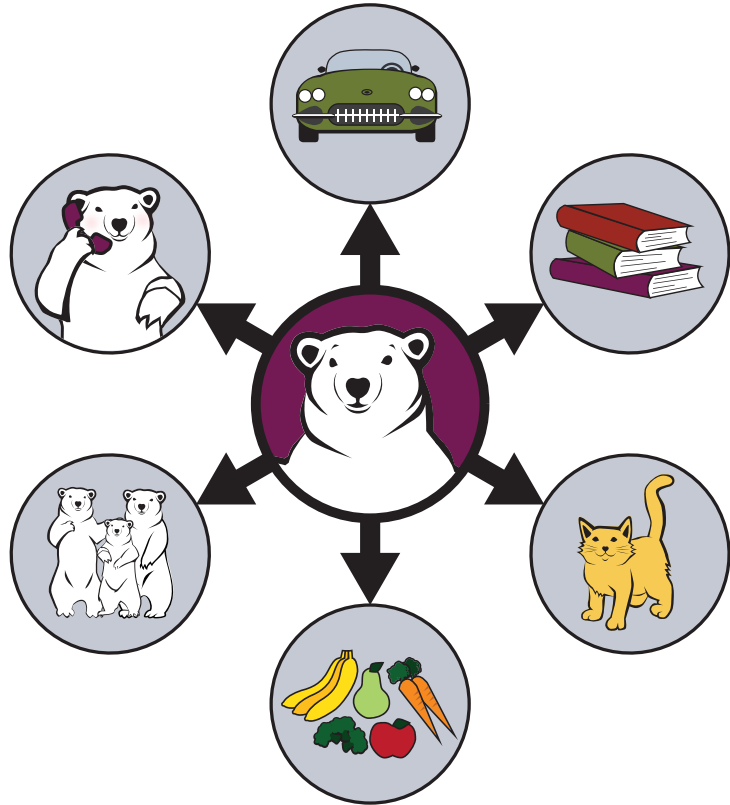
For more information visit:
<http://bit.ly/BowdoinMHMoments>





How Grateful Are You?

Take a moment to reflect
on these questions
– *how often do you:*



- Feel very thankful for your current level physical health, safety and well-being.
- Feel appreciation for what you have in this world.
- Reflect on the worst times in your life to help me realize how fortunate I am now.
- Remind yourself how fortunate you are to have the privileges and opportunities you have encountered in life.
- Take stock on how fortunate you are to have basic things in life like food, clothing, and shelter.

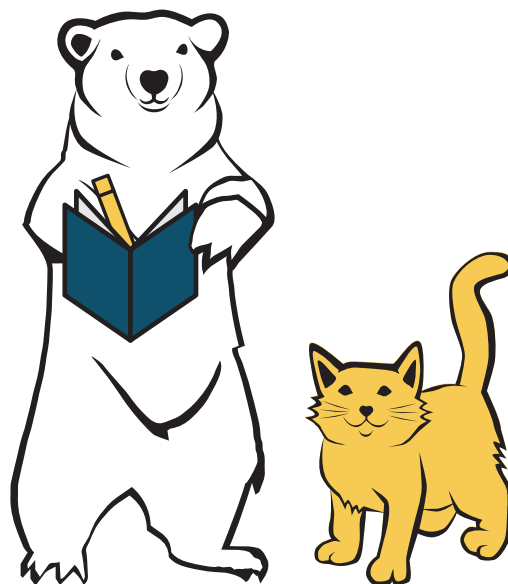
Adapted from: Adler, M. G., & Fagley, N. S. (2005). "Appreciation: Individual Differences in Finding Value and Meaning as a Unique Predictor of Subjective Well-Being."



For more information visit:
<http://bit.ly/BowdoinMHMMoments>



How to Practice Gratitude



Try to do these two practices every day for one month. Just after you have engaged in the practice, be mindful of how you experience this feeling for gratitude – notice it in your body – and see if you can drive it deeper with greater focus.

Practice #1: The 2-minute morning ritual – Within the first 30 minutes of waking up each day write down one big thing you are not taking for granted (e.g., health, family, safety), one small thing that gives you happiness or comfort (e.g., sun on your face, your favorite shoes), and something you are excited about in the future. The more specific you can get in understanding why you are grateful, the better.

Practice #2: Express thanks – Handwritten notes are best. Be detailed about what they did that positively impacted you. Thank your mentors. Thank your peers. Thank the people whose service is often unnoticed. If you don't have time to write it out or tell them in another way, hold them in your mind and mentally thank them.



For more information visit:
<http://bit.ly/BowdoinMHMMoments>