

A HEALTHY **LIFESTYLE** THAT IS SUSTAINABLE.



Gratitude Letter

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Mind

Body

Nutrition

Environment/Relationships

Before doing this worksheet find a place where you can think freely and actively utilize the concept of [metacognition](#).

Purpose/Effects

Practicing gratitude can yield a variety of physical and emotional benefits, including increased happiness, optimism, and determination. Being grateful can also reduce stress and improve sleep and immune functioning. By writing someone a letter of gratitude and reading it aloud to him or her, you can experience firsthand the benefits of being grateful. Studies by positive psychologist Martin Seligman have even reported that the effect of doing this just once can last for weeks!

LET'S TALK! VISIT **JOCOACHING.LIFE**, AND LET'S GET IN TOUCH.

Method

Write a letter to someone you appreciate – typically, a person who has made a difference in your life, and to whom you feel grateful. Then if possible, meet with this person and read the letter to him or her.

- Choose someone who has contributed to you in one way or another (e.g., emotionally, financially, with support) – perhaps a person you haven't fully yet thanked.
- Brainstorm ways that he or she has contributed to you, and had positive effects on your life.
- Write down both general and specific things this person has done for you and how his or her actions have made you feel.
- Take as long as you need to write this letter (some people take several weeks).
- Compose a letter that is roughly one page in length, and then ask this person if you two can meet. Make sure not to tell him or her about the letter beforehand.
- When you meet, read your letter to its recipient aloud and give this person time to let it sink in.
- Pay attention to how reading this letter makes you feel.
- Spend time reflecting with this person on the effects of the letter and what he or she has done for you.

History

This method was adapted from an exercise created by psychologist Martin Seligman called the Gratitude Visit. Seligman describes this practice in further detail in his books *Authentic Happiness – Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Happiness*, and *Flourish – A Visionary Understanding of Happiness and Well-being*.

For more information about Seligman's work and positive psychology, please visit: <http://www.authenticehappiness.sas.upenn.edu/default.aspx>

Cautions

Try to do this practice with an open mind and withhold expectations about how you think the recipient will respond. Remember that you can feel and express gratitude to someone while also asserting yourself with this person; for example, you can be grateful to an intimate partner while also wanting more help with housework, or more lovemaking.

Notes

Reading the letter aloud to its recipient is an important part of this method. Try to make sure you choose someone with whom you can connect with visually in person or video.