

Gratitude

Tips for Feeling More Grateful Every Day

Practicing gratitude can help increase happiness, improve mental health, and get you through the tough times.

Here are some simple tips on how you can practice gratitude in your everyday life.

- 1** *Appreciate everything.* You don't have to experience huge, amazing things to practice gratitude. Learn to notice and appreciate the little things, like good weather on a day you're spending outside, your favorite song coming up on shuffle, or a pet doing something cute.
- 2** *Practice mindfulness.* Take a quiet moment to relax your body, breathe deeply, and think about a few of the things you're grateful for. Close your eyes and picture those things in your mind.
- 3** *Keep a gratitude journal.* At the end of each day, write down three things you were thankful for that day.
- 4** *Help others.* Doing things for others helps you be more grateful for what you have. It also makes you feel good.
- 5** *Spend time with loved ones.* Focus on the people in your life who are caring and encouraging. Acknowledge and be thankful for their support.

Optimism



Tips to help you feel positive & hopeful

Are you a positive person, or do you have a hard time looking on the bright side of things? Maybe you're a little of both. Either way, being more optimistic can make tough times easier and good times better.

What is optimism?

Optimism isn't just being happy all the time. Optimism means being hopeful and seeing tough times as temporary situations that can be fixed, endured, and/or learned from.

What are the benefits of optimism?

People who are optimistic enjoy life more, and studies show that being optimistic can help you overcome both physical and mental ailments.

How can you be more optimistic?

1. Reframe negative situations.

When there's something in your life that's negative, make an effort to look for the positive aspects and/or outcomes. For example, having to stay home during the pandemic may have given you extra time to work on a hobby.

2. Surround yourself with positive people.

If you're around people who are always complaining and negative, it's easy to fall into the habit of being negative as well.

3. Know there are things you can't control.

Sometimes bad things happen that you have no control over. That's part of life. *But what you do have control over is how you react to them.* While you can't change a bad situation, knowing that you can change your own thoughts and behavior can be empowering and freeing.

Your Bright Future

When you're optimistic, you have things to look forward to.

What do you have to look forward to in the coming days? If you can't think of anything, create something, even if it's something small. For example, you might look forward to making a favorite meal or watching your favorite movie.

What can you see in your bright future?

What great things do you see yourself accomplishing this year?

What great things do you see yourself accomplishing in five years? 10 years? 20 years?

Grit

The Key to Mental Toughness

Grit means being tough, and having what it takes to persevere through difficult times. It means working toward a goal with a spirit that won't be defeated. For some, this mental toughness comes naturally. Others have a harder time staying strong in the face of adversity.

What does grit mean to you?

Because we all have different challenges in life, grit means something different to everyone. If you have a hard time speaking up in class, it can mean participating in class discussions. If you're trying to get in shape, it might mean not missing a workout. Think about a challenge you're facing right now. Define what it means for you to have grit as you deal with this challenge.

How can you build grit?

To help you build grit when facing a challenge, have a plan for what you'll do when it gets hard, or you just feel like giving up.

Think of a challenge you're facing now, and of an obstacle you'll likely encounter. What is the obstacle and how will you deal with it?

When have you shown grit?

Think about a time when you stayed strong – a time when you were determined or resilient. How did you show grit during this difficult time?

Learn from others.

Ask a parent and/or relative to tell you about a time when grit helped them achieve a goal or deal with a difficult situation. What did they do?

Examples of grit

Most successful people have faced failure at some point in their lives, but like the people below, they found the grit and determination to keep going. They refused to give up.

Michael Jordan was cut from the high school varsity basketball team his sophomore year.

Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor because he had “no good ideas.”

JK Rowling received rejections from 12 publishers before her first *Harry Potter* book was accepted for publication.

Thomas Edison once had a teacher who told him that he was too stupid to learn anything.

Courage

What is courage?

Courage isn't the absence of fear—and being courageous isn't being fearless.

Having courage means recognizing your fears and having the strength and the will to confront them.



Building Courage

Becoming more courageous is something you can work on every day in small ways. Here's how.

Expand your comfort zone.

Make an effort to do things you don't normally do. Join a club, try out for a team, or expand your social circle. Learning that you can do uncomfortable things and still come out okay, or even better, is a great way to build courage.

Figure out what you want, and go for it.

Setting goals and making concrete plans for achieving those goals is an excellent way to build courage. Plan out small ways you can work toward your goals every day.

Use positive self-talk.

We all have a voice inside our head, and that voice can sometimes be negative and critical, particularly when we're faced with a new or challenging situation. You can help yourself be more courageous by using positive "self-talk." Instead of *"I can't do this,"* think, *"I am strong. I can do this."*

Think about it

Write about a time you wish you could have been more courageous. What do you think was holding you back?

What in your life do you need courage for?

What are two things you can do to be more courageous?

Remember, sometimes the most courageous thing you can do is ask for help when you need it. If you're feeling afraid, stressed, or overwhelmed, reach out for help from someone you trust.

Confidence

We all wish we could have more confidence. But for most, being confident is easier said than done. So, how can someone become more confident? Here are some ideas.

Recognize and develop your skills and abilities.

Being able to do something well gives you confidence. Think about what you like to do and are good at, and work to develop those skills. The better developed your skills and abilities are, the more confident you will feel.

What are three skills or abilities that you have?

Think about what gives you confidence.

Are you most confident when you're surrounded by friends? Or when doing something you enjoy, like a sport or a favorite activity?

When do you feel most confident?

Think about how you can take these feelings of confidence and apply them in other situations.

Visualize.

Visualization is a skill used by students, athletes, and leaders around the world. Close your eyes and visualize a situation that you'd like to feel more confident in. Then visualize yourself in that situation as a more capable, confident person.

What did your more confident self do differently?

Select an area to improve.

Confidence might seem like a thing you either have or you don't, but confidence tends to vary depending on the situation.

Perhaps you feel confident talking with family and friends, but you'd like to feel more confident speaking up in class.

In which area(s) do you want to build confidence?

Whenever you're feeling unsure, shy, or awkward, remember that those feelings are temporary. As you learn and grow, you will feel stronger and gain confidence. We are all works in progress!

Enthusiasm

Having enthusiasm means that you are interested, engaged, and excited about something specific, or about life in general. Here are some tips on how to put more enthusiasm and passion into your life.

Act enthusiastic

It's easy to be enthusiastic about things you care about, but even if you aren't particularly excited about something, you can still act enthusiastic. And when you act enthusiastic about something, you often find that you begin to genuinely feel more enthusiastic.

Be grateful

As much as possible, run through a "what's going well" list in your mind, or write these things down in a journal. We all tend to focus on the things in our life that are less than ideal; however, when you make an effort to focus on the things that are good, no matter how small, it's easier to be enthusiastic.

Have goals

Having a goal you want to achieve can help you stay focused and enthusiastic. Having a goal can also help increase your interest when you have work or tasks that you aren't particularly excited about.

For example, you may not be crazy about history, but knowing that a good grade in the class will help you achieve your goal of raising your GPA will likely increase your enthusiasm for the class.

Find Your Passion

Having something that you are passionate about helps you be more enthusiastic about life. Whether it's sports, art, music, science, or collecting shells at the beach, developing a real interest or passion for something helps give your life meaning, focus, and purpose. Here are a few questions to help you identify and develop your passion(s).

What do you enjoy doing so much that you lose track of time?

What subjects/topics do you find most interesting?

Is there something that you've always wanted to try, but never have?

If you haven't found your passion yet, don't worry! People spend their whole lives trying to find it. But sometimes, the pursuit of passion in life can bring just as much joy as finding it!