



GRATITUDE

How to Practice Gratitude Every Single Day

Simple, research-informed practices for mornings, workdays, evenings, family life, and the hard seasons.

A NOTE FROM OUR TEAM

Gratitude is easy on a good day. The real skill is practicing it on a Tuesday when the deal fell apart, the kids are sick, and nothing went right. These are the practices we actually use. Start with one, not all of them. Small and consistent wins every time.

— The Auto Advocate Team

Gratitude works best as a habit, not a mood. You don't wait to feel thankful; you practice noticing, and the feeling tends to follow. Below are short practices for every part of your day and every part of your life, plus a 7-day challenge to get you started. Pair it with No. L04, *The 30-Day Gratitude Journal*.

1 Why It's Worth Five Minutes

The gratitude visit. In a study by Martin Seligman and colleagues, writing and personally delivering a letter of thanks produced the largest boost in happiness of the five exercises tested at one month. By six months the effect had faded, which is why some researchers suggest repeating it every so often.

Gratitude at work. Harvard Health describes a Wharton study in which university fundraisers who heard a message of thanks from their director made 50% more fundraising calls the following week than those who didn't.

Gratitude at home. Harvard Health also reports research linking expressed gratitude toward a partner with more positive feelings about that partner and more comfort raising concerns in the relationship.

KEEP IT HONEST

Most gratitude studies show associations, not proof, and some groups saw little or no benefit. Treat gratitude as a helpful practice, never as a cure or a replacement for professional care.

2 Your Daily Rhythm: Morning, Day, Evening

Morning (2 minutes)

- Before your phone, name one thing you're grateful for and one person you'll thank today.
- **Try subtraction:** picture your day without one thing you take for granted, like your health, your truck starting, or a spouse who has your back.

My morning cue _____

During the Day (1 minute)

- Use **Notice, Think, Feel, Do:** notice a good thing, think about who made it possible, feel it, then act on it.
- Thank one person specifically: what they did and what it made possible.

My daytime cue _____

Evening (5 minutes)

- **Three Good Things:** write three things that went well today and *why* they happened.
- Small counts. A good conversation or a quiet drive home is enough.

My evening cue _____

3 The Gratitude Letter & Visit

Choose someone who changed your life and never heard a proper thank-you: a coach, a teacher, a mentor, a parent, a first boss.

- 1 **Write it (about 10 minutes).** Speak to them directly. Say exactly what they did, how it affected your life, and where you are now because of it.

I'll write to _____
 What they did for me _____

 What it made possible _____
 Visit / call date _____ Done ✓ _____
- 2 **Set up a visit.** You don't have to say why. If distance makes it impossible, a phone or video call works.
- 3 **Read it out loud, slowly.** Ask them to let you finish first. Then talk about it together and leave the letter with them.

4 Gratitude at Work

- ☐ Thank people specifically: "You stayed late to finish the file, and it saved the deal," not "Great job, team."

☐ Write one handwritten note a week to a customer, colleague, or vendor.

☐ Thank the people who rarely hear it: support staff, the overnight crew, the person who cleans the building.

☐ When you get credit, pass it along to the people who helped earn it.

☐ Open one meeting a week with a quick round of wins and thank-yous.

☐ Leaders: thank in public, coach in private.

5 Gratitude at Home

- ☐ Tell your spouse or partner one specific thing you appreciated today, before bed.

☐ Leave a note in a lunchbox, a work bag, or on the bathroom mirror.

☐ Make "best part of your day" a standing dinner-table question.

☐ Thank your parents for something specific from your childhood.

☐ Notice the invisible work: the laundry, the bills, the oil changes.

☐ Keep a family gratitude jar and read it together on a holiday.

6 Raising Grateful Kids

Researchers at UNC Chapel Hill, led by Andrea Hussong, describe gratitude in four parts: **Notice, Think, Feel, Do**. Young children often start with noticing and doing; the deeper thinking and feeling grow over time. A "thank you" that's prompted is still a start.

STEP	ASK YOUR CHILD	TRY IT THIS WEEK
Notice	What's something good that happened today?	Point out good things out loud as they happen
Think	Who helped make that happen? Why do you think they did?	Talk about the coach, teacher, or grandparent behind it
Feel	How did it feel when they did that for you?	Name the feeling together: happy, cared for, proud
Do	How could we show them we noticed?	Draw a picture, make a call, or write a thank-you note

7 Gratitude in Hard Seasons

Gratitude doesn't mean pretending the loss, the diagnosis, or the layoff is fine. Both things can be true at once: this is hard, and there are still people and moments worth noticing. In a heavy season, make the practice smaller, not bigger.

- Shrink it to one line a day. One is plenty.
- Focus on people who showed up, not on silver linings.
- Notice basic things: a warm meal, a good night's sleep, a friend's text.
- Don't use gratitude to shame yourself for struggling.
- Let others help you; receiving well is part of gratitude.
- Talk to someone: a pastor, a counselor, a doctor, a trusted friend.

IF YOU'RE IN CRISIS

Gratitude practices are not a substitute for care. If you or someone you love is in crisis or thinking about suicide, call or text **988** or chat at 988lifeline.org to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, available 24/7. In an emergency, call 911.

8 The 7-Day Gratitude Challenge

One new practice a day for a week. Check it off, jot a quick note, and circle the one or two you want to keep.

DAY	PRACTICE	DONE ✓	QUICK NOTE: WHAT I NOTICED
1	Write Three Good Things before bed, and why each happened		
2	Thank one coworker or customer specifically, in person		
3	Try subtraction: imagine life without one thing you take for granted		
4	Ask "best part of your day?" at dinner; everyone answers		
5	Write a handwritten note and deliver it today		
6	Go a full day without complaining; when you slip, name something good instead		
7	Draft your gratitude letter and schedule the visit or call		

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SOURCES

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This guide is an educational personal-development resource, not medical or psychological advice or a substitute for professional care. If you are struggling, please reach out to a qualified professional. Research findings describe averages across groups and do not guarantee individual results.