

Feeling
grateful



Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude is a popular idea, and like 'self-care' and 'me time', can often be meaningless unless we understand its life-changing value.

Being grateful, noticing and caring, being mindful and present in the moment, these habits can all elevate our wellbeing, mood and attitude. It's the equivalent of taking a moment to stop and smell the roses.

Positive emotions make us feel good. And who doesn't want more of that in their lives?

I see, too often, people still embracing the isolation and self-involved way of living we had to adopt during the pandemic.

People I speak to are feeling disconnected and overwhelmed, especially when working from home. It can be hard to modify and improve these mental states.



“

“Positive emotions make us feel good.”

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Being able to make gratitude a key habit enables you to strengthen your resilience and tackle challenges. It can significantly improve how you react to certain things in a way that enables you to emerge stronger, wiser and more capable than before.

We know that living a compassionate existence is good for us and that mastering the key skill of practising gratitude is within our control. If we open our hearts, minds and willingness to look after ourselves, look out for others and live a more optimistic life we can shift our mindset to a healthier space.

Through this ebook we'll work on your gratitude, explain the science behind it, and explore rituals and techniques to strengthen your mindset.

We'll also look at ways you can harness gratitude to become a healthier, more resilient, and happier person.

Are you ready? Let's get started!

Love Debbie.xx



What is gratitude?

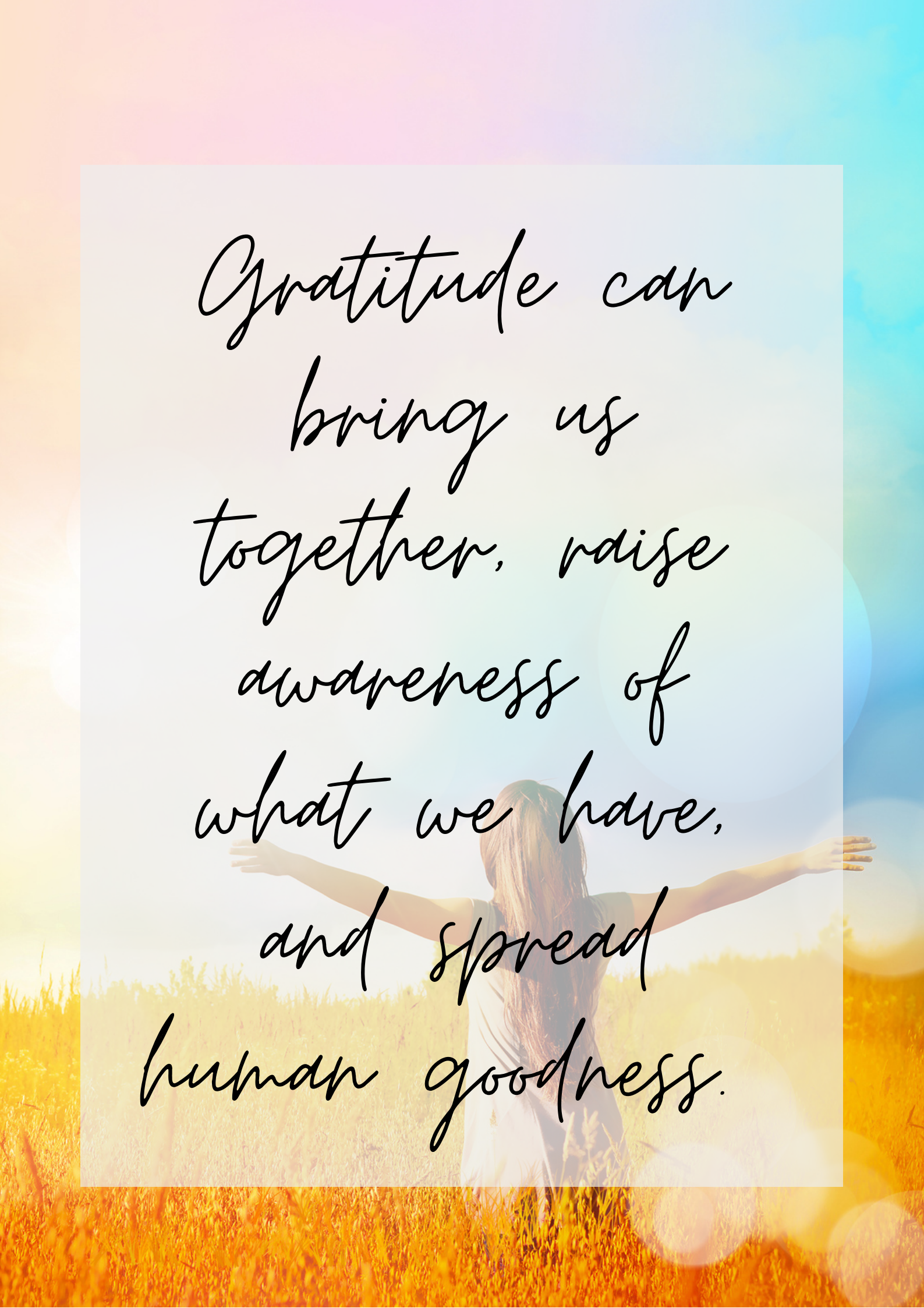
Gratitude is a positive emotion that involves being thankful and appreciative and is directly linked to our resilience and wellbeing. Studies show that discussing what we are grateful for increases our wellbeing, compared to just listing the things we're grateful for.

It has been of interest to philosophers since ancient times, but the research around it didn't really start until the 1950s as psychologists and sociologists began to look at the impact gratitude could have on individuals and groups. Since then, the topic has continued to be looked at especially because of the potential health benefits that surround it.

According to Dr. Robert Emmons, Ph.D., a leading researcher in positive psychology, practising gratitude is two-pronged: **First you appreciate what's good about your life or your work situation, which requires self-reflection. Then you acknowledge who - outside of yourself - contributes to that goodness, and let them know you're thankful.**



Gratitude can
bring us
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The science bit

Research shows that an attitude of gratitude can lead to improved physical health, make you more optimistic and less prone to negative emotions, and even help you sleep better and avoid the type of exhaustion that leads to burnout. What's more, showing thanks to others can strengthen your bonds and help you build new friendships and connections.

Data from one study suggested that gratitude relies on the brain networks associated with social bonding and stress relief, which may explain how grateful feelings lead to health benefits over time. **Feeling grateful and recognising help from others creates a more relaxed body state and allows us to benefit from lowered stress levels.**



A team at Indiana University examined how practising gratitude can alter brain function in depressed individuals. They found evidence that gratitude may induce structural changes which indicates that the mental practice of gratitude may even be able to change and rewire the brain.

Neuroscientist Glenn Fox has dedicated his life to studying gratitude. His research indicates that regular practice of gratitude and using a gratitude journal shores up our reserves, and changes how we perceive the bad times.

The science bit

“Gratitude fits into a category of what we would call pro-social emotions, and these are emotions that orient us towards the welfare of others,” according to Emiliana Simon-Thomas, who heads the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley.

“It creates this kind of bond, this enduring sense of connection, with another person or another organism who we’re poised to cooperate with. I do think that there’s an argument to be made in support of the idea that gratitude scaffolds other emotional experiences,” she said. For example, there’s research supporting relationships between gratitude and love, as well as gratitude and interpersonal trust.

Gratitude can bring us together, raise awareness of what we have, and impel us to consider how we can recognise and spread human goodness.



In addition to supporting our relationships, other research has found that gratitude can have myriad positive effects on our health.

It’s been shown to lower stress, reduce pain, and even improve our immune systems, blood pressure, and heart function.

Happiness
happens when
you 'fit with
your life' - so
that whatever
you are doing is
your joy.

Gratitude & You

In his book 'Joy: The Happiness That Comes from Within', Osho explains that joy is the happiness that comes from within:

"Humans can be unhappy and happy - but not at the same time. And the one thing that sets us apart from the animal world is that trees, birds, stars have no consciousness. We have consciousness - which means that there are two alternatives that are possible - we can become happy or unhappy - it's our choice. Trees, birds, stars are simply happy - because they cannot be unhappy! They are simply happy because they don't know any other way to be. Happiness happens when you 'fit with your life' - in harmony - so that whatever you are doing is your joy."

Being your authentic self is something that, through gratitude and understanding, can impact on our wellbeing and resilience and enables us to live a compassionate existence.



"Humans can be unhappy and happy -
but not at the same time."

Gratitude & You

A great way to work on your gratitude and joy is to ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do you feel like you have a lot to be thankful for?
2. If you made a list of all the things you are grateful for, would that list be very long?
3. Do you frequently experience moments where you appreciate someone or something?
4. Do you appreciate a wide range of people in your life?
5. Are you able to remember the last time that someone shared with you what they were grateful for about you?
6. How do you know you if you are experiencing a sense of gratitude?
7. What are the various ways you can express/experience gratitude?



Gratitude & You

A few examples of experiencing a sense of gratitude could include:

- Spending a few moments thinking about the things in your life that you are grateful for
- Stopping to observe the beauty of something you come across in your daily life
- Acknowledging the wonder of something
- Being thankful for your good health
- Thanking someone for being a positive influence in your life
- Doing an act of kindness for another person to show that you are grateful
- Paying attention (being mindful) of the small things in your life that bring you joy, peace, happiness
- Meditation or prayer focused on giving thanks
- Write down your feelings - noting them through journaling
- Focus on your senses - what can you see, hear, taste, touch and smell?
- Smile
- Be mindful of your comparisons - reframe your experiences
- Think 'WWW' - what went well?

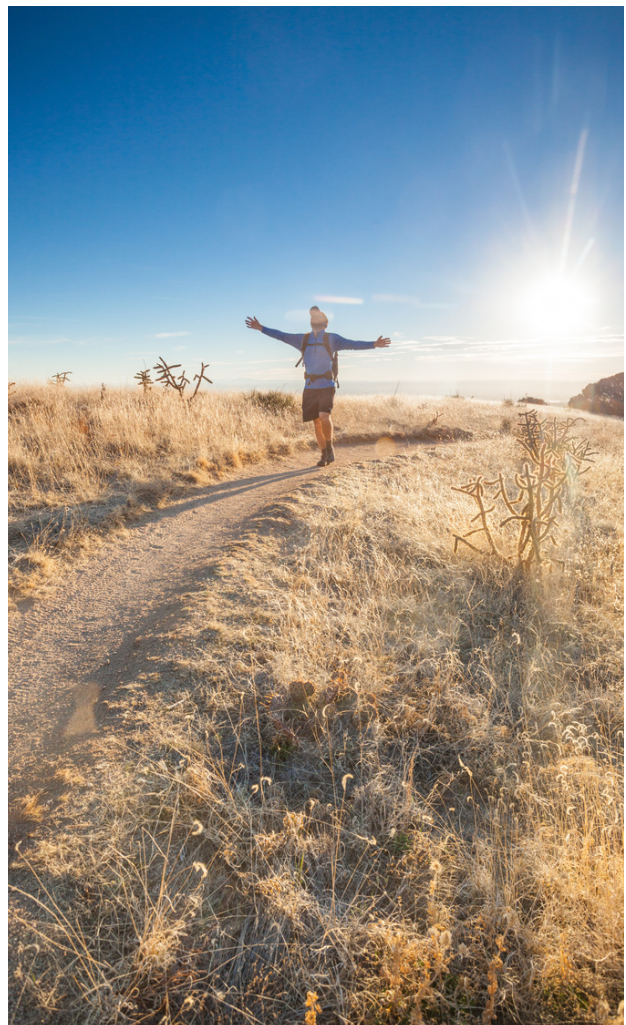


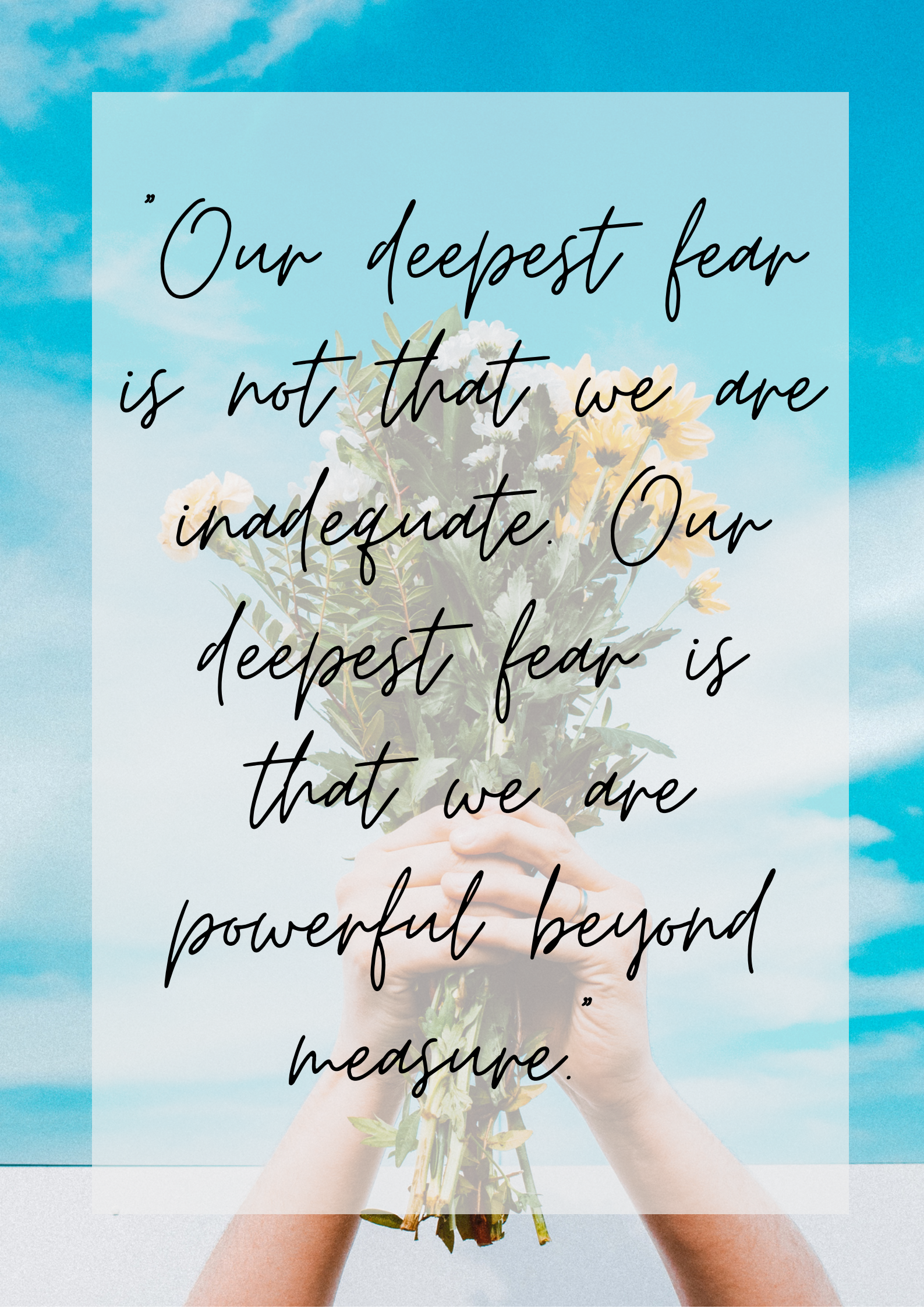
Gratitude & You

Gratitude can have a transformative effect on our lives - it helps you to focus on the present and it plays a part in magnifying positive emotions. It can help improve your and other people's self-worth.

When you acknowledge that there are people in the world who care about you and are looking out for your interests - it can help you recognise your value.

It can also block toxic emotions - such as envy, resentment, regret and depression - which can destroy our happiness.



A person's hands are shown holding a bouquet of yellow and white flowers. The background is a bright blue sky with soft white clouds. The text is overlaid on the image in a black, cursive font.

"Our deepest fear
is not that we are
inadequate. Our
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measure."

Gratitude & other people

In her book 'A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles"', Marianne Williamson famously wrote:

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. **Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.** It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."



This idea is that we have a far bigger impact on others than we realise, and gratitude is core to good relationships and our sense of worth. In a brilliant [TED talk](#), [Drew Dudley](#) brings this idea to life when he shares the importance of 'Lollipop Moments'.

Those moments when random strangers or people we know make a significantly sweet impact on our lives - and we're eternally grateful but they often don't even know that they helped us. He suggests we can all be impactful leaders in a small but significant way through these random acts of kindness.

Gratitude & other people

Take some time to ask yourself the following questions:

1. What ways have other people have positively impacted your life and how have you felt about that impact?
2. What 'Lollipop Moments' have you had in your life? Who gave them to you? Did you thank them?
3. Has anyone thanked you recently for a 'Lollipop Moment' you gave to them?



"Reminder: A simple kindness from you can often feel like a huge gift to others."



Grateful moments -

Gratitude habits & rituals

Habits are rituals and behaviours that we perform automatically, allowing us to carry out essential activities such as brushing our teeth, taking a shower, getting dressed for work, and following the same routes every day without thinking about them.

Our unconscious habits free up resources for our brains to carry out other more complex tasks like solving problems or deciding what to make for dinner. Habits are the small decisions we make and actions we perform every day and habits account for about 40% of our behaviours on any given day. Our lives today are essentially the sum of our habits.

What you repeatedly do (i.e. what you spend time thinking about and doing each day) ultimately forms the person you are, the things you believe, and the personality that you portray. **So, how do we ensure that gratitude becomes a habit?**

According to James Clear, author of 'Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones' the amount of time needed to build a habit will depend on multiple factors, including the individual and the intended behaviour. While you might be able to pick up a new habit in a matter of weeks, some research indicates that building healthy habits can also take many months.

"Habits are the compound interest
of self-improvement"

-James Clear, Atomic Habits

Gratitude habits & rituals

You can change your habits by:

- Starting small
- Building up slowly
- Acknowledging your achievements along the way
- Noticing the difference that 1% is having on your wellbeing
- Not missing a habit twice
- Aiming for consistency - not perfection
- Being patient - stick with what works for you

In a world that may be a bit chaotic and unpredictable, being able to develop personal habits or rituals can help us feel in control of our own lives. Rituals are actions that have special, personal meaning and that become a regular part of our life. They benefit our mental health and resilience enormously.



The rituals with the most positive impact are the simplest of rituals because they reduce, rather than contribute to, stress and exhaustion.

Build rituals into your routine by:

- Setting small goals
- Being accountable
- Keeping a routine going
- Practising gratitude
- Writing a list of rituals that you want to create
- Looking for evidence of things to be grateful for

Grateful moment

Grab a pen and paper, a take a moment to think about the following:

1. One thing I'm grateful for right now is...
2. Name an inspiring or hopeful thought that you're grateful to have in your mind right now...
3. What are the best five personality traits that you're grateful for...
4. Post a picture of something you're grateful for...



“There is a calmness to a life lived in gratitude, a quiet joy.”
- Ralph H. Blum



Grateful moments -

Gratitude rituals

Sometimes it can feel like there's nothing to be grateful for. But just like the things that bring us joy, often the things we are grateful for aren't the big things, like a dramatic weight-loss or a new job. It's the smaller, everyday things. In the toughest times, you've not only kept going but you've actively found the good in every single day.

Train your brain to notice the good by writing down one thing a day that you're grateful for. Keep them in a jar and then, at the end of the month, pull them out and read through them.

Another powerful gratitude ritual is interrupting negative thoughts with a list of 'three good things you're grateful for'. Say them out loud to yourself or write them down in a gratitude journal. It can be absolutely anything at all and is a great way to appreciate the many positives in your life.



Gratitude rituals

We live through 365 days of the year, only one day is for you - don't just wait for your birthday to celebrate. Stop and reflect on what you're grateful for throughout the year - Diwali, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year, the Equinox - it doesn't matter when but be sure to celebrate yourself and all the good things in your life often.

Think: What gratitude rituals can you build into your daily life, that will work for you?

Building gratitude into your daily life can improve your health and sleep, help you to feel optimistic and happy, compassionate and strengthen relationships. It blocks negative emotions, overwhelm and stress.

It's something that we can give and receive, gives us a higher sense of self-worth and helps us through tough times.

Ultimately, it makes us happier. Anyone can build gratitude into their daily lives - and it is genuinely worth the effort.



Listen up...

Want to learn more? Check out the Secrets from a Coach podcast episode #110 'Gratitude Resets Your Attitude'. Tune in via [Spotify](#) or [Buzzsprout](#)!

In the final part of our Mind Over Matter series, we focus on the benefits of being grateful. Joined by Performance Coach Karl Green who shares his tips on gratitude being the enabler in the ruthlessly competitive world of dance.

From ancient religion to cutting edge neuroscience, it is clear that when humans focus on what they have got, rather than haven't got, daily life is easier and a more positive experience.

In the world of work, just even small thank you messages, or starting team meetings with celebrating small wins or achievements before cracking on with the tasks can shift it from grieving to achieving success.

These purposeful moments of gratitude are even more important when there's hurdles to overcome.

For extra information follow us on Instagram @SecretsFromACoach.



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A final note

Hopefully this guide has given you lots of inspiration and ideas for ways you can prioritise your wellness and strengthen gratitude.

But if you do find you need extra help and support, don't be afraid to ask.

Many people find life difficult for all sorts of reasons, and there is lots of formal and informal support out there. Samaritans helpline is available 24 hours on 116 123.



More Information

For more information please contact Debbie, Laura and Gail on 07496 328 745 / 07896 998 136.

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Visit: www.wishfish.org.uk

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