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About the Author

Angie Plunkett had been a typical stressed commuter for years. She had tried a few systems which were being promoted to reduce stress and build energy.

But, the one which worked best for her was making a diary of gratitude. It was also the simplest and very inexpensive to do.

Angie said, "I used to do a regular diary and was going to start with the New Year."

"But, I thought it would be worth concentrating on positive things that I saw or experienced each day. It was fun to do."

She said, "It also comforted me when I was sick for a couple of days to flick through the previous entries."

Over the next few months, Angie started to notice that people were smiling more and wondered what was causing it. Her partner told her that he had noticed she seemed happier in the previous weeks and he guessed those people were reacting to that!

Angie said, "I thought about it and realized the diary was helping me to be more relaxed. And I was enjoying my conversations more too."

Angie believes the her tips and research will help you to start using your own diary of gratitude to improve your self confidence and enjoy every day a bit more.

Angie said, "You can use any sort of notebook you like or even make a file on your computer or portable device."

"It's easy, simple and effective. You just need to get started and my book makes that very easy for you!"

Introduction

This book explains how to use a simple diary to help you enjoy your life more, improve your self-image, deal with upsets and even disasters. Putting short entries about some of your positive daily experiences and encounters can also help you to relate better to those who are important to you.

A "Gratitude Diary" doesn't take long to set up.

Then, it's just a few minutes each day to add a few entries.

But, the effects can be very good.

It does not require you to accept any particular beliefs or change your views about anything.

The diary will help you to better recognize and appreciate some of the good things which you encounter each day.

Even when we are under great pressure suffer disappointment, there are usually some good things which we often don't see clearly.

The diary will also become a memory jogger about special events and people that had, and possibly continue to have, a positive effect on your life.

I am very grateful to those friends, family members and colleagues I discussed this subject with while I was preparing this book.

Their comments and questions helped me focus better on the most important aspects of creating a diary of gratitude and using it successfully. Their input should ensure that it can help any reader with their questions and goals for their own diary.

Some people were interested in creating their own diary but hesitant to ask questions – they thought I might be offended.

They're all good questions and I hope the answers will help you too.



or

What is a Diary of Gratitude?



It's a diary with entries about the experiences, people and places which have a positive effect on you at various times during your life.

It can be a physical book or a computer file and as simple or elaborate as you want it to be.

I'll give you general suggestions based on my research and the experience of many thousands of people from around the world.

Those people and their environments varied widely, but the enthusiasm and positive feedback was everywhere. So I am confident that you will find the experience of making your own diary of gratitude worthwhile.

NOTE: A diary of any kind is a very personal thing. So, please use my book as a guide to the mechanics and a way of saving time, but change or even ignore any of the suggestions which get in the way of your diary being an honest and enjoyable expression of your journey to greater gratitude.

Learn to Appreciate what we Have

In our high-speed society, it's too easy to become focused on short-term satisfaction and react negatively when we don't get some new device or position which we aspire to.

A diary of this type can help us to appreciate those things which are of most important to us like friends, family, experiences and such basics as our health and capabilities.

This is probably the most basic benefit of having a Diary of Gratitude.

Fyodor Dostoevsky was sentenced to be executed because of his participation in a radical group.

He and the other members were put in front of a firing squad. But, a messenger from the Czar brought news their sentences were commuted to hard labor. Two of the other prisoners went insane just from the stress of this day!

But, Dostoevsky said it was a lesson. After that, he realized he had wasted much of his earlier life and had never appreciated that every minute is a very valuable gift.

When we appreciate small but significant advantages we have, we are better able to make use of them.

The diary will also help you to project a more positive self-image and enjoy more quality relationships in every part of your life.

Why Have a Separate Diary for Gratitude?

You may already put entries about nice things you see or which happen to you in your regular diary if you have one. That's a good thing in itself.

But, there are some reasons why having a separate diary of gratitude is worthwhile.

Many people talk about the concept and its possible benefits of having a Diary of Gratitude with friends. Naturally, they show them their own. Later on, this sharing of each others' diaries over a coffee can become a regular routine.

Some may be happy to share all of their personal diary, but lots of people would be less willing!

It is nice to read a few entries at odd times, usually when you're having a slow or low day. Having all the entries in their own diary is easier and more enjoyable than if you had to go through a general diary looking for the entries about gratitude.

The diary is like a dose of sunshine which really can help lift your spirits at least a little when you most need it. You usually just need to read a few lines to get that smile back in place.

What are the Benefits?

This will vary with each person. I will give more detail in later chapters.

It's very cheap and doesn't take much time to start or maintain a diary where you write short bits about, say, three nice things each day.

Doing that in the evening gives me a few minutes to relax and also makes me feel a bit brighter after the commute home.

Remembering that I'm committed to find four things to write up each evening probably helps me focus on positive things a bit more during the main part of the day.

For Your Family in Years to Come

Have you ever been given, or somehow got hold of, the diary of a relative that lived some time before you?

These keepsakes are great reading because of the details from a very different era and the personal connection which you have with them.

Your diary of gratitude could be a valued heirloom for members of your family in years to come. And, it will probably be even more appreciated because of its positive tone.

Gratitude Raises Optimism

Optimism is a great thing to help you move ahead in your life.

Using your diary of gratitude will help you be more optimistic without becoming over-confident.

Studies have shown that maintaining optimism helps us deal with setbacks and can, sometimes even improve our internal defenses in measurable ways.

Maintaining your optimism will be a great example to your kids.

Improving Relationships

Your diary of gratitude is the center of your practice of gratitude.

It can also inspire you to improve the way you show appreciation of what other people do for you.

How well do you respond to people that do or say something which you appreciate?

? Do you feel a need to respond but are unsure how to do that appropriately? If so, do you just keep moving?



? Do you give them a hurried, "Err, thank you for that!" before you hurry off to your next appointment or task?

We may intend to show that we are sincere about our gratitude but don't do it often enough to be comfortable about it.

If we begin to say thank you or, in some way, express our gratitude more obviously,

we will get better at it.

A side-benefit is that we will also probably get better service because people respond best to those who appreciate what they do.

Just think about how we feel when someone thanks us? Do you remember what small touches helped them to show they meant what they said?

A trainer suggested these tips can help and not appear forced or artificial.

- ✓ Point your feet at the person. That will put the rest of your body in the right position to show they have your full attention.
- ✓ You will smile, of course. But, many people have smiles that don't look real. It really is worth practicing your smile. Don't bare all your teeth unless it looks and feels natural. Ask your partner – you might be surprised at the answer!
- ✓ Imagine that you are drawing the smile out through your eyes so they light up a bit too.

- ✓ Push your forehead slightly toward the person.
- ✓ Don't grab them except to shake hands if that's appropriate.
- ✓ Keep your attention on their face.

If you feel it deserves it, write a note to the store manager to bring the actions of the employee to notice. Sign it with a pen even if you print the rest of the note on your computer. That personal touch will help to ensure that they take notice of it.

Dealing with People you don't Like



It's inevitable that we have to deal with people that we don't like in business or our private lives.

Sometimes, we have to work closely with them or they may be our boss.

Let's assume they are not mistreating you physically or emotionally.

If we focus on why we don't like them, we will compromise our ability to perform at our best and that will have consequences that are probably our fault.

Have you ever thought of looking for one or two things which you can like?

That's unlikely but I suggest you try it.

It can help you to avoid compromising your performance and it will also make your time which you have to be around them a little more bearable.

Concentrate on doing your job to the best of your ability and improving your skills so that you are ready for any opportunity to move within the company that becomes available.

Can you find something you feel that you can honestly feel grateful to that person for?

If you can, then tell them. You can assume they will take the comment well. If they don't you are no worse off as long as you were honest.

While your situation is not ideal, it's much better than being unemployed and desperately looking for any sort of job.

Remember that you are more likely to get another opportunity when you are already employed and performing well.

A poor performer is not a good prospect for promotion anywhere.

When Will I be Happy?

If you believe the advertisements, you'll be happy when you have a new car, a pair of shoes or even a certain pizza.

The truth is that you will experience pleasure when you get any of these things but that feeling may reduce when you take the car home and you are still facing all the problems which you had when you left that morning.

If you want to repeat that feeling, you might have to buy another car or, at least, eat some more pizza!

To get the feeling without a pizza or even a diary, you can just mentally recall the taste and aroma of the pizza you just ate!

Your mind can create a mental image good enough to give you a feeling similar to the one you enjoyed before.

Yes, that does work for most people. Instead of supersizing your next take-away order of fast food, make do with the regular size order and use a mental image to revive the feeling.

But, happiness is something we can attract any day without the cost of a new car or adding the pizza's calories to our waistline.



We need to understand what really makes us happy and the diary of gratitude can help us do that every day for the rest of our lives!

There's no calories and very little cost or effort.

Don't look for happiness in a packet or a special TV offer.

Look for people who appreciate you and share your principles.

If you have some negative people among your regular crowd, try to reduce the time you spend with them.

They are likely to be a negative influence on you.

Look for people you admire and model yourself on them without becoming a shallow copy.

Get happier the Express way!

I really believe that using gratitude is a short-cut to becoming a happier and more caring person.

The reason is that anyone can use the methods and tips explained here without much expense. It is certainly a lot cheaper than visiting the doctor!

The time commitment is also minimal and you will start to look forward to filling in new entries as well as reviewing some older ones very soon.

A gratitude Diary does not require you to change your way of doing things or any special rituals.

It cannot guarantee you great wealth but it helps you to find enjoyment in what is already available to you.

Be Grateful for Good Health

If you haven't had one in the last year, get a full health check.

Some people don't go to the doctor because they fear what might be found.

The worry they carry about the unknown can sometimes do as much damage as some serious conditions.

It can also reduce their body's ability to protect them from the effects of the condition. Worry can kill you!

Just keeping going without regular checks can cause deterioration of various vital organs, including your skin, bones and other parts.

Gratitude is a beneficial emotion which you can increase your store of just by the simple methods in this book.

There's another way which gratitude can make you feel good.

Do things which help other people without thought of reward.

I'm talking about volunteering.

Just Give

Many people volunteer to help people, animals, their community or some cause they believe deserves their time and effort.

There is always one thing which they get that helps them.

Heaps of gratitude.

My experience of volunteering has been in a number of areas and I've felt good vibes in all those situations, even the most depressing situations.

And, the gratitude of those people was not always what made the biggest impression on me. Many of the people we were able to assist showed exceptional courage and most of them shared jokes and memories of better times with us.

I don't know if I could have done that if the positions had been reversed.

I was grateful for the opportunity. I was amazed at their generosity in thanking us for our help.

If you get the opportunity or you can find a way to volunteer, get as much information as you can about what is required.

Will you be able to handle the emotional pressure or physical requirements? If not, there may be other ways you can help.

Do your background checks so that your efforts are helping those who really need it and then have a go.

Your life will be improved from then on and you will have a better level of gratitude about your own circumstances and potential.

Is it Just “Mind over Matter?”

It involves making better use of our minds but without the need for professional intervention.

And there is a considerable amount of research which indicates benefits like those I describe in this book for many of the people who use Diaries of Gratitude in some form.

Making and using the diary will help you to clear some of the poisonous thoughts you probably have in your mind from time to time.

It will help to focus on and appreciate those people and events which have a positive effect on you.

It will help you to respond better to people in all kinds of situations, when you seek help and when you have an opportunity to give some help to someone else.

It is a way to judge how important some things really are and keep a realistic, positive outlook.

When you realize what people and things are most helpful to you, you will start to show that appreciation to them which will encourage greater interaction between you.

This will also attract more like-minded people toward you, either socially or to do business.

Then, you can deal better with whatever comes your way.



Tips for Making Your Entries

Set a Time: Experiment with where you fit your daily entries into your routine. It is a good idea to stick with the same time each day as far as possible so that you can arrange to be at the right place or have the diary and a pen with you.

Manual Input might make it more personal: You can keep your diary on your portable device or you may prefer to indulge in the traditional diary and pen.

Some of the digital diaries which are available are very attractive and, of course, you can create covers or have them created for you at low cost through sites like Fivver.com.

My preference is to write it into a book with a pen. That personal connection makes it more special for me.

But, that may just be because computers were not widely available until I'd been working for a few years.

Write on Your Device: Now, of course, there are devices including the iPad where you can write onto the device and your entries will be recorded digitally. That may be the best of both worlds.

You can have the material recorded instantly and print it out when convenient.

This method is more secure, easier and the entry can be shared if that's what you want to do.

But, don't forget to make a backup!

Don't push Yourself: Set a low minimum number of entries to write each day. That will avoid the session starting to feel like a chore. You can always put more entries than usual when you have a particularly interesting day. If you can't think of many items, maybe you can add a little more detail to help later recall.

Take a Day (or two) Off Sometimes: Remember that it's to benefit you. Some days you may decide not to write anything and that's fine. When you start the next entry, get yourself in the mood by looking at a couple of older entries first.

You will start to lose focus and be more likely to stop writing your entries altogether if you have more than three days in a row where you could have written something but didn't.

Finding Things to Write: It's no use writing cookie-cutter entries just to write something. That's wasting your time and degrading the quality of your diary.

Gratitude for those that bug You: When you really can't think of anything, think about those close to you and imagine if one of them was not around any more? You'd obviously miss them even if you don't get along all the time. What have they done or said recently which gave you something to feel gratitude for? Maybe they did something for someone you care about a lot?

Keep it brief: That makes it easier to read and is good practice for any other writing you do.

But, always make sure there's enough detail for you to remember that particular encounter from other similar encounters.

Take time to think about each entry: When you are starting to write the entries, don't rush to get them down and dash away.

Give yourself a short time to think about each one. Why did you enjoy this event in particular?

If you do this with those first few days of entries instead of rushing through them, you will start to set a habit of storing the future entries more firmly in your sub-conscious.

Why The Diary Works

“Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.” *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

It may seem hard to believe that so many people are getting great results from such a simple method as the diary I describe.

But, I think it is the simplicity and the sharp focus on positive things and people that really helps.

So much of our media and even our conversations have negativity at their core.

When we open our Diary of Gratitude, that negativity is put aside for a while at least.

Many people use their diary with other systems like meditation or their particular spiritual beliefs.

It does not make for problems because it is entirely positive and reassuring. You are in control.

Making your entries and then reviewing some of them later on helps you to plant positive messages in your subconscious.

That can, over time, replace some of the negative junk which you may have absorbed in the past.

This negative track in our subconscious makes our body less efficient.

But, that takes time, but not as long as your mind has been uncritically absorbing them from what you read, hear, see and also what you say yourself.

Now that you are more focused on finding and accepting positive thoughts, your mind will start to become more positive in its reactions to whatever stimuli you get.

You can improve this repair process -find more things to be grateful for!

Other Methods for Recording Gratitude

I guess there are some who will feel writing in a book or even on a computer or device is not right for them.

There's plenty of other options.

Pack of cards: This is an easy way to do it. Get a pack of file cards from your store or cut them out of discarded thin sheets of cardboard.

Write just one entry per card or put a day's ration on each.

Grab a few to browse when you go on a trip.

Some people stick each card up somewhere to read as they pass by but I would keep each month in a box and leaf through them when I felt the need. It wouldn't matter if you mixed up the order. In fact, that could make it more interesting when you read a few later on!

Sticky notes: These are a great, colorful idea if you don't want to keep all your entries for later. Or, you could put one on your phone to give you a small lift every time you've got to make a call.

Whiteboard: You could put some on a whiteboard; either write them or stick some of those notes along one edge. They'd remind you to keep positive.

Making Better Contact with People

Remember the various books and movies about an Invisible Man or Woman?

Actually, there are hundreds of them in every town and city across the country.

When you are going through your town and someone else is driving, look closely at the people in the streets you go through.

Do you recognize the people who deliver your mail, keep your city clean or pour that "life-saving" cup of coffee you quickly grab on your way to work?

You realize how much value they give you when you think about the problems if they did not do their job well.

When you get a parcel delivered or see the mail being delivered, thank them and see the reaction.

If you find that people don't seem to notice you at business functions or other events, you know you are missing out on potentially valuable and enjoyable contacts.

To get attention of the right sort, don't change your personality, just give the other people more genuine attention and they will respond.

Think about the responses you give when you meet people at a function? Do you glance at them and then let your eyes rove the room to see who else is there?

Do you really listen to their name and other details when you are introduced?

Do you have an "elevator speech" which gives your name and business (where relevant) in an interesting way?

Do you smile?

The most popular people at any event: The special guests and committee, they are the good listeners. It's the real secret of social and business success.

Gratitude in Personal Relationships

One common complaint from men and women is that their partner does not appreciate them.

So, there's obviously a possibility that using a diary of gratitude could help those partners make significant improvements in their relationships, whether emotional, business, or casual.

Yes, there is. Researchers have been studying this for years.

Two important things to note:

- ✓ The appreciation does have to appear genuine for best results.
- ✓ You have to convey it to your partner as well as write it in your diary!



All this should be obvious. But, whether you are convinced by the science, you have nothing to lose by trying it.

Just make sure that you think about what you decide are the most important things you are grateful to your partner for. If you only tell them about things which are focused on you, they might consider you shallow or insincere.

Also, think about how you can do things which will make you partner more grateful to you. Attending that sporting event they love or watching it with them on TV even though you don't care for it might be one way.

The main thing is to make an effort and don't tell them how much of an effort it was for you.

Helping Children to Learn Gratitude

I think there is value to helping our children to create a diary of their own.

Some people believe that few children will like the idea, or that it is only something which will appeal to some girls and not boys.

But, the idea usually works with most young kids if you give them more options than the diary which I concentrate on in this book.

I suggest that you talk with them about gratitude or start a daily session where you each tell each other three things which you were grateful for that day.

Then, that can evolve to starting a diary or even a gratitude jar (explained below).

That could be on the computer, in a diary or on smaller, individual pieces of paper which they put in a large screw-top Gratitude Jar each time they write some.

When they use the jar method, they can pull a few random pieces of paper out to read at any time when they may just want something to lighten their mood. They'll probably get entries from different days which will make for more variety.

I believe that kids may get a more personal connection and greater benefit if they write and/or draw on paper rather than a computer or other device. But, they will benefit from any type of diary of gratitude.

However they do the entries, encourage them to add color and even pictures to them which will help to enhance the connection they feel to each one.

The Secret to Teaching

Every successful teacher and parent knows that it isn't so much what you tell the kids to do as how you demonstrate that you do those things yourself when you are not teaching them.

The Greatest Benefit

When kids start a diary of gratitude in any form, they learn the same things which adults are reminded of.

While they make and, later, read, their diary, they focus on positive events and people in their own lives. They understand that everyone needs other people.

They are improving their ability to express their ideas better

They feel more satisfaction about themselves.

When Kids Don't Accept this Idea?

Creating your own diary will show you there is value to them learning how expressing gratitude can help them with their own self-confidence and also relating with other people. But, don't push the idea if they're not showing interest or they will never become really interested in it.

Kids have very busy lives and this may not look as good as watching TV, playing with their friends or even having a nap!

They like to do what the adults around them do. If they have heard that you are writing your own gratitude diary, they will be more open to it. It also helps if your family are accustomed to showing appreciation for comments or help from family members and other people.

If they like to paint or draw, you might even ask them to make a picture for the front of your diary. That would lead to a discussion about making one themselves.

They might prefer to just make a picture for each entry. As they get more experience, they may add a few words so other people understand the special significance of that picture to them.

Short Entries: Some children will produce very short entries like those I mentioned earlier.

They will also re-use some frequently.

This can be a sign that they feel it is a chore rather than something they enjoy.

Encourage them to personalize it. The diary, in whatever form, will soon

be abandoned and there will be no value in it for them unless you can find some way to connect them better with it.

The Benefits keep Coming: Your children will learn a lot from their gratitude exercise. The benefits I've said you will get will also come to them.

They will learn to appreciate what has real value to them and become more comfortable about their situation.

The diary will remind them that the friend they argued with today has given them much to be grateful for and, maybe, repairing the friendship could be more important than proving who was right or wrong.

Writing Powerful Entries

It's easy to write good entries for your diary.

What to put in the entries?

I can't give specifics here.

Each person will have different values and situations. But, if you just write simple things like "a lovely sunset today", "waking up", "being healthy", you will create a generic journal. It has no personality or heart.

Details make the difference

Include some detail about each entry so that it is easy to recall the circumstances which made it memorable when you browse the entries in later years.

But, rambling entries are less easy to read when we go back to them months later. You just need enough information to show why this particular event made a strong impression on you that day.

You are writing family history

Your descendants will appreciate reading the entries years from now!

People will be the subject of your most memorable entries

We all write about events which we enjoy. I try to make note about something which made that particular event different or more special than other similar events.

But, the research suggests that the entries which give us the most benefit are those about people who help us or someone that we care about (including our pets!).

I wrote about getting the opportunity to grab a runaway dog and return it safely to its frantic owner. I feel that I enjoyed that experience almost as much as they did.

There are entries about people who have helped me with directions in a strange city and the enjoyment I got just watching a small bird feeding its chicks in a nest in the park.

Get Involved!

The most important factor in writing an effective diary of gratitude is

including details in the entries which make it more personal to you.

The more we are involved in a process, the more enthusiasm we have for it. That, of course, ensures that we get the most benefit from it.

The difference which even a small amount of involvement can give people was demonstrated with the success of a cake mix many years ago.

Sales of one particular packaged food mix skyrocketed when the company removed the egg from their mix and told people to add their own egg themselves to the provided ingredients when cooking it!

The buyers probably liked the little bit of personal involvement in the process which this gave them.

They probably felt their direct involvement in the process gave a better result than they got with other mixes available at that time.

That gave them more satisfaction and probably more compliments from the family when they served the cake.

Removing powdered egg from the mix was probably done to reduce the company's cost, and using the fresh egg improved the taste of the cake as well.

If you just put simple entries in your diary like, "nice sunset" or a "wonderful walk on the beach with my dog" etc., your benefit from the exercise will be minimal because you're doing no more than the cook that poured a cake mix into their pan and turned on the oven.

Think about each Entry as you write

When you think about the item you are writing in your diary, you immediately get some more positive vibes from the memory and you write with more clarity.

This has been noted as very important to get the best effect on our self-image and general well-being.

Those two factors are very important in strengthening our personal and business relationships.

Write about What Makes YOU Grateful

This is the biggie. It's not a contest or a test.

It is something which you are the most important beneficiary.

Put whatever makes you feel gratitude in YOUR diary.

You can ignore or alter any of the suggestions I write here if it will make your diary of gratitude more personally important to you.

Resources

"The Science of Getting Rich"

Wallace Wattles' classic inspirational book, "The Science of Getting Rich", is worth reading. You can download a free copy in various electronic formats from this link at the Internet Archive.

This PDF version is readable on almost every computer.

<https://www.archive.org/details/TheScienceOfGettingRich.pdf>

Wallace Wattles' advice has value for everyone who wants to make the most of their personal abilities and opportunities.

Always scan any file you get from the Internet with your security program before opening or using them in any way.

Gratitude and Well Being

"The Benefits of Appreciation" by Randy A. Sansone, MD[✉] and Lori A. Sansone, MD

References to studies about Gratitude and well-being.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3010965/>

This will keep anyone wanting to review reports on studies of Gratitude and well-being occupied for some time.

The article does not reflect the official views of the U.S.A. Government or associated bodies.

Be Grateful All Your Life!

I have to say the obvious: I am very grateful to you and not just because you have bought and read my book!

I wanted to share what I have experienced and found about Gratitude without tying it to any particular philosophy and making it as easy as possible for people to understand and benefit from.

If you can share your experience of gratitude with your family, I know that they will all benefit.

It's simple to do and the outcomes are simply wonderful!

Angie Plunkett

[Another eBookWholesaler Publication](#)