



## Newsletter



TCDMSB Mental Health Services provided by **Psychology, Social Work, and Guidance** personnel.

### Making Thanksgiving a “Lifestyle”

How to be more consistently mindful of the good, beginning this Thanksgiving. (source : Andy Tix, Ph.D Psychology Today Nov.18,2012)

The most psychologically informed holiday is : Thanksgiving. Although most of us associate this holiday with overeating, the meaning of Thanksgiving is much more profound.

Most of us recognize that our thoughts often are negative in tone. Consider, for example, the thoughts to which you personally most often return. If you're like most people, many of these thoughts probably concern what you lack, what is in the way of your progress in daily strivings, and what could go wrong in your future. These kinds of thoughts contribute to stress, depression, anger, anxiety, addictive behaviors, and relationship problems.

A transformation often occurs when people learn to shift their thoughts from negative to thanksgiving. Although we only celebrate the holiday of Thanksgiving one day per year, we all would benefit from making mindfulness of the good in our lives a consistent lifestyle habit. This holiday week would be the perfect opportunity to try out some new practices that might move us in the direction of

We're pleased to send you the October edition of the Student Mental Health and Well-Being Newsletter. As a family of faith it's important to reflect on what we are thankful for and to show gratitude for our many blessings. Please feel free to share and pass it along.



cultivating a lifestyle of thanksgiving. Some specific suggestions follow.

#### **1. Express your thanks to someone who made a difference in your life.**

In one study, Dr. Martin Seligman and colleagues ( University of Pennsylvania) had research participants take a week to write and then deliver a letter of gratitude to someone they never properly thanked. They found that depressive symptoms, on average, declined for 1 month after the event.

This week would be an excellent opportunity to apply this research. Think of someone who made a significant positive impact in your life that does not know how you feel and let them know in some meaningful way.

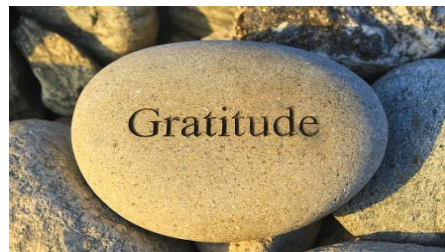
**2. Keep a gratitude journal.** : Many studies have been conducted where they randomly assigned people to daily or weekly record things in their lives for which they were grateful or thankful. Results show consistent psychological, physical, and interpersonal benefits from these practices, even when individuals were in the midst of experiencing a stressful life event. Make it a habit to record what you are thankful for on a regular basis.

**3. Savor the moment.** One idea for promoting mindfulness before a meal is to begin with grace. If you have not engaged in this practice for a while, perhaps you can reinstate it this Thanksgiving. Ideally, this would involve a meaningful expression of heartfelt thanks. If this isn't right for you, consider having a moment of silence in which those present have permission to express thanks quietly in a way that is meaningful to them. Engage yourself fully in the conversations with your loved ones. Enjoy the moment. Begin a tradition to make meal times a “technology free zone,” with no television or phones allowed.

Many of the above-mentioned thanksgiving practices may be difficult for some to implement because they require vulnerability to softer feelings. In particular, it may be difficult to openly express a sense of heartfelt thanks in the presence of others. Vulnerability may be necessary for the connection that many of us deeply seek. Have the courage to be vulnerable, and this Thanksgiving may be one of the most meaningful Thanksgiving celebrations you’ve had in a long time.

## Closing Thought on SLEEP

**Grateful people sleep better.** Writing in a gratitude journal improves sleep, according to a 2011 study published in *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*. Spend just 15 minutes jotting down a few grateful sentiments before bed, and you may sleep better and longer.



### A Prayer of Thanksgiving

Psalm 92:1-4

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praise to thy name, O Most High: to declare thy steadfast love in the morning, and thy faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For thou, O Lord, hast made me glad by thy work; at the works of thy hands I sing for joy.

## Mental Health Initiatives 2017-18

- Support for schools in developing a mentally healthy classroom. See Supporting Minds on the Ministry’s website and edugains.ca.
- Inclusion of mental health to school SLIPs
- Building partnerships with community agencies, families, and parishes.
- safeTALK suicide awareness workshops for staff available via PAL



## Fostering The Family:

### The TCDSB Pastoral Plan 2015-18 “ Together With one Voice: Harmonizing Our Faith Through Family, Parish, and School” 2017 focuses on the SCHOOL

Family, Parish and School – Unity in Diversity... Though it is our goal to highlight in depth each community of faith from the educational “village” of family, parish and school every year, it is imperative for us to remember that each of these communities is not simply a discordant or isolated entity; instead, each with the richness of its diversity adds greatness to the harmony of God’s music of love. In other words, the unity of the whole (family, parish and school) does not and should not undermine the uniqueness of the individual. This relationship of unity in diversity reflects St. Paul’s notion of many parts, one body (1 Cor. 12:12-26). This present pastoral plan challenges us as a Board to continue to encourage this ‘symphony’ and build a harmony with ‘ONE VOICE’ in order to develop, celebrate and nurture the wholeness of the human person in our beautiful but sometimes discordant world.

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## Suggested Reading and Websites:

### Websites

Gratitude Activities for the Classroom

[http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/gratitude\\_activities\\_for\\_the\\_classroom](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/gratitude_activities_for_the_classroom)

Benefits of a Gratitude Journal

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lauren-jessen/gratitude-journal\\_b\\_7745854.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lauren-jessen/gratitude-journal_b_7745854.html)

Gratitude Ideas for parents of kids to Teens

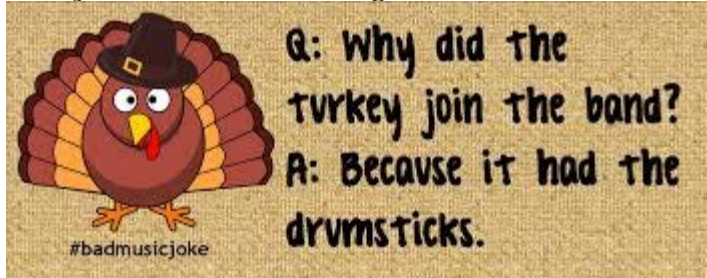
<http://www.parenttoolkit.com/index.cfm?objectid=84F67EA0-7032-11E4-98050050569A5318>

Emmons, R. A. (2007). *Thanks!: How the new science of gratitude can make you happier.*

Emmons, R. A. & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 377-389.

### A Laugh A Day...

Laughter makes you feel good! The good feeling that you get when you laugh remains with you even after the laughter subsides....and there’s another reason to be thankful!



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