

Student Mental Health and Well-Being



Newsletter

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

Reasons to Practice Gratitude

Psychology Today (April 2015)

Whether you choose to write a few sentences in a gratitude journal, or simply take a moment to silently acknowledge all that you have, giving thanks can transform your life.

Here are 7 scientifically proven benefits:

1. **Gratitude opens the door to more relationships.** Not only does saying “thank you” constitute good manners, but showing appreciation can help you win new friends, according to a 2014 study published in *Emotion*. The study found that thanking a new acquaintance makes them more likely to seek an ongoing relationship. So whether you thank a stranger for holding the door or send a thank-you note to that colleague who helped you with a project, acknowledging other people’s contributions can lead to new opportunities.

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.

2. **Gratitude improves physical health.** Grateful people experience fewer aches and pains and report feeling healthier than other people, according to a 2012 study published in *Personality and Individual Differences*. Not surprisingly, grateful people are also more likely to take care of their health. They exercise more often and are more likely to attend regular check-ups, which is likely to contribute to further longevity.
3. **Gratitude improves psychological health.** Gratitude reduces a multitude of toxic emotions, from envy and resentment to frustration and regret. Robert Emmons, a leading gratitude researcher, has conducted multiple studies on the link between gratitude and well-being. His research confirms that gratitude effectively increases happiness and reduces depression.

“It is the grateful heart that sees the blessings in each new day. It is the peaceful heart that reviews the past without feeling the guilt. It is the inspired heart that looks to the future with anticipation and hope. It is the faith-filled heart that lights up the world by blending the three.” Karen O’Leary

4. **Gratitude enhances empathy and reduces**

aggression. Grateful people are more likely to behave in a prosocial manner, even when others behave less kindly, according to a 2012 study by the University of Kentucky. Study participants who ranked higher on gratitude scales were less likely to retaliate against others, even when given negative feedback. They experienced more sensitivity and empathy toward other people and a decreased desire to seek revenge.

5 **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.

6 **Gratitude improves self-esteem.** A 2014 study published in the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* found that gratitude increased athletes' self-esteem, an essential component to optimal performance. Other studies have shown that gratitude reduces social comparisons. Rather than becoming resentful toward people who have more money or better jobs—a major factor in reduced self-esteem—grateful people are able to appreciate other people's accomplishments

Gratitude increases mental strength. For years, research has shown gratitude not only reduces “stress,” but it may also play a major role in overcoming trauma. A 2006 study published in *Behavior Research and Therapy* found that Vietnam War veterans with higher levels of gratitude experienced lower rates of post-traumatic stress disorder. A 2003 study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* found that gratitude was a major contributor to resilience following the terrorist attacks on September 11. Recognizing all that you have to be thankful for—even during the worst times fosters resilience

“Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.”

William Arthur Ward



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 2016-17

- 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
- Psych. And SW supporting Newcomer Mental Health



Fostering The Family:

The TCDSB Pastoral Plan 2015-18 “Together With one Voice: Harmonizing Our Faith Through Family , Parish, and School” 2016 focuses on the Parish

Create family rituals of thanksgiving by:

- Have your family count blessing by listing things that everyone is thankful for every night at dinner or bedtime
- Express your thanks through service. As a family volunteer.
- Comment on the blessings you encounter throughout your day e.g. “what a nice sunrise!” Your children will follow suit.

Suggested Reading and Websites:

Websites

Canadian Association of Positive Psychology

<http://www.positivepsychologycanada.com/>

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

Elementary Aged Students , Books on Gratitude

<http://www.the-best-childrens-books.org/teaching-gratitude.html>

Gratitude Ideas for parents of kids to Teens

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

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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