

# The Kindness Curriculum Educators notes

## Gratitude

Gratitude is from the Latin word *gratus*, which means "thankful, pleasing." Gratitude is a feeling or attitude in acknowledgment of a benefit that one has received or will receive. Gratitude is an emotion like appreciation - taking the time to appreciate what you have is one of the keys to cultivating gratitude.

Gratitude is the single best predictor of individual well-being contributing to life satisfaction, happiness, optimism, hope and positive affect. Gratitude is different from other caring emotions such as empathy and compassion and it develops as it is intentionally cultivated. Cultivating an attitude of gratitude requires people to look at their situations from a point of appreciation rather than from a deficit.

Harvard Medical School (2019) suggests that gratitude is: “a thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives ... As a result, gratitude also helps people connect to something larger than themselves as individuals—whether to other people, nature, or a higher power”

Kindness and gratitude are powerful concepts and positive emotions. Gratitude is being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen in life and taking the time to express appreciation and positivity. A simple 'thank you' can change the way people interact, feel and perform. Studies show that when people feel gratitude there are many mental and physical benefits including the ability to better cope with stress; higher levels of happiness and optimism; reduced depression; improved sleep; improved resilience and increased self-esteem. Scientific research found that adults who are more grateful have higher levels of wellbeing, are happier, less stressed, and more satisfied with their lives. In workplaces and different contexts feelings of gratitude support improved productivity, stronger relationships and a happier workforce and culture. Gratitude plays an important role in organisational success!

Even though expressing gratitude is good for the body and mind, it's not always an easy task. Some ways people can embrace gratitude include:

- Making it a part of a daily routine
- Having an awareness of others
- Embracing challenges
- Recognising others' efforts – even when not successful
- Saying 'thank you' often
- Creating authentic relationships



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Gratitude can be contagious reaching far beyond our immediate environment into our communities

## References

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