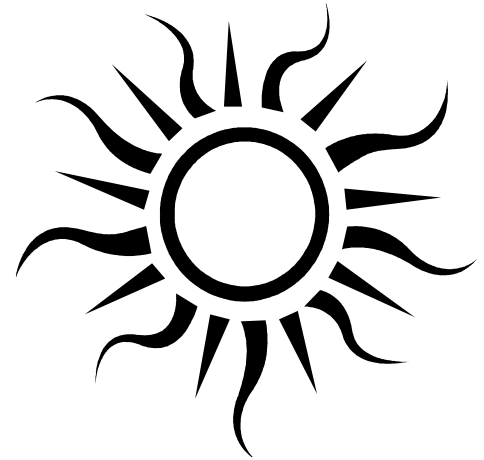


## Theme T: Tips to Take Away: Dial Up the Gratitude



Positive emotions provide many benefits to physical, intellectual, emotional, and social well-being. In particular, gratitude can be an effective antidote to anger, hostility, and irritation, which are bad for your health. We are used to thinking of gratitude as a feeling that comes and goes. But gratitude is also a *practice*. Recent scientific studies show that you can cultivate positive emotions like gratitude. You might have heard that researchers who studied lottery winners found that these instant millionaires often ended up much less happy than they were before they won huge sums of money. How can you explain this? It appears that happiness doesn't come exclusively from what's outside us. It's really more a matter of what's happening inside us. Daily practice of gratitude can increase your happiness in real and long-lasting ways.

### Try these techniques

1. Pay mindful attention to good things in your day, no matter how small they are.
2. Keep a daily log of things that you are grateful for. Make this a regular routine by adding to the list each night before you go to bed.
3. Turn things around and practice gratitude for the things that seem less desirable. Do you hate homework? Practice being grateful that you can go to school.
4. When you're feeling low or upset, practice looking for the blessings. Stop. Tune in to your breath. Look around and find three things that you're grateful for.
5. Say thank you or write a letter of gratitude to someone who has helped you.
6. Notice the kindness of others, and say thank you often.
7. Experience the feelings of gratitude in your body around the area of your heart. Tune in to this feeling several times each day.
8. Try writing in your journal about gratitude. Here are some questions to get you started:

Select something in your life for which you are grateful. It could be a person, object, activity, memory, and so on. Write in your journal your responses to the following questions: *Why am I grateful for this? How does it enrich my life? How would I feel if I lost it? How could I show my gratitude for this?*