



Exercise: Gratitude Letter

Feeling gratitude can improve health and happiness. Expressing gratitude strengthens relationships. This exercise encourages you to express gratitude in a thoughtful, deliberate way by writing and ideally delivering, a letter of gratitude to a person you have never properly thanked.

Allow 15-30 minutes to write the letter

Instructions

Call to mind someone who did something for you for which you are extremely grateful but to whom you never expressed your deep gratitude. This could be a relative, friend, teacher or colleague. It can be helpful to select a person that you haven't thought about for a while.

Write a letter following these steps:

1. Write as though you are addressing the person directly, "Dear ____"
2. Don't worry about perfect spelling or grammar
3. Describe in specific terms what this person did, why you are grateful and how their behaviour has affected your life. Try to be as concrete as possible
4. Describe what you are doing in your life now and how often you remember his or her efforts.
5. Try to keep your letter to roughly one page (~300 words).

If possible, try to deliver the letter in person. Plan a visit telling them you have something special to share. Read your letter to them and then discuss your feelings together afterwards. Leave the letter with them.

If you can't make a visit you could arrange a phone call or video chat.