

LET'S PLAY
GRATITUDE!

**GRATITUDE
GAMES
TOOLBOX**

DEBORAH KRUEGER
.....
THE GRATITUDE MESSENGER



GRATITUDE GAMES TOOLBOX

Welcome to readers of my little book with a big message, “LET’S PLAY GRATITUDE! WITH LIFE’S STICKY ISSUES”!

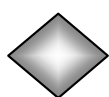
We’re happy to present 15 more “Gratitude Games” to speed you on your way as you build your growing “attitude of gratitude.”

Remember that each and every Gratitude Game fits easily into your day **without** taking time or energy from your busy schedule — whether you’re walking to work, riding the bus or subway, waiting at a stoplight or in a dentist’s office, or standing in the grocery line.

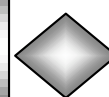
Your free time is also the right time to play a Gratitude Game, especially in those moments when you want to feel happier and more focused.

You’ll discover that the more you play Gratitude Games the more you’ll want to play, because the path of gratitude becomes easier, more exciting, and more rewarding the faster and further you move forward to receive new and unexpected gifts.

Blessings of Gratitude,
Deborah Krueger



GRATITUDE GAMES TOOLBOX



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WAKE-UP CALL



Instruction

The very best way you can start your morning is to be in a state of gratitude when you open your eyes, before you even get out of bed. The “Wake-Up Call” game is a thought, a prayer, or a meditation that will leave you fresh and confident as you begin your day’s journey, alert and ready to receive and pass on the gifts of gratitude that await you.

HERE’S ONE GOOD WAY TO START PLAYING WAKE-UP CALL:

“Good morning, World! Thank you for this new day to live my life. I am so grateful for my family, friends, neighbors, business associates, and everyone else in my life. I am grateful to have a place to live, food to eat, my health, and the work that I do. I am grateful to be me, to have another day to be of service in any way I can, and to spread love and joy to everyone I meet.”



Consider This

Your own unique “wake-up call” is a meaningful and enriching gesture of true thanks for your existence, the sincere, deep, and grateful thought or prayer that will assist you in beginning your day in the right frame of mind and heart, to your best advantage.



Examples

- I am grateful simply to be alive.
- I am grateful for where I live today.
- I am grateful that I have a job to go to and work to do.
- I am grateful that I have today to look for a job.
- I am grateful that today begins my weekend.
- I am grateful for the bird singing outside my window.
- I am grateful for that first cup of coffee or tea that is calling my name!



ATTENTIVE GRATITUDE



Instruction

Playing the Attentive Gratitude game means you make a **conscious** choice to pay attention to all the small details as you go about your “usual” day, closely observing everything you do and everything around you. You can have fun and feel your mood lift when you challenge yourself to be more observant and to nurture a sense of increasing gratefulness for everything you see and every person that you meet.



Consider This

You will quickly begin to notice how **much** you have to be grateful for, especially all the everyday things we too often take for granted. You’ll feel your mind begin to slow down from all its busy thoughts as you enter the present moment, your attention focused on the people and things that deserve and summon your gratitude.

The gratitude your focused attention creates will bring you a more peaceful state of mind, help eliminate confusion, and make it easier for you to enjoy every hour and aspect of your day. You will start living your life from a place of joy, as more and more you live “now,” in the present instant, throughout your day’s activities.



Examples

- I am grateful for having clothes to wear today.
- I am grateful for having a roof over my head, running water, and electricity.
- I am grateful that I have so many people and things to be grateful for.
- I am grateful that I have a pet waiting to greet me when I get up.
- I am grateful that my car starts on the first try.
- I am grateful that I chose to let another driver ahead of me when I was running late.
- I am grateful for Fridays.
- I am grateful that I helped someone today.

PROACTIVE ATTENTIVENESS

Instruction

To play Proactive Attentiveness, be alert for people who might need help. Reach out to someone that you **know** needs your help — someone to whom you haven't offered aid before because the gesture of assistance didn't "fit" into your schedule or plans.

Consider This

Think about the many times that people went out of their way to help you. Imagine the pleasure and satisfaction the "helper" enjoys in thinking, feeling, and acting in the service of someone else. Nurturing your awareness of the needs of others nurtures you, allowing you to be grateful that you have the ability to increase another's happiness, sense of well-being, and certainty of being loved.

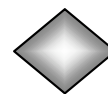
As you help others, reflect on how good you feel, especially if the person in need wasn't expecting a kind gesture. When you do a good deed, remember to be grateful that you are generous and caring and willing to take time from your busy day.

Examples

- Helping an elderly or disabled person load groceries into the car
- Helping a friend move
- Offering to baby-sit a neighbor's kids or care for her yard when she is out of town
- Running an errand for a busy friend or family member
- Filling in for someone who is ill or must tend to a family emergency
- Helping someone with a difficult project, or one that is difficult for one person to complete alone or on time
- Taking time to listen when someone has a problem, needs to brainstorm an idea, or just needs a "sounding board"
- Visiting someone in the hospital or a nursing home
- Giving up a special preference and agreeing to someone else's wishes



SPECIAL THANKS



When you play Special Thanks, you say a sincere “Thank you” to each and every person who helps you during your day.



Consider This

Begin by choosing a particular day to play Special Thanks. Make a point of saying “Thank you” to everyone who helps you in any way, is kind to you, or says and does something that makes you feel appreciative, whether your “helper” is a friend who shares a funny story or an efficient bagger at the grocery store. And when you say “Thank you,” mean what you say, so that each person knows how grateful you are to receive a special gift.

Your simple words of thanks will make other people feel gratitude for their own day and its gift of thanks. You may never know how powerfully your kind words affect other people, and what a huge difference your “Thank you” may have had at that particular moment in their own day and life.



Examples

SAY “THANK YOU” TO THOSE WHO ARE COURTEOUS:

- Family members, including children
- Friends and neighbors
- Employers and co-workers, teachers and fellow students
- Members of organizations and churches or spiritual groups
- Managers and employees at restaurants and retail stores (grocery stores, banks, dry cleaners, delivery services, gas stations, etc.) and repairmen, handymen, and mechanics
- Bus and cab drivers
- Other motorists who allow your car to go first (Wave your hand in appreciation.)

HEARTFELT THANKS

Instruction

The game of “Heartfelt Thanks” helps you say a sincere and direct “Thank you” to other people for their particular help and sends the message: “Your gesture of kindness has touched my heart.” Heartfelt Thanks is always mutually beneficial and serves as a reminder of how good you feel when someone you’ve helped sincerely thanks you.

Consider This

At times in your life generous individuals have helped you in ways that left you feeling special. Expressing thanks for a singular effort on your behalf doesn’t necessarily require that you do something special in return, although that opportunity may come. Remember that you can **always** express your sincere gratitude by simply adding a few heartfelt words to your “Thank you,” to convey that the practical help you received is prized both for itself **and** as a gesture of affection.

As you become a “natural” at Heartfelt Thanks, you’ll begin to realize the fun involved in finding different ways to communicate sincere appreciation. Real “Thank you’s” are pleasurable and act as “stress reducers” for you and the person you thank. The hearts and minds of “Thankers” and “Helpers” are open to a sense of connectedness with others — to the rewards of loving and being loved.

Examples

- “Thank you. **I really appreciated what you did.**”
- “Thank you. **That was very thoughtful of you.**”
- “Thank you. **No one’s ever done that for me before.**”
- “Thanks. **I couldn’t have done it without you.**”
- “Thank you. **This means the world to me**” or “**I will cherish this forever.**”
- While you’re saying “Thank you,” **make eye contact to convey your heartfelt appreciation.** Eyes as well as words communicate the sincerity of your thanks.

UNIVERSAL THANKS

Instruction

Each day, as an internal, heartfelt message of gratitude, say to yourself, “Thank you, God, for **everything!**” These quiet, mental words of thanks differ from the appreciation you express to specific people in specific situations. “Universal Thanks” means feeling gratitude for the totality of your life, for all the people, places, and events that you’ve been freely given to experience, by a power greater than yourself.

Consider This

Have there been times in your life when you’ve felt that everything around you was simply wonderful? Have there been hours or days when you wanted to shout with joy?

When you experience feelings of exaltation and perfect happiness, you’re also experiencing a deep-rooted sense of gratitude that comes from your innermost heart. You can express your thanks silently or aloud — it’s the complete feeling of gratefulness that matters, not how you say it.

Saying “Thank you for everything” may be easier on some days than others. But as you consciously nurture gratitude in your everyday life, for the very existence of the world and your chance to experience it, you’ll discover that your “happy” days multiply. You’ll spend less time focusing on negative issues. Your own gratitude increases the love that comes back to you, creating more joy in your life. You’ll find that you’re smiling more often, which is natural when you have so much joy to express.

Examples

- Practice experiencing a **general feeling** of gratitude (regardless of whether you’re happy with your present circumstances or not).
- As often as possible, allow yourself to **feel** “universal gratitude” throughout the day — for your life, for the world, and for everything in it.
- Enjoy the “all inclusiveness” of your life: the wonderment of its totality as well as its simplicity, the intricacy of its “weave,” and the bold clarity of its details.



EXCEPTIONAL THANKS



Instruction

Make an **extra effort** to convey your thanks when someone has gone “above and beyond” the call of duty to help you with a difficult or pressing task, or to offer kindness and reassurance that has been a lifesaver. When you acknowledge others who have helped you in ways you could not have helped yourself, you’re expressing gratitude for their acute thoughtfulness and special talents.



Consider This

Doesn’t valuable time and effort freely given by a family member, friend, or co-worker deserve that you “take time” to express “Exceptional Thanks” for their outstanding aid?

There are many ways to thank the “heroes” in our lives. All true forms of thanks and admiration, whether expressed in simple words or by a hug or handshake or the presentation of a prestigious medal, have one thing in common: the sincerity of the gratitude for uncommon acts.

Your Exceptional Thanks means that you are **choosing** to express appreciation beyond the “usual” “Thank you” for their unusually thoughtful actions. The generous people who receive your special thanks realize how much their help has meant to you, and you benefit from the love and joy that increases when you give extra thanks.



Examples

- Send a personal “Thank you” note of appreciation for the gift of time, energy, and caring that you received.
- Send an e-mail “Thank you” if you want to respond immediately or feel it is more appropriate. An e-mail can also be delivered with sincerity and warmth.
- Phone the person and express your appreciation.
- For an outstanding work-related effort, send a letter to the supervisor with copies to Human Resources and the co-worker or employee who helped you.



SPECIAL FRIENDS



Instruction

Note who your “Special Friends” are — those particular friends toward whom you **feel** deep gratitude for all the ways they’ve enriched your life. These are the people with whom you’ve formed a close and trusting emotional bond, no matter where or how your valued relationship began. Special Friends can be companions, soul mates, siblings, parents, associates, co-workers, business partners — anyone who “means the world” to you.



Consider This

When was the last time you thought carefully of one or more of the special people in your life, and of all the ways you and your valued friends are able to make that “special connection” that is the hallmark of all real friendships? Allow yourself to **feel** “specific” gratitude for these unique relationships and for all the reasons why you treasure them.



Examples

- Think of each of your cherished long-term friends, how you met them, and why you value them, maybe even adding their names to an “Honor Roll.”
- Think of people you’ve met recently but with whom you’ve already developed a close relationship, and consider the reasons you’re grateful they’re in your life.
- Reflect on vivid memories and important life lessons that you and your friends have shared with one another.
- Think about the fun your Special Friends have added to your life. Let yourself feel deep gratitude for each gift of affection they have brought you.
- Think about specific ways you can let these friends know how grateful you are for their presence in your life.

MONEY GIFTS

Instruction

To play the Money Gifts game, build a sense of gratitude by being thankful for the money that you receive from your work or as a gift from family or friends or any other benign source.

Consider This

Unless you are independently wealthy, money is important in your life. Money represents the value that you and your employer (or customer) place on your labor. Sometimes you may be gifted with money as a loved one's expression of affection and "investment" in your well-being. Whenever you receive money, remember to practice an "attitude of gratitude" by contemplating how blessed you are to receive it.

Keep in mind that when you consciously feel sincere gratitude for financial resources, you're nurturing a new mindset and more positive emotions. Open your heart in gratefulness for the source of your financial support and realize and remember what those resources mean to you and members of your family.

Each time you express thanks for the money you receive, you're creating the opportunity for new sources of monetary aid to enter your life and for further financial rewards from existing sources. This is one of the ways the "gift" of gratitude works: Feeling and expressing gratitude attracts more of the gifts you're already grateful for.

Examples

Be grateful for:

- Money from employment
- Money gifted from someone else
- Money received from child support
- Money received from a trust fund or inheritance
- Money received from dividends, stock sales, etc.
- Stimulus and unemployment benefits

GRATITUDE SONG

Instruction

Sometimes everyone needs a “change of pace,” and some days you may want to take a break from noting and acting on all the specific things you’re grateful for.

Why not create your own “gratitude song”? It can be simple and short, but your thoughts of gratefulness expressed in lyrics joined to a melody will be fun and lift your spirits, as you hum or sing your own song of praise. It can be as easy as this:

*This summer day dove’s song recalls A place by
quiet waterfall—
There grass and water sing love’s name As new
as springtime, old as rain...*

Consider This

We live in a world too often full of chaos and confusion, and there are times when we don’t want to have to think closely about anything. That’s the time you want to find an easy, enjoyable way to feel and express your gratefulness.

Your own song or one by someone else that inspires you is a good way to center yourself. “I Am So Blessed,” by Karen Drucker, is a good song to listen to or sing to reach a state of peace as you let your feelings of gratitude rise up with the music.

Examples

- Find a song that you can call your own which gives you an **inner feeling** of gratitude.
- Choose songs that remind you of gratitude or have lyrics about gratitude.
- Discover a lyric and melody that helps you focus **only** on gratitude.
- Let the feelings of gratitude pour from your heart as you sing the song to yourself.
- Simply hum your tune, letting the music itself express your gratitude.

LIFE CAN BE ROUGH

Instruction

We all have “rough days” that are difficult, confusing, or troubling. But instead of dwelling on or complaining about the negative, double your effort to see those good things that may lie hidden within or beyond an apparently “bad” situation.

Consider This

Many of us are unaware that we’ve moved from gratitude to “grousing,” forgetting the many positives that fill our lives. But remember that complaining sends a HUGE message to yourself and others, spoiling the moment, darkening your judgment, and triggering more negatives. When you stop and **choose** to think or speak positively, **your perspective** on the troubling issue will clarify and improve — guaranteed!

Playing “Rough Days Gratitude” will help you perceive “difficult” people and situations with more clarity and fewer hurt feelings, as understanding takes the place of resentment and opens up your life for the positive opportunities and experiences that await a grateful heart.

Examples

- Focus on the “difficult” person or situation, and find some aspect, however small, to be grateful for.
- Ask yourself, “Why am I complaining? Is there something that I need to learn?”
- When you sense irritation rising, **halt** and reverse your complaint. Change “I don’t like washing the dishes” to “I’m glad I have dishes to wash.”
- Try laughing at the situation. “Letting go” helps you reach a more neutral place within yourself. (This process takes time to learn — it’s a conscious habit that’s the flip side of complaining, leading to a positive mind and heart and a sense of peace.)
- Play a “gift” game with yourself: Think of a reward that you’ll give yourself each time you stop a complaint in its tracks. (Your prize doesn’t have to cost money — be creative and have **fun** with choosing your gratitude gift.)

THE BEST OF ME

Instruction

Think of all your talents, skills, and attributes. Remember the compliments you receive, and what other people appreciate about you. Be grateful for your abilities and acknowledge that no one else does things in just your own unique way. Let yourself feel a deep sense of appreciation for the many things that you do well, and thank that “greater power” that has allowed you to receive and develop your gifts.

Consider This

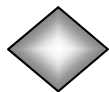
Making a “Best of You” list may come naturally or it may take some effort. Remember that it isn’t immodest to be grateful for and proud of your talents. If you’re a person who “just does good work” with a minimum of reflection or need for praise, talk to your friends, family, or co-workers. They know exactly what makes you special.

Remember, you can’t overdo it when recognizing your gifts and positive attributes, so include everything that comes to mind. This exercise will help you develop an increased sense of gratitude and self-worth as you build a greater appreciation for yourself and your unique contributions to others.

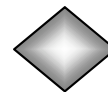
Why not post a sticky note on your mirror with your “Best of Me” list? As you move through your day, you’ll be reminded to be grateful for being “uniquely” **you!**

Examples

- I am grateful that I am someone who has friends and family who love me and care about me.
- I am grateful that I am loving, kind, and compassionate toward others and myself.
- I am grateful that I am a good listener and a good communicator.
- I am grateful that I am an amazing mother/father, daughter/son, wife/husband, and friend.
- I am grateful that I am intelligent and creative, capable of performing needed tasks that help others.
- I am grateful that I am motivated and dedicated to my work and my life’s purpose.



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS



Instruction

Concentrate on any new opportunity in your life and take time to **feel** grateful for your new chance to be of further service to others, make a new friend or reclaim a failed relationship, expand the scope of your abilities, receive greater recognition for your work, or move to a new and promising locale. Give thanks as you note the special people, timing, and place that have given you your new “opening,” as well as the ways your good fortune will benefit others in your life.

Consider This

New opportunities can sometimes create anxiety, as they often require us to move from our “comfort zone” to expanded duties or demands and relationships with new people. But when we give thanks for new opportunities, we create an “atmosphere” for the best possible outcome. And we escape those self-centered feelings of entitlement, that we “deserve” or are “owed” something, which breed negative results.

Remember that gratefulness for the appearance of new challenges allows you to remain open-minded, removes fear from your mind and heart, and leaves you free to take correct action, which allows future developments to far exceed your expectations.

Examples

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKSWHEN:

- You help with a task and meet someone who aids you in a way you hadn’t anticipated.
- Someone tells you about a new job or a class that would improve your skills.
- Someone you feel has wronged you offers an apology.
- You hear of a new apartment or house that better suits your budget or lifestyle.
- A friend asks you to help with a project that may bring you recognition for your participation and good work.



MENDING FENCES



Instruction

Make a note of any people with whom you've recently had a falling out — you may have had a disagreement or an argument or feel that in some way you've been insulted or unjustly criticized. Quietly meditate on the person and situation to see things more clearly and decide what it is you can do to repair the damaged relationship.



Consider This

Normally, when we're in a state of gratitude, we treat others with all the love and care that flows naturally from our mind and heart. When we don't — none of us is perfect — we wish that we'd done things differently, or chosen other words, or even remained silent. That's usually the time to apologize and ask the other party for forgiveness. But what do we do when we're the one who's been offended?

A loving heart is always ready to forgive a usually well-meaning friend, but we must also remember that all relationships have their "seasons." People aren't "static" but necessarily dynamic — the passage of time and new events affect each of us in different ways. But we can **choose** to feel gratitude for the good part friends have played in our lives, whether we set aside hurt feelings or regretfully decide to move on.



Examples

- Think of your friends, how you met them, and why you treasure them.
- Recall how the challenges of certain friendships allowed you to understand yourself better, how apparent "difficulties" brought you opportunities for personal growth and gratitude for important lessons.
- Consider how grateful you are that certain friends came into your life at just those times when you really needed each another.
- Think of all the ways that **you've** made a contribution to your friends' lives.
- Think of the specific ways that your friends have enriched your life, and **feel** gratitude for their contributions (especially if your life and your friend's life are moving in different directions).

BEDTIME REFLECTIONS

Instruction

Each night, before your head hits the pillow, play the game of “Bedtime Reflections”: Think about your day and write out a “gratitude list” of everything “good” that happened to you. Or just create that list in your mind.

Consider This

When you go to bed, your natural instinct may be to let your mind fill with critical thoughts about yourself, others, and the day’s events. You may be worried about “tomorrow” and what it will bring, and start planning for future weeks or months or even years.

Instead, focus your mind on thanks for each entry on your gratitude list. Use your heart and soul and summon pictures of each person, encounter, or event. You’ll sleep more deeply and awake in the morning with a more positive attitude.

Examples

- I am grateful that I made it through the day (especially if it was challenging).
- I am grateful for all the opportunities that came to me today (large and small).
- I am grateful for the people who came into my life today. (Recall them individually — each kind person who touches our lives creates a significant relationship, no matter how apparently casual or fleeting the encounter.)
- I am grateful for the comforts of my home. (If your living situation is not ideal right now, be grateful for what you presently have.)
- I am grateful for myself — for all my accomplishments and successes as well as my special talents and skills.
- I am grateful for my work. (If you’re unemployed, be grateful for your skills and talent, and for the people who are helping you.)
- I am grateful that I have a car to drive to work or am a member of a carpool. (If you’re seeking work, be grateful you can take a bus or ride the subway.)