

5 Finger Gratitude

Practice Description: Gratitude, or appreciation, is a thought or feeling of being thankful for someone or something. Paying attention to what we appreciate can take our mind off what is bothering us and lighten our mood. When we appreciate moments of happiness, warmth or joy in our day, we are also training our mind to be more positive, which can increase the natural frequency of these thoughts.

Age Group: K4-8 Grade

Welcome to the 5 Finger Gratitude exercise.
You will be asked to use your imagination to appreciate and be thankful for people and times in your life. It's important to stay with these thoughts and feelings for 20 to 30 seconds so you train your mind to notice all the good around you. There are no right or wrong things to appreciate.
Let's start by getting into a mindful position, on the floor or in your chair. Sit with a long, strong back and allow your hands to rest in your lap.
<i>Pause for 5 seconds</i>
Try softening your eyes and turning your gaze down toward your knees or to the images on the screen. If you feel comfortable, you may choose to close your eyes.
We will begin by listening to the sound of a chime.
<i>Chime sound.</i>
When you are ready, think about someone in your everyday life that you appreciate. It could be a teacher, a grandparent, parent, or friend. It could even be a pet.
Imagine this person. What is their expression? Are there certain sounds or images that come to mind?
<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
If you choose, think "I am so grateful for this person."
<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
When you are ready, let go of that person. And on the next breath, bring something "BIG" to mind that you appreciate or are thankful for. Big things might include your family, your strong body, or a warm home. The idea is to intentionally bring your awareness to something that brightens a moment of your day.
<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
Try to notice the details that help you appreciate this big thing. Where are you?
<i>Pause for 2 seconds</i>
Who are you with?
<i>Pause for 2 seconds</i>
What is your expression?

<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
You might choose to think to yourself, "This is something I really appreciate!"
<i>Pause for 15 seconds</i>
On the next out breath, let go of that thought. And when you are ready, bring to mind something "small" that you appreciate. Smaller things could be a sunny day, your favorite outfit, realizing someone did your chores, or a warm welcome from your dog.
<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
Imagine this small thing. What is special or meaningful for you about this?
<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
Try thinking, "I am thankful for this thing."
<i>Pause for 15 seconds</i>
As you breathe out, let go of that thought. And when you are ready, breathe in and think of an "experience or time" you are grateful for. This could be a sports or musical event, a holiday, a trip, or something else.
<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
Where are you? What are you doing? What makes it special?
<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
Perhaps you want to think about why you appreciate this event. You might think, "I am so grateful for this."
<i>Pause for 15 seconds</i>
As you breathe out, let go of that experience. And when you are ready, think of a group of people for which you are grateful. This could be your family, a team or club you are a part of, or some other group. If you prefer, you can always choose a person, time, or experience from before.
<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
As you imagine a vivid image of this group, notice who you are with. Where are you in this group? What do you appreciate about this group?
<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
Notice how you feel in this group.
<i>Pause for 5 seconds</i>
You might choose to think to yourself, "I am very grateful for this group of people!"
<i>Pause for 10 seconds</i>
Take a moment to reflect on what you noticed and felt during this exercise. Know that you can transform any moment of your day by bringing up feelings of appreciation or gratitude by counting out 5 things you are grateful for on one hand.
<i>Pause for 15 seconds</i>
When you are ready, open your eyes and bring your focus back to the room around you.