

## GRATITUDE

Core beliefs come in pairs (I am not loveable/I am loveable).

You can influence your mind so that your positive core beliefs and positive moods are active more often than your negative core beliefs and moods.

Adding more gratitude to your life is one approach that can be a path to strengthening positive core beliefs and moods.

A lot of recent research shows that an attitude of gratitude can lead to greater happiness, improvement in a variety of moods, and even improved physical well-being.

It is interesting to note that gratitude plays a role in every major religion. It seems that gratitude can be considered a universal human value that cuts across cultures and has been important throughout time.

"Gratitude" means thinking about and being thankful for experiences or qualities in **ourselves, other people, and the world.**

When we can identify things to be grateful for or things we appreciate, we are more likely to have our positive core beliefs activated and strengthened.

Therefore, one thing each of us can do to improve our mood is to develop a regular practice of gratitude. Gratitude provides a pathway to recognizing and capturing positive experiences. When we follow this path and cultivate this mind-set, we tap into the better parts of our nature and experience more positive moods.

Focusing on things we appreciate often results in a shift in perspective from negative to positive. Consider Louisa, who is having lunch with a friend. Louisa's food is not as hot as she would like, and the flavours are a bit disappointing to her. If she focuses on these aspects of her experience, she is likely to experience a negative shift in her mood. However, if Louisa is grateful that someone else has cooked lunch for her, that the food is generally OK, and that she enjoys being with her friend and having a lively conversation, then Louisa is likely to experience a better mood.

Gratitude does not have to mean ignoring negative things. Louisa could ask the restaurant to reheat her food or bring her something else. However Louisa chooses to handle these and other negative aspects of her life, *practicing gratitude means accepting the negative aspects and actively looking beyond them to notice positive dimensions of her experiences that she values.*

The worksheets in this part of the chapter are designed to help you develop a practice of gratitude in your life. Some people experience the impact of this exercise immediately, and others may not notice any effects until they have used the worksheets for several weeks.

If this exercise is helpful for you, you may decide to develop the habit of gratitude as a regular practice for the rest of your life.