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520 2nd Ave, South Charleston, WV 25303 . WVPresbytery.org . 304-744-7634

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Links for more information:

Link to a printable copy of the Randy and Lori Sansone article

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3010965/pdf/PE_7_11_18.pdf

Tips For Your Own Gratitude Journal

- ◆ Choose a regular place and time to journal.
- ◆ Be comfortable.
- ◆ Be as specific as possible.
- ◆ Go for depth over breadth.
- ◆ Get personal. Think about people.
- ◆ Try subtraction, not just addition. What would it be like without...
- ◆ See good things as "gifts."
- ◆ Savor surprises.
- ◆ Revise if you repeat.
- ◆ Write regularly.

Gratitude and the Older Adult

Did you know that taking time to be grateful can reduce your stress level and increase the sense of a fulfilling life? In an article by Randy A. Sansone and Lori A. Sansone, the authors describe several studies that



have provided evidence of a link between gratitude and well-being.

For example, the authors describe three journaling methods for investigating these effects undertaken by researchers Emmon and McCullough, including one group that journaled about negative events or hassles in life, one group that journaled about things they were grateful for, and one group that journaled about neutral life events. The group focusing on things they were grateful for reported significantly higher well-being than the other two groups.

Another study pitted a group who completed the "counting one's blessings" exercise, in which participants wrote about things they were grateful for or for which they felt blessed at the end of each week, against a group who identified challenges or hassles in life and a control group. Those who counted their blessings seemed to experience a boost in well-being.

The authors conclude that gratitude can be an effective way to enhance well-being and suggest several exercises that can be used as interventions in therapy, including:

- Journaling about things for which to be grateful
- Thinking about someone for whom you are grateful
- Writing and/or sending a letter to someone for whom you are grateful
- Meditating on gratitude
- The "count your blessings" exercise
- Practicing saying "thank you" and really meaning it
- Writing thank you notes
- If you are religious, incorporating your gratitude in prayer

Gratitude Prompts

Gratitude prompts are a great way to get started, continue your practice, or kick-start a stalled gratitude practice. This is also a relatively simple exercise, with only one instruction: fill in the blank!

These prompts provide several ways to begin a gratitude statement, with infinite possibilities for completion. They cover multiple senses, colors, people, and things. The goal is to **identify** at least three things in each category that you are thankful for. The prompts include:

- I'm grateful for three things I hear: _____
- I'm grateful for three things I see: _____
- I'm grateful for three things I smell: _____
- I'm grateful for three things I touch/feel: _____
- I'm grateful for these three things I taste: _____
- I'm grateful for these three blue things: _____
- I'm grateful for these three animals/birds: _____
- I'm grateful for these three friends: _____
- I'm grateful for these three teachers: _____
- I'm grateful for these three family members: _____
- I'm grateful for these three things in my home: _____
- I'm grateful for these three people who hired me: _____

