



For Teen Mentees

Cultivating Gratitude The holidays can provide other kinds of opportunities to enrich your relationship with your mentee, like having a meaningful conversation about gratitude. Research confirms that focusing on strengths can improve a person's life considerably. Cultivating gratitude, a practice that focuses on strengths, can reduce the stressors associated with the holidays or life in general, for youth as well as for adults. Christine Carter of the Greater Good Science Center

found that youth who engage in gratitude practices experience gratefulness more overall, they have higher grades, are more satisfied with their lives, and are more integrated socially. These teens also show fewer signs of depression, feel less entitlement, and are more motivated to help others. At this stage in their development, independence and mastery are important for adolescents, so they may not heed advice from adults about why practicing gratitude is beneficial. However, because belonging and generosity are also important, mentors can role model gratitude, helping mentees recognize their own wisdom and ability to practice gratitude in their lives. Follow this link for ideas to share in practicing gratitude:

http://m.kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/gratitude-practice.html

As the mentor, it's important to be persistent in helping the mentee build habits. It is in the teen job description to be resistant after all. Understand that youth will need to struggle with feelings of entitlement and dependence, like all feelings. Last, and most important, focus on helping them become experts on themselves.