

Gratitude Practice — Workbook

This workbook turns the Gratitude Practice course into a real, measured habit. Each section follows a course module, giving you the exercises, worksheets, and checklists to understand gratitude, run the evidence-based practices, design a ritual you will keep, and track your own wellbeing over weeks. Fill it in as you go, and the editable templates become your reusable gratitude journal, wellbeing tracker, and gratitude-letter planner for the long term.

What Gratitude Is and How It Works in the Brain and Body

Clarify what gratitude actually is, separate it from forced positivity, and understand the forces that dull it.

Exercise: Name the Three Layers of Your Own Gratitude

Apply the affect, mood, and trait distinction to your real life so the rest of the practice targets the right thing. Be specific and honest.

- Describe one recent moment of affective gratitude: what happened, who or what was the source, and what benefit you received?

- Where would you honestly place your trait gratitude right now, low, moderate, or high, and what makes you say that?

- Recall a time you felt indebted rather than grateful: what made it feel like a debt or pressure instead of warmth?

- Has gratitude ever tipped into forced positivity for you, where you used it to deny something genuinely hard? Describe it.

Worksheet: Habituation Audit: The Good You Have Stopped Noticing

Hedonic adaptation and habituation hide your steadiest blessings. List things that are reliably good in your life but that you no longer consciously notice, then for each imagine its absence to test the contrast. Reliable good in my life (person, ability, comfort, circumstance)

How long I have had it

How often I actually notice or feel grateful for it (never, rarely, sometimes)

What my life would concretely look like without it

Gratitude felt after imagining its absence (none, slight, strong)

Checklist: Set Realistic Expectations for the Practice

- I understand gratitude is a trainable skill, not a fixed trait or a personality I lack
- I expect moderate, real benefits over weeks, not an instant or dramatic transformation
- I know gratitude is largely a social and moral emotion, so practices involving people are especially powerful
- I will not use gratitude to deny or suppress genuine pain or difficulty
- I accept the practice may feel forced at first and that this is normal for a new habit
- I will treat gratitude as one practice among several, not a cure for everything

The Core Evidence-Based Exercises

Practise the specific interventions from the research: journaling, the gratitude letter, mental subtraction, and savoring.

Checklist: Three Good Things, Done Right

- Recall three specific things that went well today, large or small
- Write each in a sentence or two, naming the exact event, person, or detail
- Add a short note on why each one happened or what made it possible
- Keep it concrete, not generic; avoid repeating the same vague category each night
- Do it nightly for the first week to build the habit
- After the first week, consider two to three quality sessions instead of seven rote ones
- Reread past entries occasionally to spot patterns in what brings you good days

Exercise: Draft Your Gratitude Letter

Write the most powerful gratitude exercise in the course: a detailed letter to someone who helped you and was never properly thanked. Use these prompts to draft about 300 words, then plan delivery.

- Who is one person who did something important for you that you never fully acknowledged?

- What exactly did they do, in concrete detail, and what was happening in your life at the time?

- How did it affect you then, and how do you think about it now, years or months later?

- When and how will you deliver it, reading aloud in person if possible, and what is holding you back?

Worksheet: Mental Subtraction and Savoring Practice Log

Pair the two imagination-based exercises on the same good thing: first imagine life without it, then fully savor it. Record what each step does to your felt gratitude.

Good thing chosen (an ordinary, familiar one works best)

Mental subtraction: how my life would differ if it had never happened

Feeling after subtraction (none, slight, strong gratitude)

Savoring method used (sensory absorption, sharing, mental photograph, reminiscence)

What I noticed when I slowed down and savored it

Where I did this (commute, queue, walk, before sleep)

Combined effect compared with simply listing it

Exercise: Send One Specific Thank-You

Scale the gratitude letter down to an everyday habit. Choose one person to thank specifically today, in writing or out loud, and reflect on the predicted versus actual experience.

- Who will you thank, and for what specific thing rather than a vague general thanks?
- Before sending: how awkward do you predict it will be, and how good do you think it will make them feel?
- After sending: how did they actually respond, and how did it actually feel for you?
- What does the gap between your prediction and reality tell you about expressing thanks more often?

Designing and Sustaining Your Daily Practice

Build a ritual that survives busy weeks, fits your temperament, and avoids the traps that make gratitude practices fizzle.

Worksheet: Write Your Implementation Intention and Habit Stack

Turn intention into an automatic ritual using the if-then plan and habit stacking from the course. Fill in each field so the practice is anchored to a cue you will reliably meet.

Primary practice I am starting with (e.g. nightly Three Good Things)

Existing rock-solid habit I will anchor it to (e.g. after brushing teeth)

Implementation intention: after I [existing habit], I will [gratitude action] at [place]

Exact place and tool, kept visible (e.g. journal on the pillow)

Tiny minimum version for a bad day (e.g. one good thing)

Fixed cue or reminder time

How I will respond to a missed day without quitting

Exercise: Match the Practice to Your Temperament

Use person-activity fit to choose a default practice you will actually keep. Work through which styles suit you rather than copying someone else's routine.

- Which style fits you best: reflective and verbal, relational and social, sensory and present-focused, or contemplative?
 - Which specific exercise from that style will be your default on a tired evening, and why?
 - Has any gratitude format ever felt fake or forced for you? What does that tell you to change?
 - How will you build in variety, rotating prompts or methods, so the practice itself does not go stale?
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Checklist: Avoid the Gratitude Traps

- I will let gratitude coexist with difficulty rather than using it to deny real pain (toxic positivity)
- I will keep gratitude freely chosen for my own wellbeing, not a duty I owe (forced gratitude becomes indebtedness)
- I will be grateful for the intrinsic value of what I have, not because others have it worse (comparison trap)
- I will not use gratitude to avoid acting on a genuine problem that needs to change (bypassing)
- I will keep gratitude felt and private-or-sincere rather than performative for image
- If the practice worsens self-criticism or feels hollow in distress, I will scale back, be gentle, and seek support

Worksheet: Weekly Variety Planner

Plan deliberate variety across a week so habituation cannot dull the practice. Assign a different focus or method to each session rather than repeating an identical list.

Session 1 focus (e.g. people who helped me)

Session 2 focus (e.g. experiences or moments)

Session 3 focus (e.g. my body, senses, or health)

Method swap this week (e.g. a letter or savoring walk instead of the journal)

A misfortune I avoided that I can be grateful for

Something in nature or my surroundings I usually overlook

Measuring Your Wellbeing and Seeing the Change

Establish a baseline, run a personal experiment, and interpret honestly whether the practice is working for you.

Checklist: Set Up Your N-of-1 Experiment

- Choose your scales: the GQ-6 for trait gratitude and a wellbeing scale such as the SWLS
- Take a baseline by scoring the scales for three to seven days before changing anything
- Pick one primary practice and a fixed cadence for the intervention
- Set the period: at least four weeks, up to ten
- Decide in advance what would count as success and write it down
- Change only one major thing at a time so you can attribute any improvement
- Plan to retest at the end and again two to four weeks later to test durability

Worksheet: Baseline and Target Worksheet

Record your starting scores and your pre-set definition of success before you begin the practice. Leave the change and final columns blank until the experiment ends, and compute differences yourself.

Baseline GQ-6 score (6 to 42)

Baseline wellbeing score (e.g. SWLS, 5 to 35)

Date baseline taken

Primary practice and cadence chosen

Experiment length (weeks)

My pre-set definition of success (specific scores and felt changes)

Final GQ-6 score (fill in at the end)

Final wellbeing score (fill in at the end)

Change in each score (calculate yourself at the end)

Exercise: Interpret Your Results Honestly

When your weeks of data are in, read the trend rather than any single point and decide your next move. Guard against both wishful thinking and undue pessimism.

- Looking across all your weekly scores, is the trend drifting up, flat, or down, ignoring any single noisy point?
 - Did you meet the definition of success you set in advance, and are you noticing the good more often spontaneously?
 - If scores rose, will you keep the practice and add a second exercise such as a monthly gratitude letter?
 - If scores were flat or it felt hollow, what one thing will you change, the format, the prompts, or the style, before concluding anything?
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Checklist: Build the Lifelong Rhythm

- Settle on a sustainable ongoing cadence rather than maximum intensity forever
- Keep the practice anchored to existing daily cues
- Rotate prompts and methods, and refresh with mental subtraction when it goes stale
- Treat the practice as a rhythm that can ebb and return, not a streak to protect
- Re-measure with the GQ-6 and a wellbeing scale once or twice a year
- Consider layering a monthly gratitude letter alongside regular journaling once the habit is solid

Your Action Plan

1. Define gratitude for yourself in its three layers and run a habituation audit of the good you have stopped noticing
2. Take a baseline by scoring the GQ-6 and a wellbeing scale such as the SWLS for several days before starting
3. Begin with nightly Three Good Things for one week, specific and with a why for each item
4. Write an implementation intention and habit-stack the practice onto a rock-solid existing routine
5. Draft and, where possible, deliver one full gratitude letter to a person you never properly thanked
6. Add portable exercises, mental subtraction and savoring, for busy days when you would otherwise skip
7. Choose a default practice that fits your temperament and build in deliberate weekly variety to prevent staleness
8. Watch for the traps, toxic positivity, forced gratitude, and the comparison trap, and keep the practice freely chosen
9. Run the practice as a four-to-ten-week N-of-1 experiment, tracking scores weekly and against a

pre-set target

10. Retest at the end and weeks later, read the trend honestly, keep what works, and refresh it into a lifelong rhythm

