



AWARE, DECLARE, AND SHARE: KEYS TO AN EFFECTIVE GRATITUDE PRACTICE

Robert A. Emmons,

July 30th, 2015

Facebook: Gratitude Works



COMPLAINTS

GRATITUDE

Baldwin

GRATITUDE

What gets in the way of
gratitude?

Obstacles to gratitude:

- Negativity bias-bad is stronger than good
- Feelings of self-sufficiency, entitlement
- Suffering
- Forgetfulness



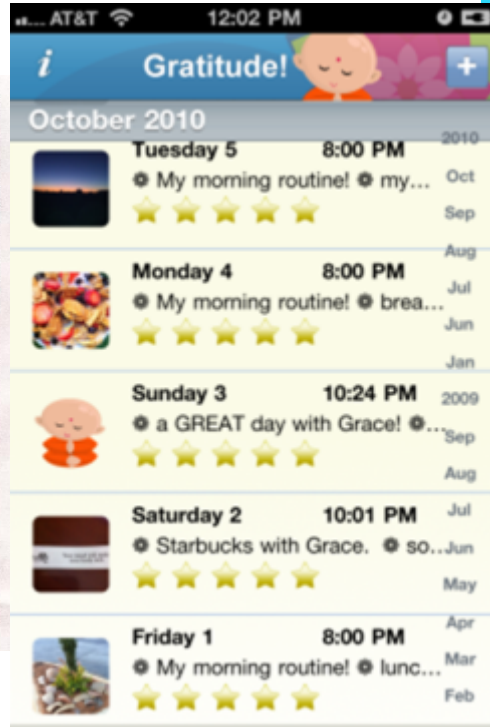
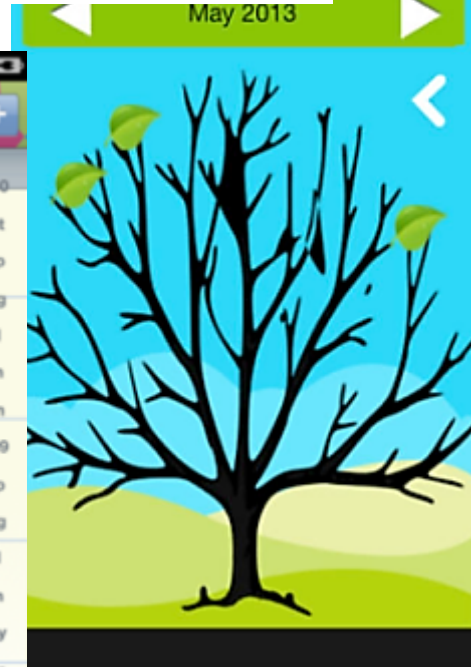
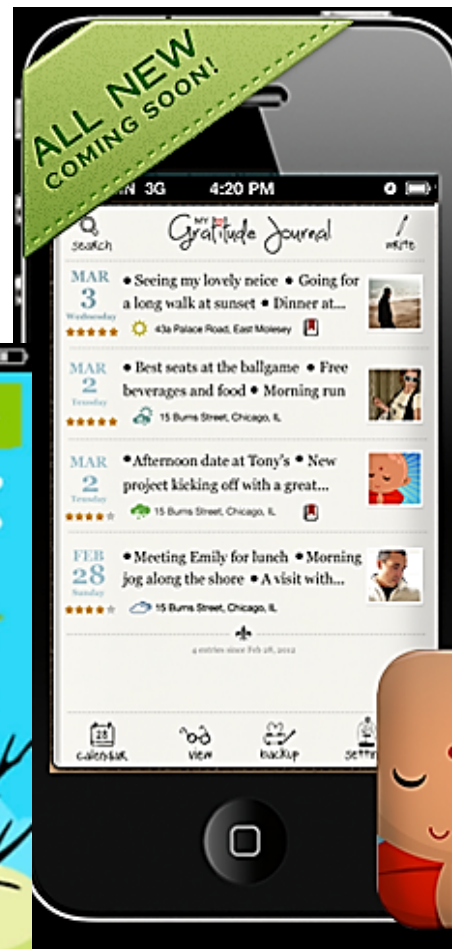
From the outside in: Hardwiring gratitude



Gratitude is remembering to remember.



Use visual reminders/cues



Giving thanks

Kamloops mom encourages positive thought with gratitude jars

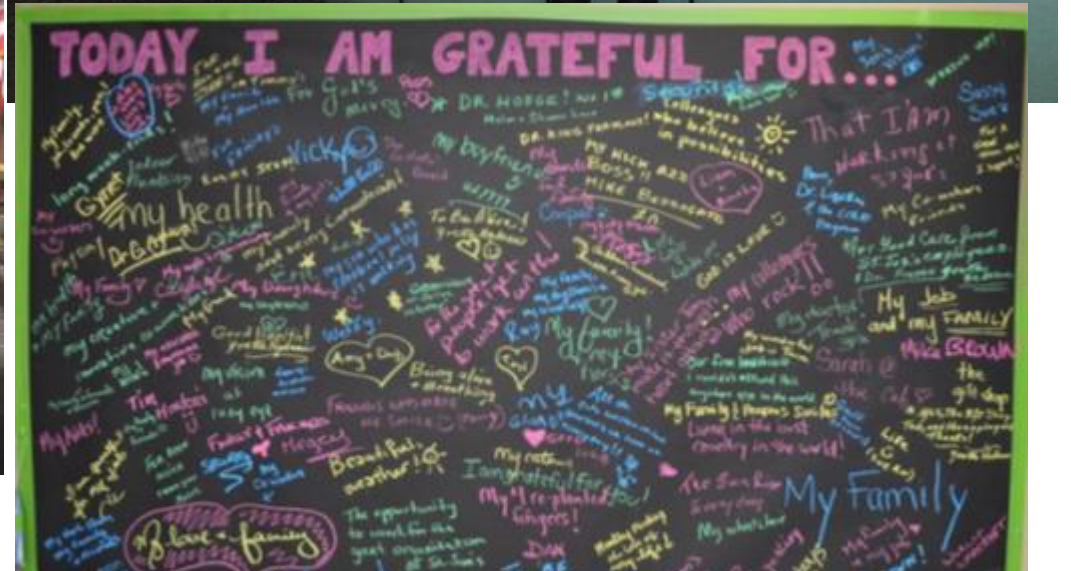
CATHERINE LITT Daily News Staff Reporter

harta Ostapovich was at her nephew's hockey game in Vancouver a few weeks ago when she noticed some parents passing around a tin can. At the time a player scored a goal, the parents dropped a coin into the can. She had never seen an episode of Oprah just a few days earlier — the one in which Oprah was about paying a good deed forward — the 37-year-old Kamloops mom might not have noticed those parents. But something about the episode resonated with her. Watching those parents fill their tin can gave her an idea. What if every time we're grateful for something we put some money in a jar, and then just give it away to someone when it's full? she thought. When Ostapovich arrived home later that weekend, she created an old pickle jar and started her husband and




SHARLA OSTAPOVICH shows some of the gratitude jars she made. She plans to donate the funds to someone in need. (Daily News)

THE
Gratitude
GRAFFITI
 PROJECT™



Or fill out a card...



PRACTICE HAPPINESS.

I'm Grateful For

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

People who make a list of things they are grateful for and share notes of gratitude with others, are measurably happier and healthier.*

Invitation 1: At the end of each day for two weeks, make a list of 3 things that happened during the day that you are grateful for.

Invitation 2: Write a note of gratitude and thanks to someone, letting them know how much you appreciate them. The more specific the better.

* Emmons RA: Thanks!: How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier, 2007
Seligman M: Authentic Happiness, 2004
Sobel DS and Ornstein R: The Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Handbook, 1998

KAISER PERMANENTE. **thrive**

PRACTICE GRATITUDE.

1. Inventory Your Gratitude Daily

1. Reflecting
2. Reviewing
3. Relishing
4. Riting



Facets of Gratitude

1. **Frequency:** how often
2. **Intensity:** how much
3. **Span:** # of circumstances
4. **Density:** # of people/circumstance

What is your gratitude quotient?




The GQ-6

1 = strongly disagree

7 = strongly agree

1. I have so much in life to be thankful for.
2. If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list
3. When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.*
4. I am grateful to a wide variety of people.
5. As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.
6. Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone.*

Source: *JPSP*, 82, 112-127

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- Add up your scores for items 1, 2, 4, and 5.
 - Reverse your scores for items 3 and 6. That is, if you scored a "7," give yourself a "1," if you scored a "6," give yourself a "2," etc.
 - Add the reversed scores for items 3 and 6 to the total from Step 1. This is your total GQ-6 score. This number should be between 6 and 42.

Interpreting your Score:

40-42: Extremely high gratitude. People who score in this range have the ability to see life as a gift. For you, gratitude is a way of life.

37-39: Very high gratitude. Your life contains frequent expressions of gratitude and you are able to readily acknowledge how others have helped you.

34-36: High gratitude. You are above average in gratitude and find it relatively easy to spend time reflecting on your blessings.

30-33: Average gratitude. You may find it easy being grateful when things are going well in your life; but may have difficulties maintaining a grateful outlook in tough times.

25-29: Below average gratitude. You find it challenging to find reasons for gratitude in your life. Life is more of a burden than a gift. Perhaps you are just going through a downturn.

Optimizing gratitude journaling:

1. **Specificity:** the truth is in the details
2. **Surprise:** the key to emotional intensity
3. **Scarcity:** wanting now what we may not have later

Gratitude Exercise I:

- Group 1: Think about something positive in your life that happened easily, was certain to happen, or the ways in which it was not at all surprising
- Group 2: Think about how something positive in your life might never have happened or have been part of your life, or the ways in which it was surprising



The “George Bailey” effect

“You’ve been given a great gift, George: A chance to see what the world would be like without you.” – Clarence Odbody, *Angel Second Class*

It's a Wonderful Life: The George Bailey effect

- Thinking about the *absence* of a positive event from one's life improves happiness more than thinking about the *presence* of that event
- The way in which people think about positive life events is critical
- Therefore, gratitude journaling should include writing about how one's life would be like without that event/person/gift in the list

Gratitude Exercise II: The Letter/Visit



The Gratitude Letter

- Select one important person from your past who has made a major positive difference in your life and to whom you have never fully expressed your thanks. Choose someone who is still alive.

Write a testimonial just long enough to cover one laminated page. Take your time composing this – several weeks if required. Invite that person to your home or travel to that person’s home. It is important that you do this face to face, not just in writing or on the phone. Do not tell the person the purpose of the visit in advance.

Bring a laminated version of your testimonial with you as a gift. Read your testimonial aloud slowly, with expression and eye contact. Then let the other person react unhurriedly. Reminisce together about the concrete events that make this person so important to you.

The Seven Daily Practices

Day 1: The Three Blessings

Day 2: To Whom for What

Day 3: The Gifted Self

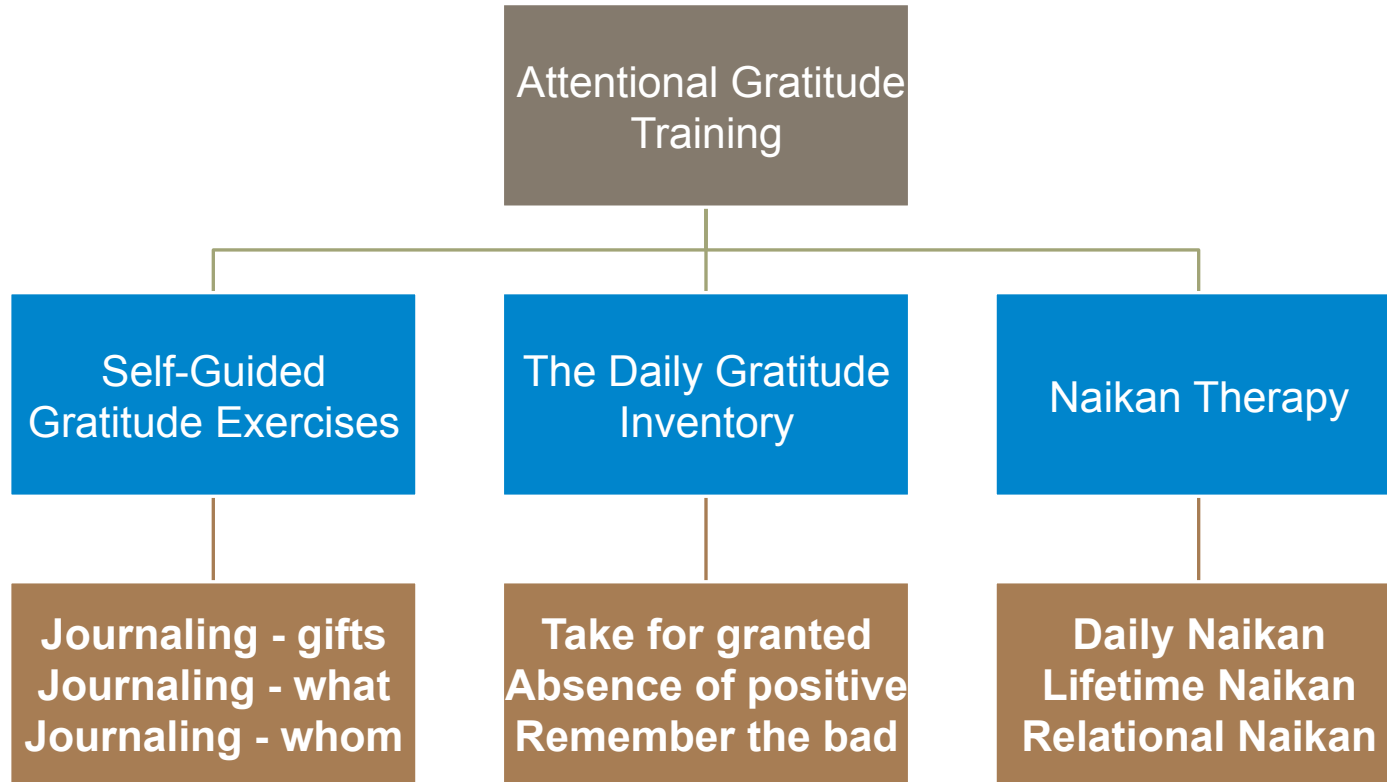
Day 4: Looking to the Future

Day 5: The George Bailey Effect

Day 6: The Gratitude Letter

Day 7: Bad to Good

An Integrated Mind-Body Gratitude Training



Thanks!

Gratitude Works!

Pathways to
Emotional
Prosperity

Dr. Robert Emmons

Interactive Recovery Workbook Series

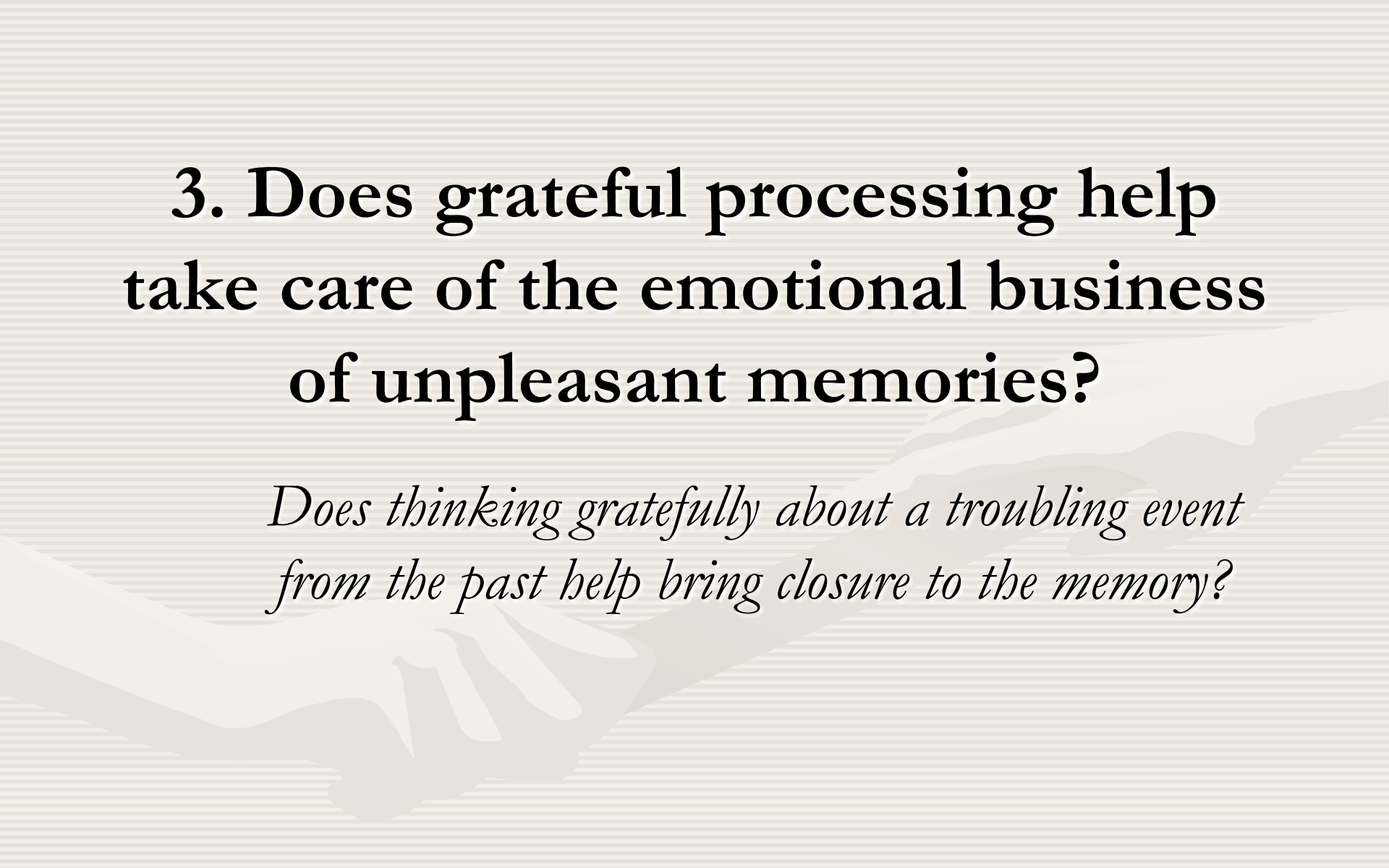
Gratitude Workbook



Dennis C. Daley, PhD
Antoine Douaihy, MD

Remember the Bad

- Think of your worst moments, your sorrows, your losses, and your sadness and then remember. Focus on how you got through the worst day of your life, the trauma, the trial; you endured the temptation; you survived the bad relationship; you're making your way out of the dark. Remember the bad things, and then look to see where you are now.



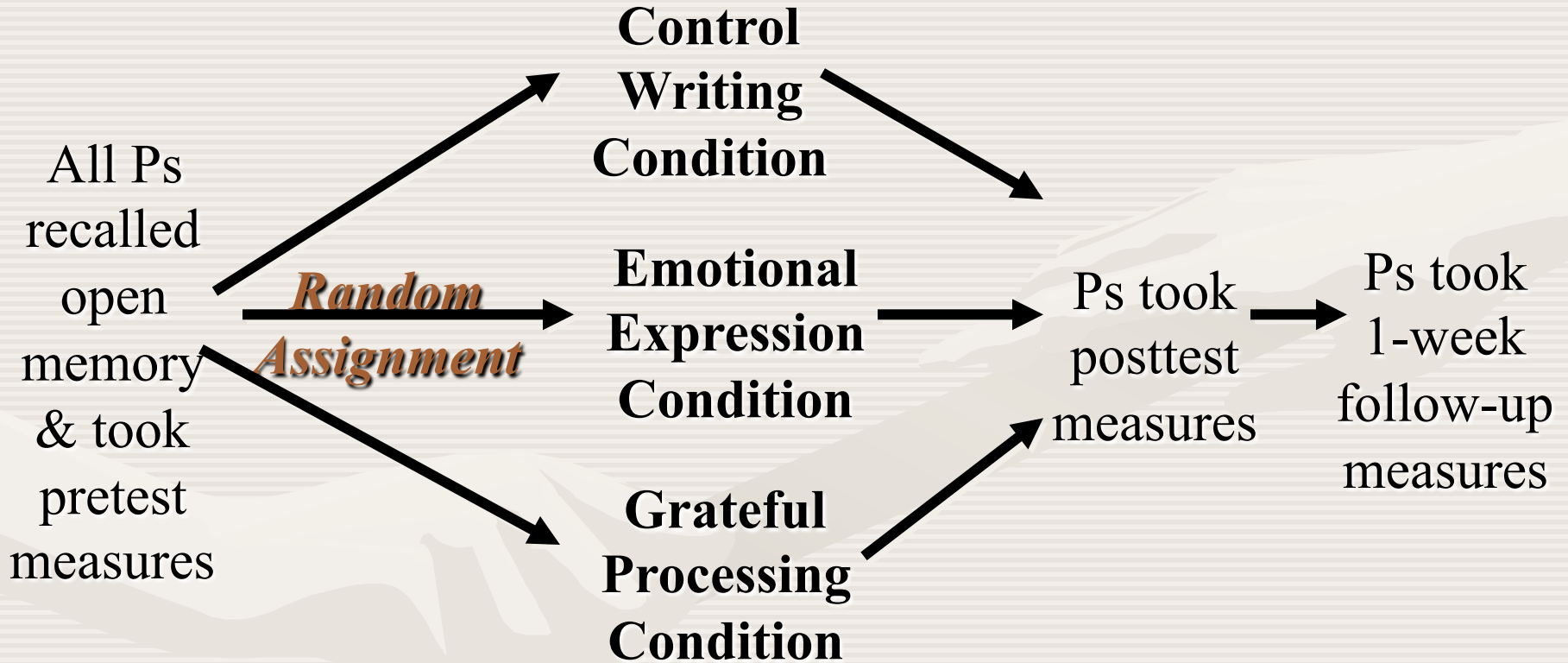
**3. Does grateful processing help
take care of the emotional business
of unpleasant memories?**

*Does thinking gratefully about a troubling event
from the past help bring closure to the memory?*

Study Procedure

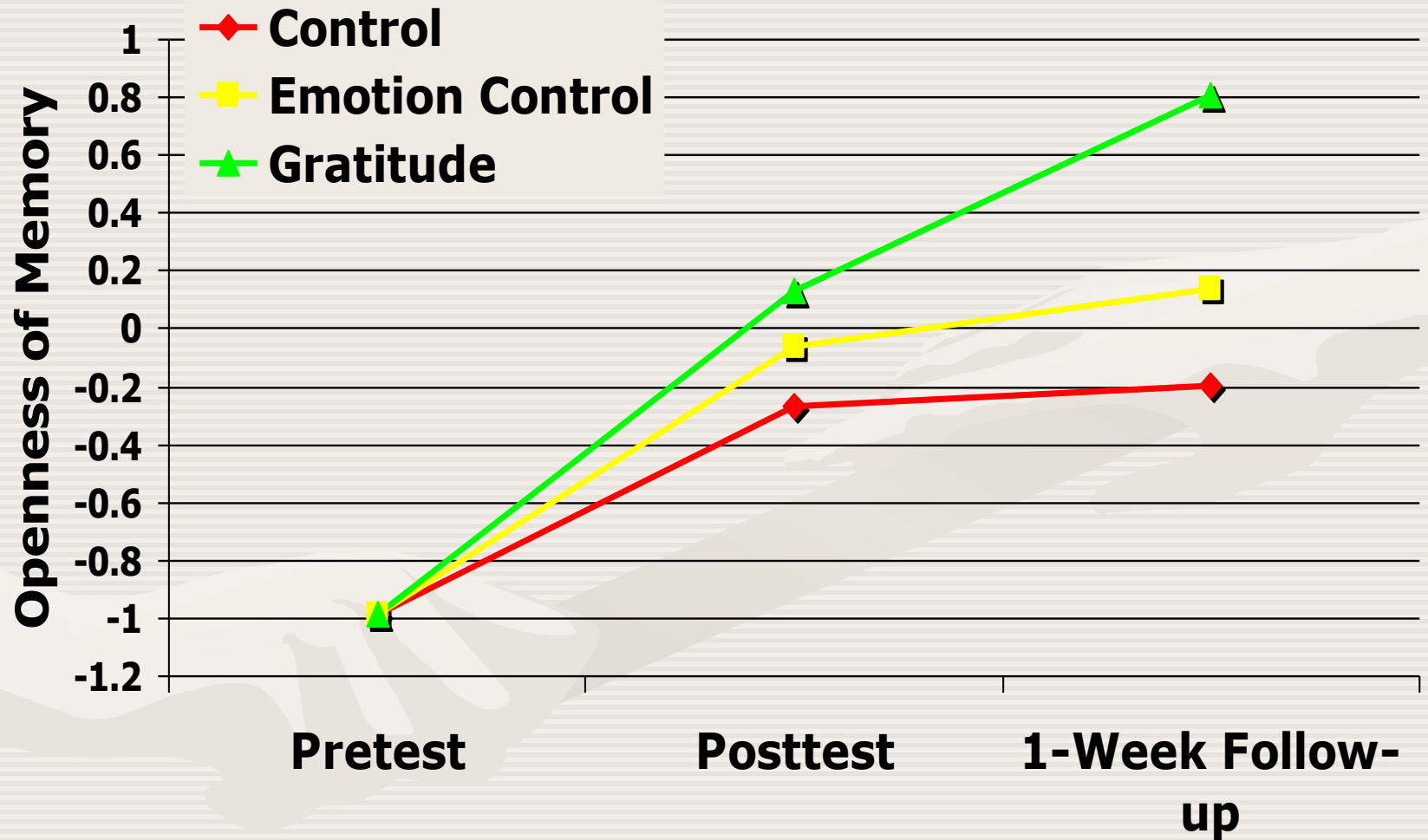
- Participants recalled an unpleasant open memory.
 - An open memory is a troubling memory from your past that you feel is not yet behind you and is poorly understood. It's an emotional memory that may intrude into your consciousness at unwelcome times, and you feel you have some “unfinished business” associated with this memory. In other words, in many ways this emotional memory is still an “open book” for you.

Procedure

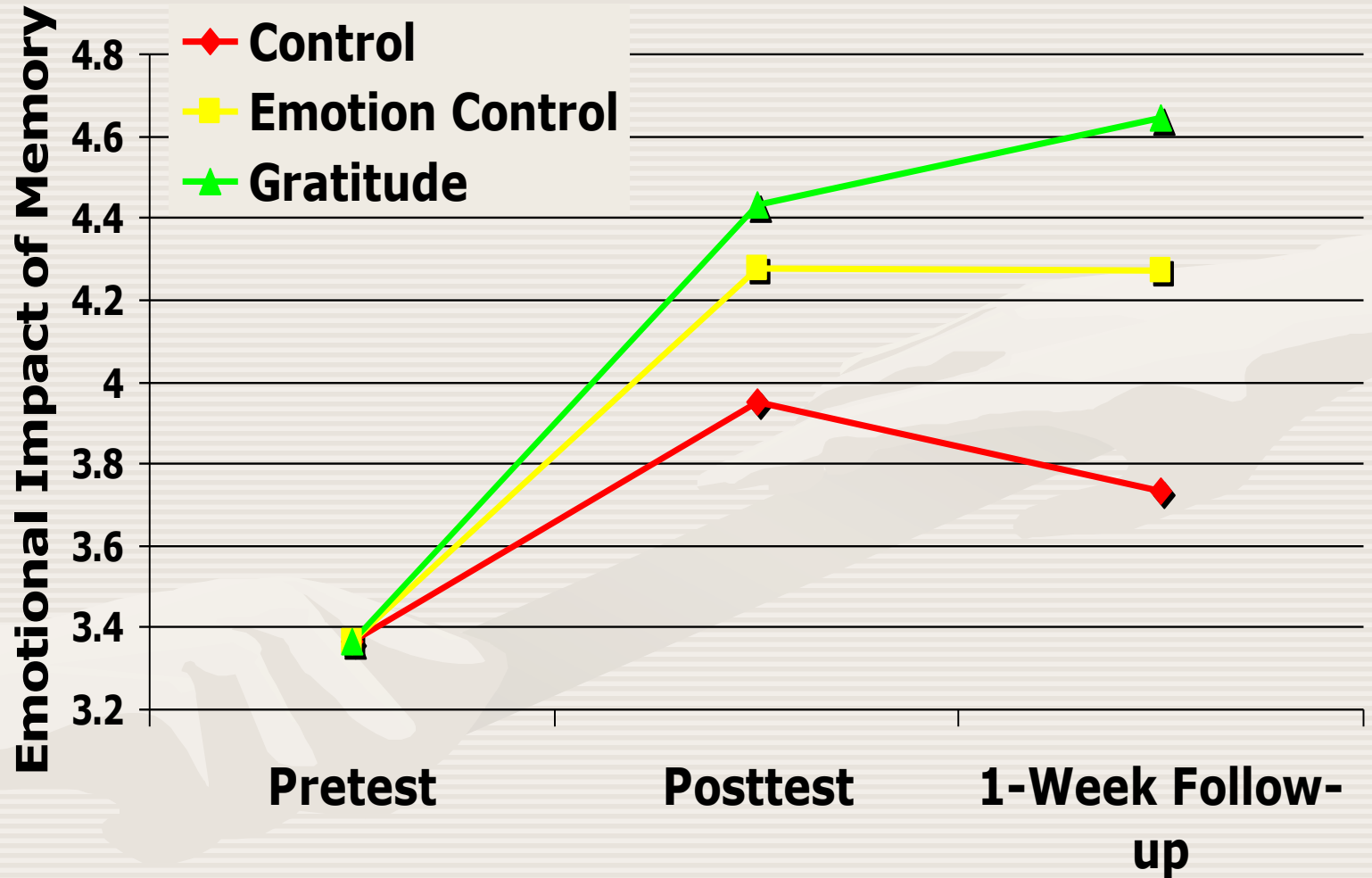


Please recall your open memory that you remembered for this study. For the next 20 minutes we would like you to write about your open memory. Think again about this experience for a few moments. At first it may seem that the event you wrote down might not have had any positive effects upon your life. However, sometimes even when bad things happen, they ultimately have positive consequences, things we can now be grateful for. Try to focus on the positive aspects or consequences of this difficult experience. As the result of this event, what kinds of things do you now feel thankful or grateful for? How has this event benefited you as a person? How have you grown? Were there personal strengths that grew out of your experience? How has the event made you better able to meet the challenges of the future? How has how the event put your life into perspective? How has this event helped you appreciate the truly important people and things in your life? In sum, how can you be thankful for the beneficial consequences that have resulted from this event?

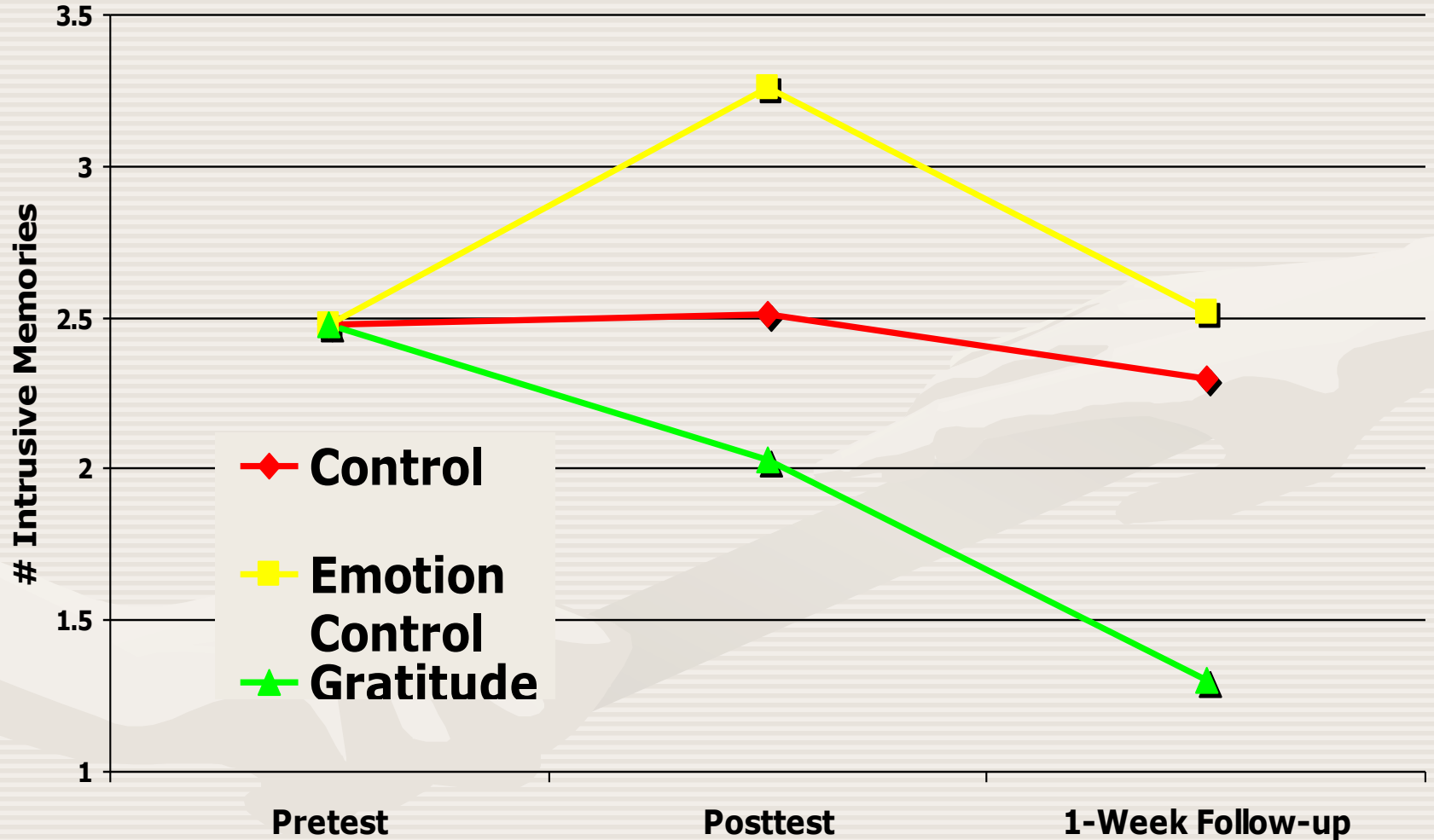
“How open/closed would you say the memory is?”



“How does recalling this memory *affect you now?*”



Intrusiveness of Open Memory



Self-care: Giving yourself the gift of gratitude

- Life is a continual invitation to gratitude
- We already have all the tools we need
- Reminded or instructed?

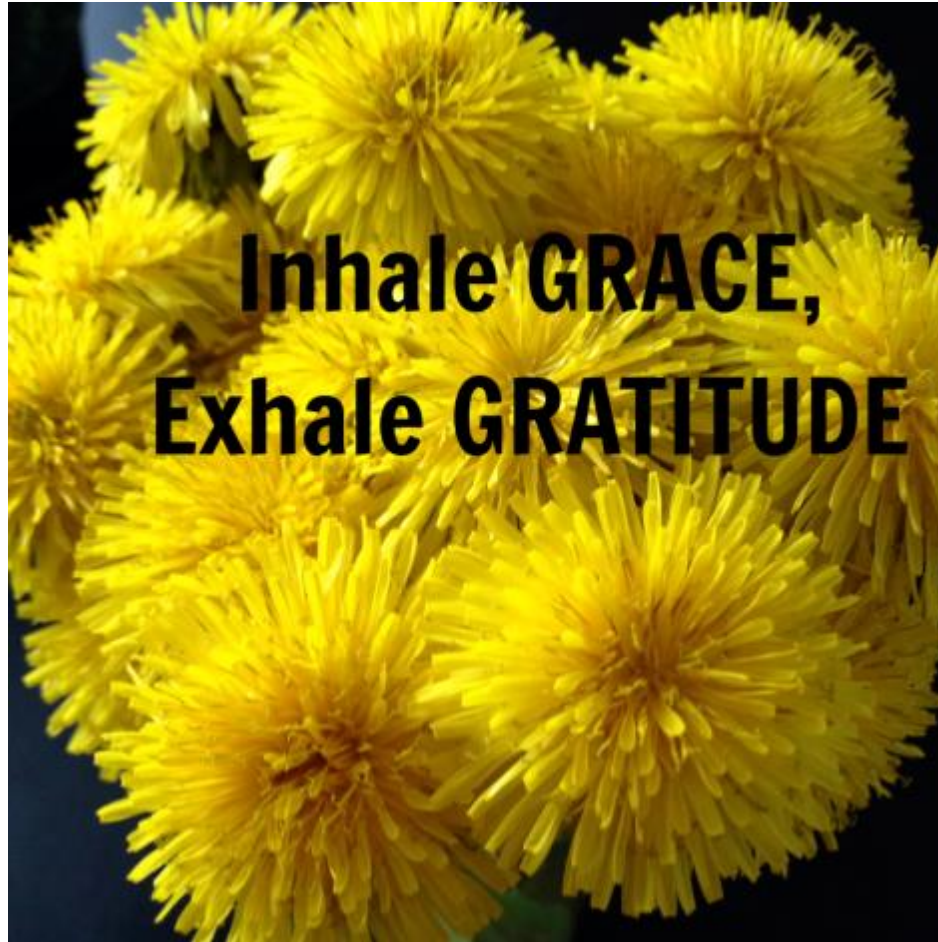



A warning: It's not about us...

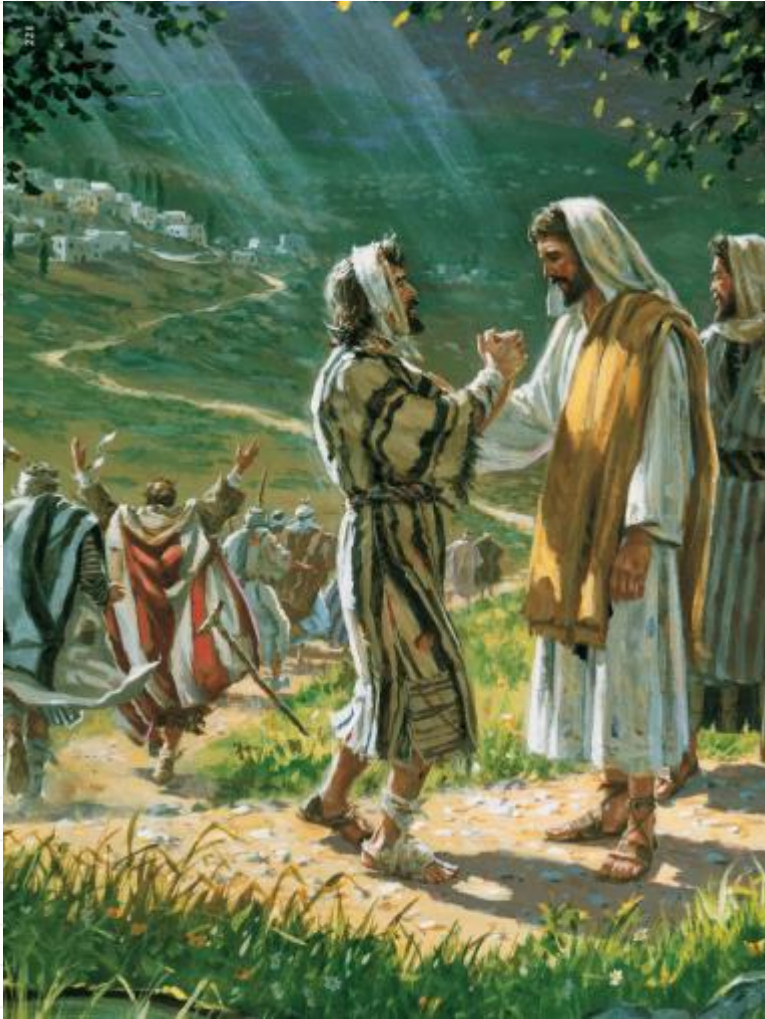
- The perils of self-improvement projects
- Trying too hard to become more “grateful” can backfire
- Focusing on performance can undermine performance



Gratitude begins with grace...



- 
- 1. Grace amplifies the good in gratitude**
 - 2. Grace does not depend on gratitude**
 - 3. Gratitude is the link between grace and thanksgiving**



- **¹⁵One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."**


Empirical research on grace?

- “Grace is a divine activity not immediately open to human observation” (Meissner, 1966, p. 7)



Measuring perceived grace

- “Grace is a gift of God, all I have to do is ask”
- “I accept my shortcomings”
- “My acceptance of God’s grace has helped me love others”
- “It is hard to forgive myself of the sin in my life even after giving it to God”
- “The harder I work, the more I earn God’s favor”



“Our natural capacity for gratitude is the central point at which God’s grace touches us, drawing us into the loving union which is the theological virtue of charity, and making that love fruitful in action.”


--Shelton, 2010, p. 143

Scores on the grace scale are:

- Associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety and with higher levels of intrinsic religiousness, self-compassion and a healthy view of sin

Project Amazing Grace: Understanding the Nature of Divine Grace





[http://www.gratefulness.org/
resource/a-good-day/](http://www.gratefulness.org/resource/a-good-day/)

- **“As we learn to give thanks for all of life and death, for all of this given world of ours, we find a deep joy. It is the joy of trust, the joy of faith in the faithfulness at the heart of all things. It is the joy of gratefulness in touch with the fullness of life.”**

--David Steindl-Rast, *Gratefulness, The Heart Of Prayer: An Approach To Life In Fullness*



