

WHAT GOOD IS GRATITUDE? IT'S ROLE IN DISEASE PREVENTION, HEALTH PROMOTION, AND PERSONAL WELLNESS

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A decorative blue wave graphic that starts on the left side of the slide and curves across the top towards the right. The wave is composed of several overlapping, semi-transparent blue lines of varying shades, creating a sense of movement and depth. The background of the slide is a light gray grid.

Gratitude Works!

Gratitude has the power
to heal,
to energize, and
to change lives.

Gratitude:

Affirming goodness
and recognizing that
the sources of this
goodness are
outside the self



The role of emotions in health

- Positive emotions are associated with lower rates of morbidity and mortality and with reports of less severe symptoms and pain

Sources: *Psychological Bulletin, Psychosomatic Medicine, American Journal of Epidemiology, JAMA, Annals of Behavioral Medicine, Science, Health Psychology, Brain, Behavior, Immunity*

What is the role of gratitude in health care?





Is expressing *gratitude* the
key to unlocking *happiness*?

8 Things Happy People Do Every Morning



Gratitude is available to everyone



Counting Blessings or Burdens?

- Random assignment, placebo controlled experimental trials
- $N \sim 3,000$



Gratefulness
Increases
Emotional
Well-Being



Journal of Research in Personality, 2007

The role of gratitude in the development of social support, stress, and depression – Wood, Maltby, Gillett et al

Grateful
People
Achieve
More



Journal of Personality & Social Psych, 2003

Counting Blessings Versus Burdens: An Experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-Being in Daily Life – Emmons, McCullough

Grateful
People Get
Along Better
with Others



Clinical Psychology Review, 2009

Gratitude and well-being: A review and theoretical integration - Wood, Froh, Geraghty

Grateful
People Pay
It Forward



Psychological Science, 2006

Gratitude and Prosocial Behavior: Helping When It Costs You – Bartlett, DeSteno

Grateful
People Are
Less
Depressed



American Psychologist, 2005

Grateful
People Are
More
Resilient to
Trauma

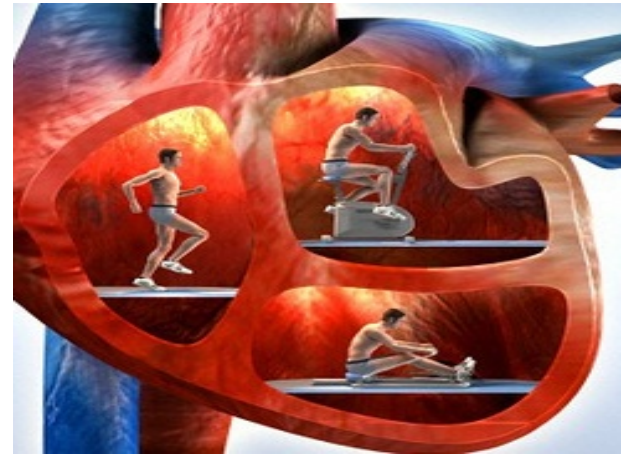


Behaviour Research and Therapy, 2006

Gratitude and hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in

Gratitude is Good Medicine:


- More exercise
- Better dietary behaviors
- More efficient sleep
- Reduced smoking and alcohol use
- Greater medication adherence
- Lower blood pressure and healthier lipid panels



1. Gratitude works in the clinic:

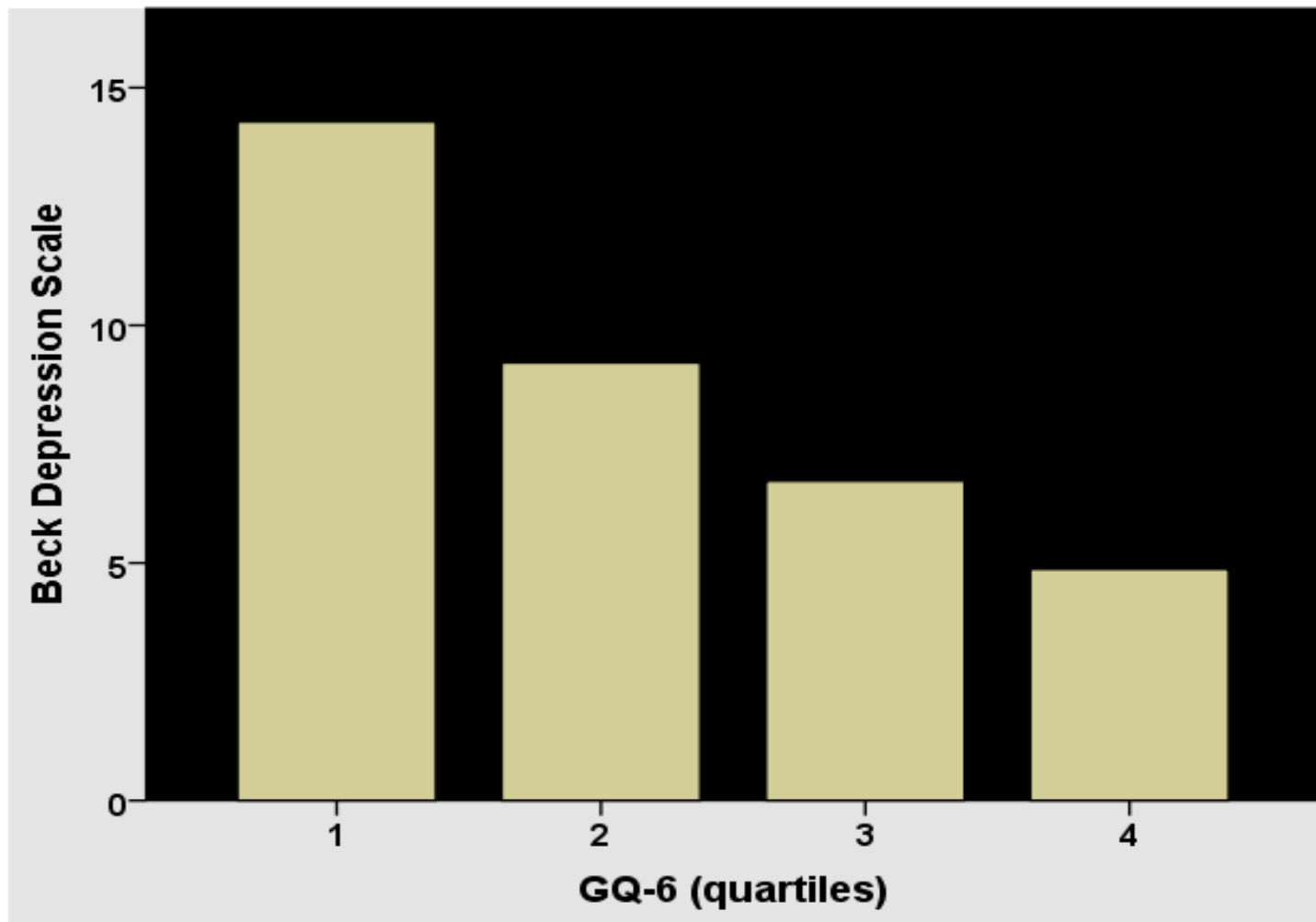
Two-week daily monitoring of gratitude program for clients waiting for psychotherapy was effective in reducing depression, stress, and anxiety and increasing connectedness & optimism

(Source: *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 2014)

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- “There are many things in our lives to be grateful about. Think back over the past day and write down on the lines below up to five things in your life that you are grateful or thankful for.”

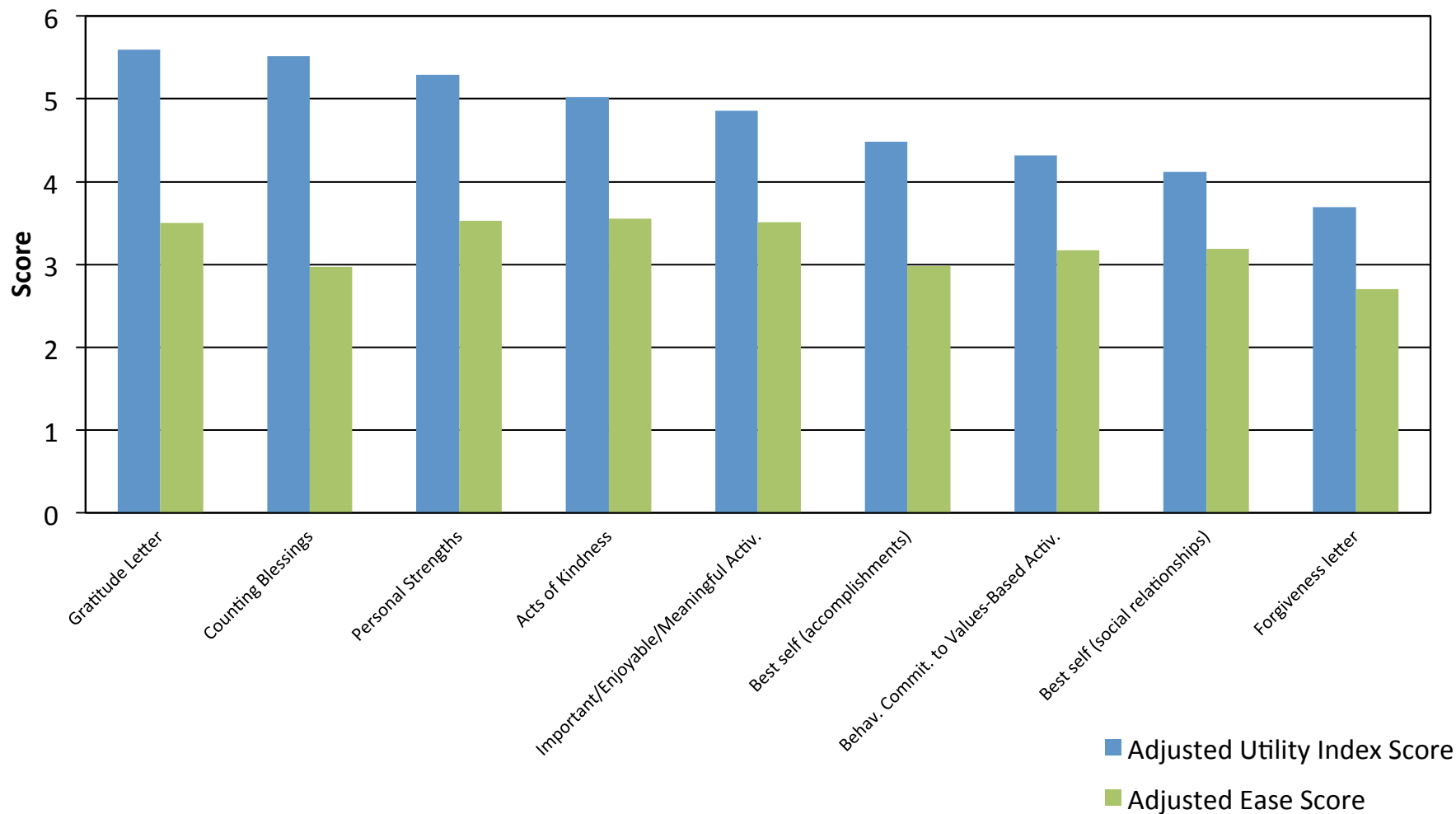
Implications:

- Long waiting period is linked with client dissatisfaction and pre-intake dropout
- Gratitude practice is a useful pre-treatment intervention that can reduce negative impact of long waiting times



R^2 change .28
 $t = -4.88, p < .001$

Gratitude in suicidal inpatients



2. Gratitude as a protective factor in addictions and other disorders

Gratitude improves mood in outpatients being treated for alcohol use disorder

Gratitude intervention increased well-being and decreased alcohol consumption in teens

“Gratitude was the most successful intervention” (Akhtar & Boniwell, 2010, p.12)

The Journal of Positive Psychology, in press
Groupwork, 2010

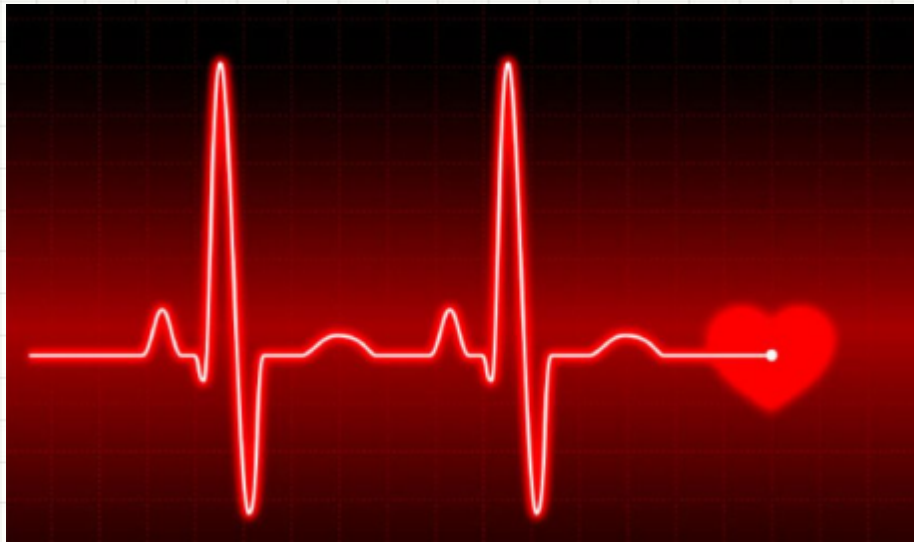
Gratitude in at-risk youth

Gratitude predicts greater levels of protective factors and lower levels of risks in African American adolescents

Journal of Adolescence,
2013



3. Feeling grateful may improve health for heart failure patients



Gratitude predicted lower levels of inflammatory biomarkers, less depression and fatigue, better cardiac self-efficacy in Stage B HF patients
Source: (SCP, 2015)

(SCP, 2015)

4. Gratitude reduces stress and depression in health care practitioners

A double-blind randomized controlled trial was conducted in 5 public hospitals with follow-up to 3 months posttreatment.

Gratitude, hassles, no treatment control, 2x week/4wks

Source: *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 2015

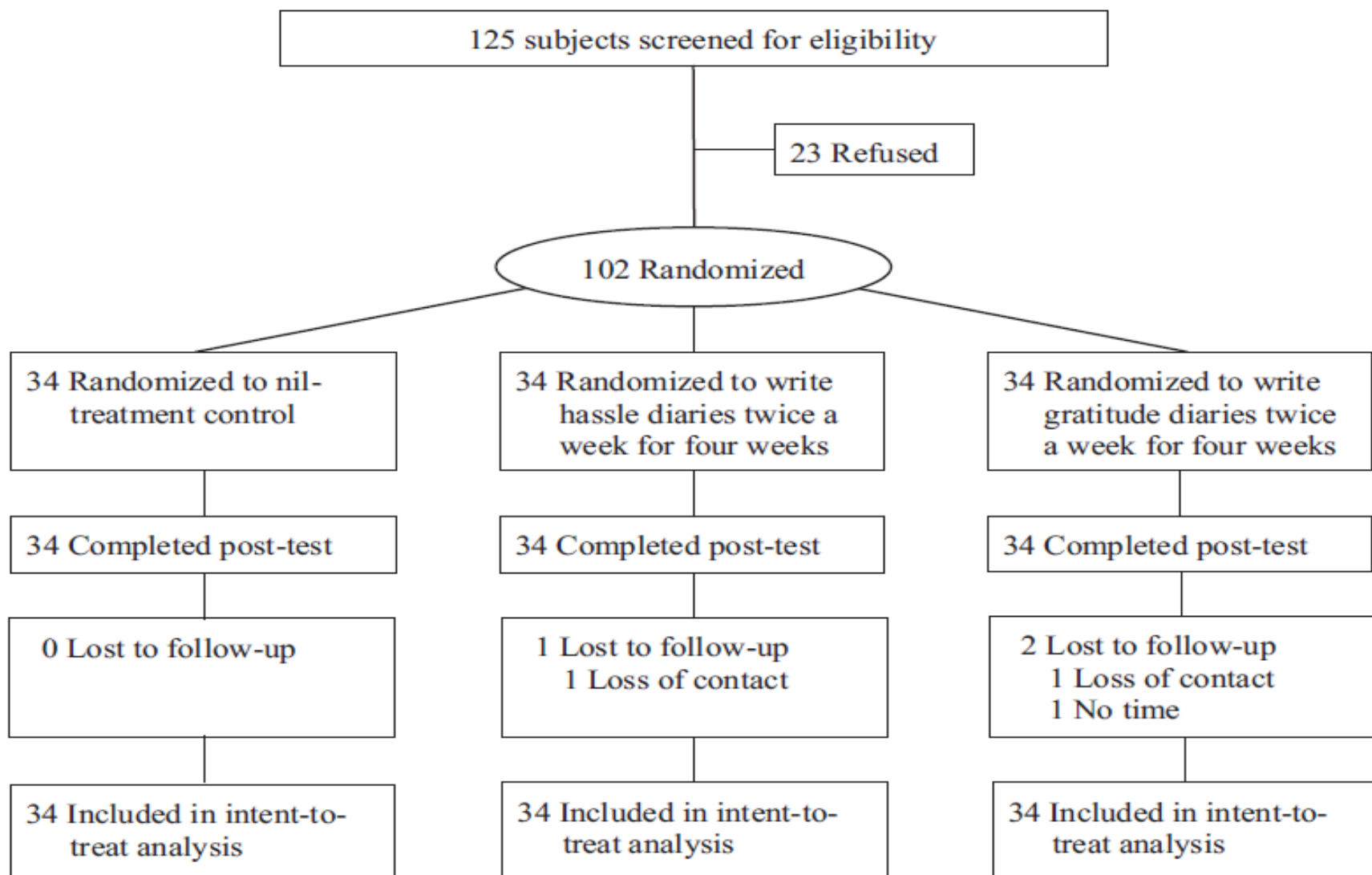


Figure 1. Study flowchart.

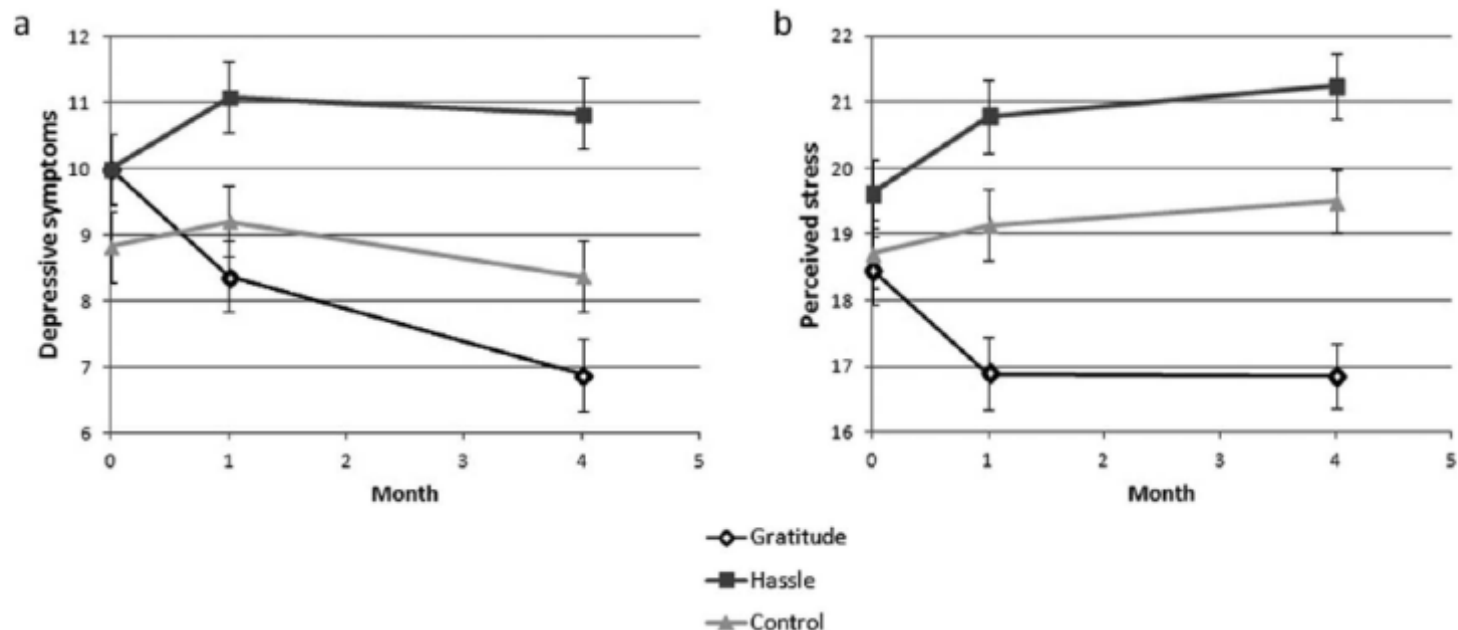


Figure 2. Means of (a) depressive symptoms and (b) perceived stress by treatment conditions, adjusted for education, years of professional experience, and the respective interactions with time and time²; error bars denote standard error. Month 0 = baseline, 1 = posttreatment, 4 = 3-month follow-up.

Conclusions:

“Taking stock of thankful events is an effective approach to reduce stress and depressive symptoms among health care practitioners.”

“...such positive effects among these professionals can also lead to an improvement in both productivity and quality of patient services.”

5. Does Patient Support and Gratitude Reduce Nurse Burnout?

- Study compared oncology nurses with ER nurses



Source: *Frontiers in Psychology*, April 2015

Perceived gratitude and perception of support

- “Several patients express gratitude for the care we offer them.”
- “The patients can thank in many ways for the care they receive”
- “When one is thanked by your patients working seems less heavy.”
- “Thank you” from a patient allows you to face your workload with much more enthusiasm”

Gratitude was related to all 3 dimensions of burnout:

- Perceived gratitude reduced emotional exhaustion and depersonalization



"You're in a hospital, Nurse Hill. If you collapse from exhaustion, the emergency room is just down the hall."

- Increased sense of personal accomplishment

Nurses react to journaling:

- “I believe journaling helped me to see the good things surrounding me...it made me consciously think not to let others or the environment bring me down with them”
- “It made me stop and think about all the things I take for granted and how blessed I really am which really can improve your mood”
- Source: *MedSurg Nursing*, 2013

What good is gratitude in physicians?

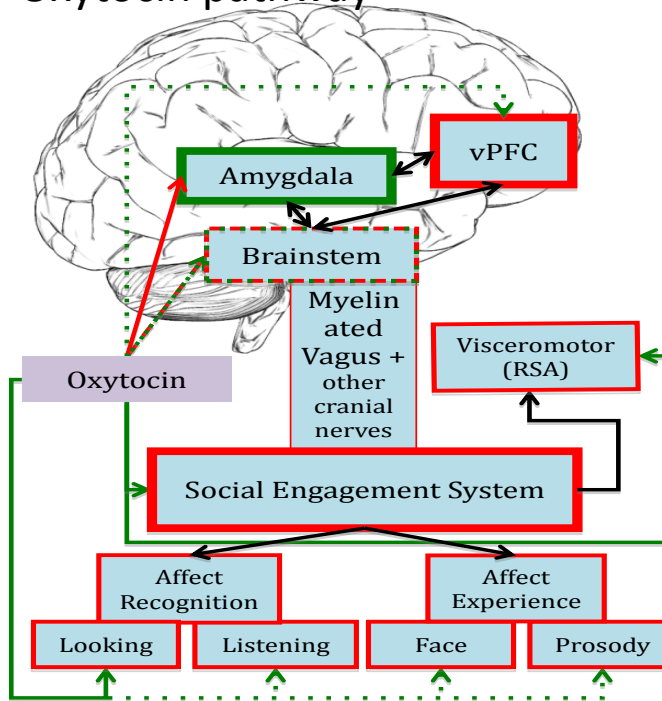
1. Gratitude is associated with greater meaning and less burnout in patient care (*Annals of Internal Medicine*, 2003; *Patient Education and Counseling*, 2008)
2. Gratitude is a common emotion in medical trainees (*Academic Medicine*, 2003)
3. Expressing gratitude and praise is essential to the art of patient communication (*The Lancet*, 2010)
4. Gratitude fosters collaboration between physicians and nurses (*Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 2009)

How does gratitude “get under the skin” to affect health and well-being?

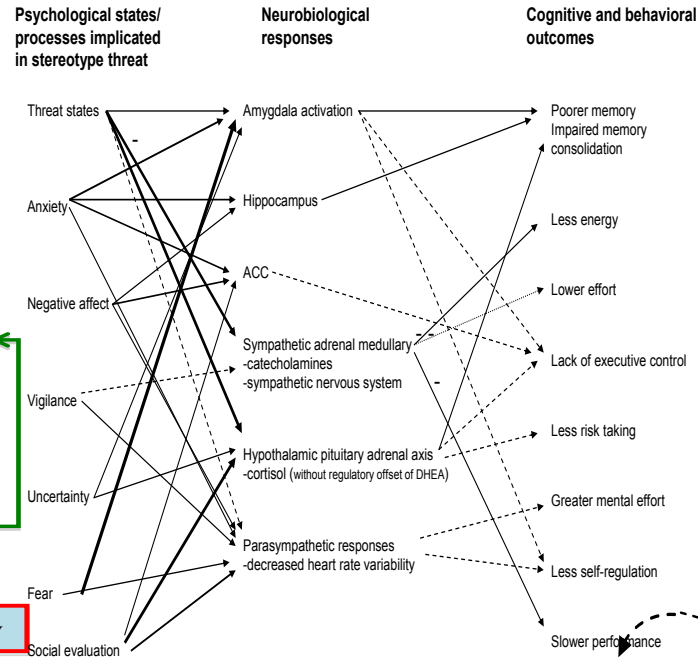


Possible pathways linking gratitude to health

Oxytocin pathway



Potentiated behavior pathway



Vagal pathway

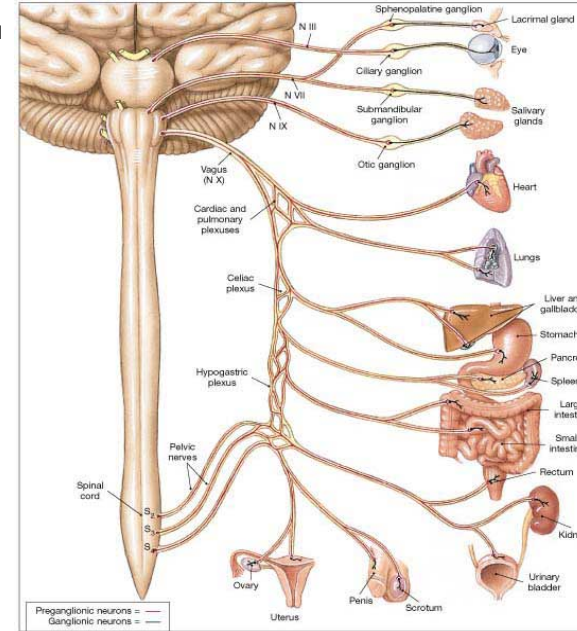
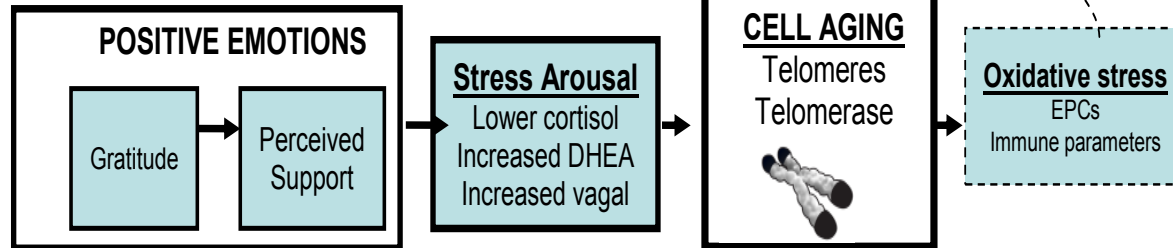


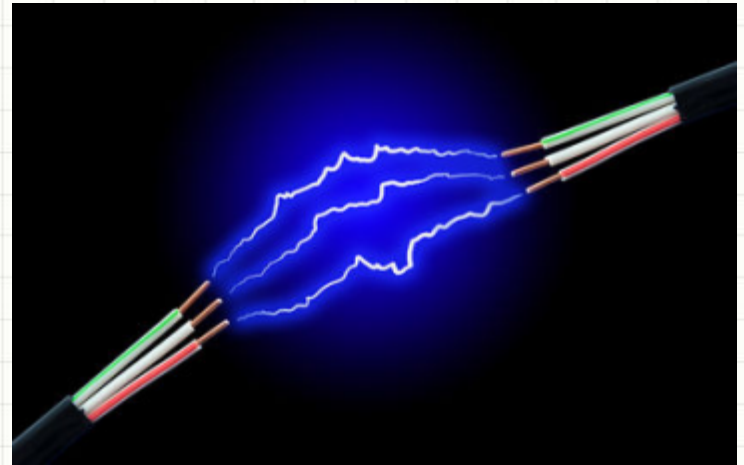
FIGURE 16-9 Distribution of Parasympathetic Innervation

Stress pathway



Why does gratitude work? ARC

1. Gratitude amplifies
2. Gratitude rescues
3. Gratitude connects



Gratitude Amplifies the Good



Gratitude amplifies value of future rewards

(*Psychological Science*, 2014)

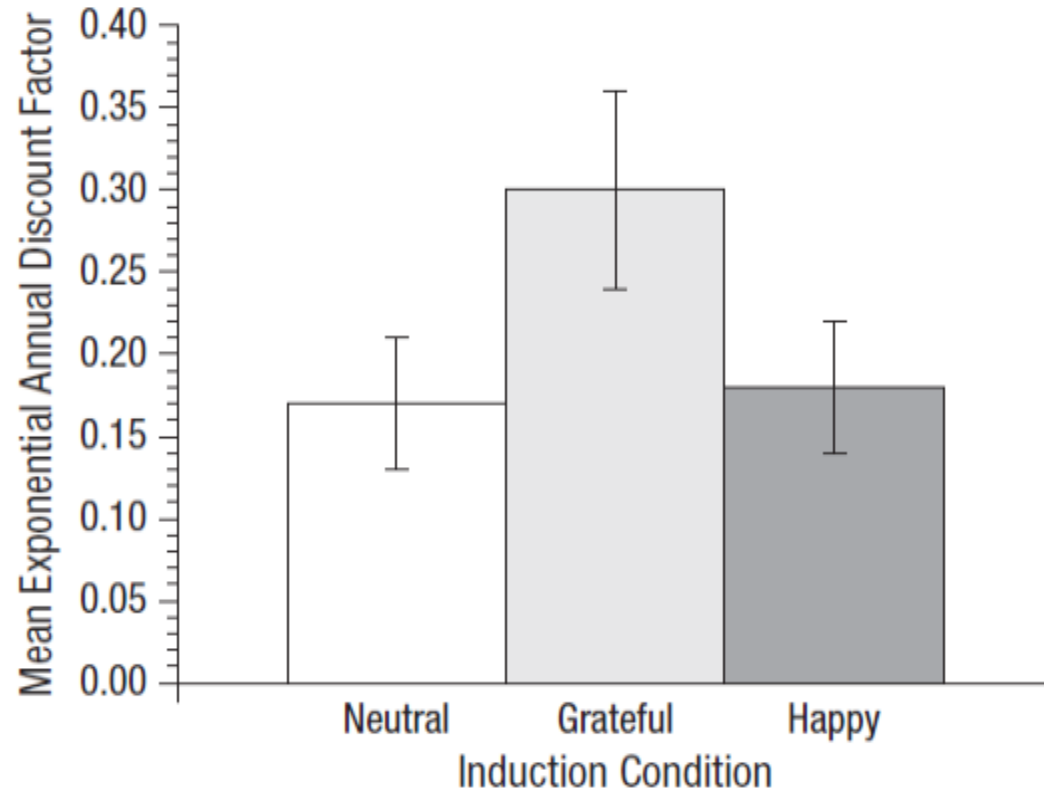


Fig. 1. Mean exponential annual discount factor as a function of induction condition. Error bars indicate ± 1 SE.

Gratitude is fertilizer for the mind



Gratitude rescues



Two ways of looking at life

Lens of abundance vs.

What life is offering vs.

Life as a gift vs.

What I've been given vs.

Lens of scarcity

What life is denying


Life as a burden

What I am owed



Benefits of gratitude journaling from mildly depressed:

- When I'm sinking and get caught up in my problems, it helps me rise above it.
- It keeps me in touch with reality out there rather than my constant negative interpretations. I remember that others are there and can be supportive.
- Helps me get out of the negative and remember that not all is lost.
- I am reminded that there is more to feel good about than to feel bad about.
- I stop taking the good in my life for granted and get out of my shell.

- 
- I am reminded of the things that make me feel good. It makes me want to do more positive things.
 - I go from what is missing to what I do have.
 - See the good in the people in my life rather than just their faults.
 - Makes me feel safer. It helps me relax because I remember that I am supported.
 - When I'm scared, it helps me remember that there is help.
 - Helps me love my life a bit more.
 - Makes me feel lucky rather than sorry for myself.
 - It brings me back in the here and now, where I can always find something to be grateful for.
 - It brings a smile across my face. Helps make the negativity vanish even for a brief moment.

Gratitude connects: Find, remind, and bind



CHOOSE GRATITUDE.

CHANGE LIVES.

Clara Morabito




*I choose to be happy,
I choose to be grateful,
I choose to be caring
And always be thoughtful*

*I choose to be well,
I choose to be fine,
I choose to be healthy
All of the time.*

*I choose to be patient,
I choose to be strong,
I choose to be calm
All the day long.*

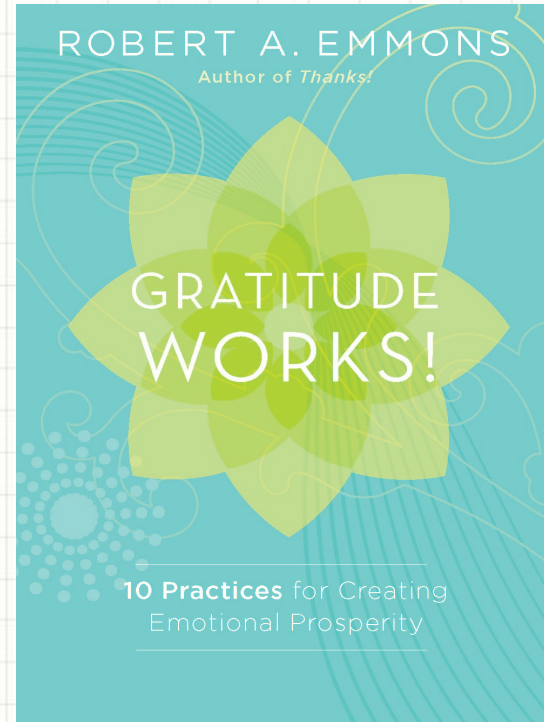
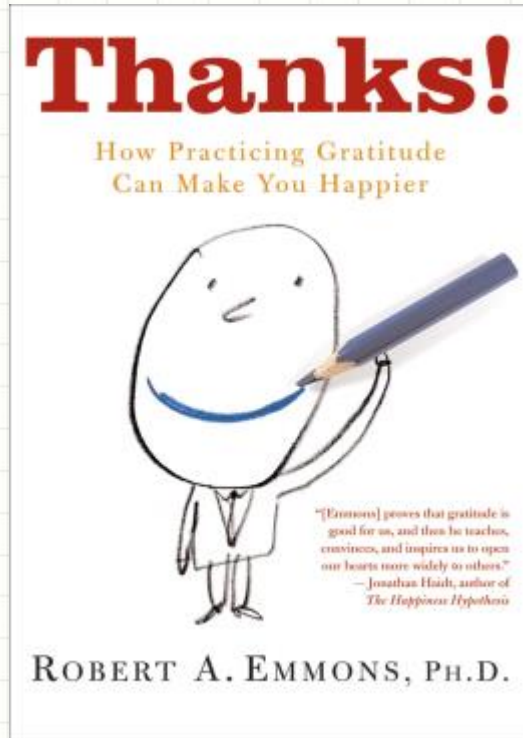
- Clara Morabito



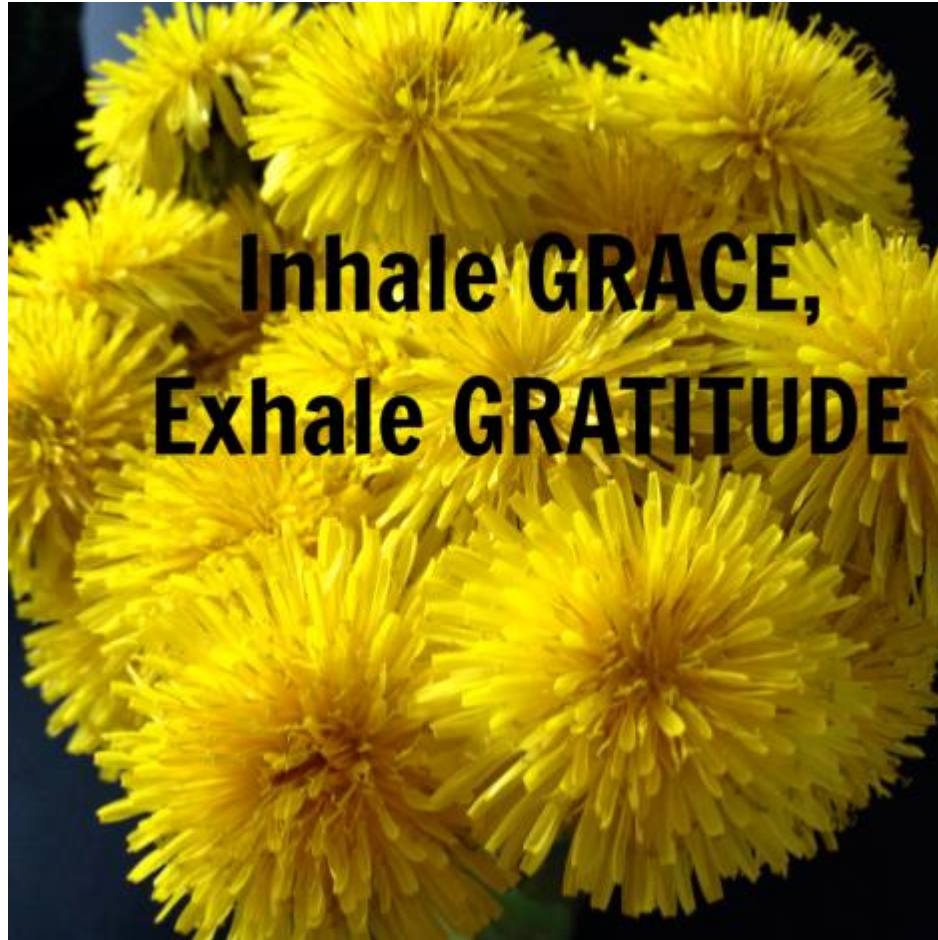
“There are two kinds of gratitude: the sudden kind we feel for what we take; the larger kind we feel for what we give.”


- -- Edward Arlington Robinson

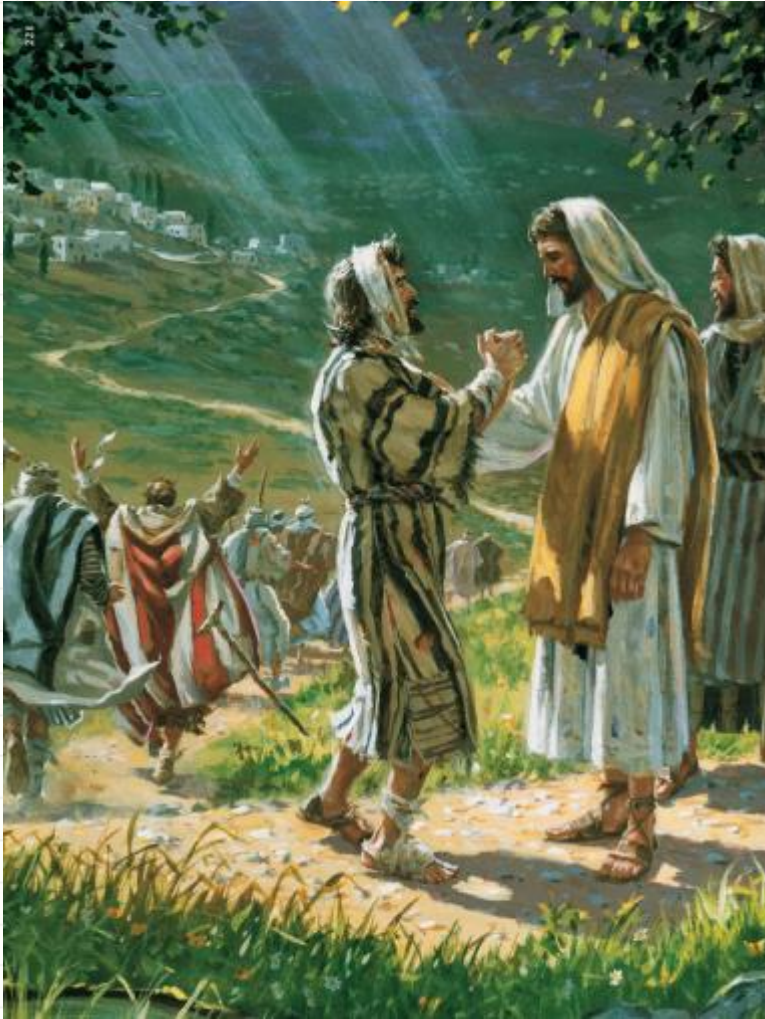
For more information...



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”

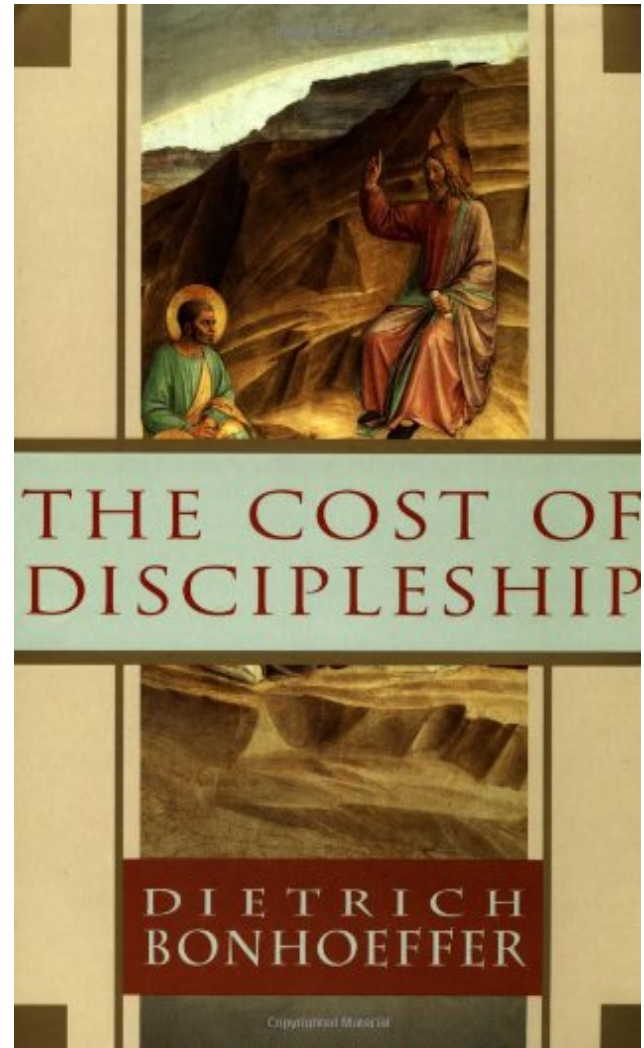


“Our natural capacity for gratitude is the central point at which God’s grace touches us, drawing us into the loving union which is the theological virtue of charity, and making that love fruitful in action.”

--Shelton, 2010, p. 143

“Grace is...an inexhaustible treasury, from which she showers blessings with generous hands, without asking questions or fixing limits. The essence of grace...is that the account has been paid in advance; and, because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing. Since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using and spending it are infinite.”

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*



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