5 Finger Gratitude

Recommended for Grades:

6-12th grade

Practice Description:

Gratitude, or appreciation, is a thought, or feeling, of being thankful for someone or something. Paying attention to what we appreciate can take our mind off what is mothering us and lighten our mood. When we appreciate moments of happiness, warmth or joy in our day, we are also training our mind to be more positive, which can increase the natural frequency of these thoughts.

Transcript:

Welcome to the 5 finger gratitude exercise.

You will be asked to use your imagination to appreciate and be thankful for people and times in your life. It's important to stay with these thoughts and feelings so you train your mind to notice all the good around you. There are no right or wrong things to appreciate.

Let's start by getting into a mindful position. On the floor or in your chair, sit with a long, strong back and allow your hands to rest in your lap.

- *Pause for 2 seconds*

Try softening your eyes and turning your gaze down toward your knees or to the images on the screen. If you feel comfortable, you may choose to close your eyes.

When you are ready, think about someone in your everyday life that you appreciate. It could be a teacher, a grandparent, parent or friend. It could even be a pet.

Imagine this person. What is their expression? Are there certain sounds or images that come to mind?

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

If you choose, think "I am so grateful for this person!"

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

When you are ready, let go of that person. And on the next breath, bring something "BIG" to mind that you appreciate or are thankful for. Big things might include your family, your strong body, or a warm home.

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- *Pause for 5 seconds*

Try to notice the details that help you appreciate this big thing. Where are you? …Who are you with? …What is your expression?

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

You might choose to think to yourself, “This is something I really appreciate!”

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

On the next breath, let go of that thought. And when you are ready, bring to mind something “small” that you appreciate. Smaller things could be a sunny day, your favorite outfit, realizing someone did your chores or a warm welcome from your dog.

Imagine this small thing.

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

Try thinking, “I am thankful for this thing.”

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

As you breathe out, let go of that thought. And when you are ready, breathe in and think of an “experience or time” you are grateful for. This could be a sports or musical event, a holiday, a trip or something else.

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

Where are you? What are you doing? What makes it special?

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

You might think, “I am so grateful for this.”

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

As you breathe out, let go of that experience. And when you are ready, think of a group of people for which you are grateful. This group could be your family, a team or club you are a part of, or some other group.

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

As you imagine a vivid image of this group, notice who you are with.

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

Notice how you feel in this group.

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

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You might choose to think to yourself, “I am very grateful for this group of people!”

- *Pause for 5 seconds*

Take a moment to reflect on what you noticed and felt during this exercise. Know that you can transform any moment in your day by bringing up feelings of appreciation or gratitude by counting out 5 things you are grateful for on one hand.

When you are ready, open your eyes and bring your focus back to the room around you.

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