Frameworks EQ COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER TM EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ)

Vol 3 Issue 2

& GRATITUDE



WHAT IS GRATITUDE?

by Siomara Bridges-Mata, Senior Community Program Specialist

Gratitude is the best attitude! Pause for a moment and think about 3 things you are grateful for today. Are you a little happier? When we practice gratitude, we are actively building our emotional intelligence by bringing awareness to the present moment and the people, places, and things that bring us joy. Research has proven that if we reflect more on what we have rather than the things we don't have, we are happier and healthier people. Taking time to express gratitude to the people we have around us also impacts their emotional state by making them feel appreciated, valued, and having a sense of belonging. For some of us, on certain days it may be hard for us to identify things we are grateful for simply because we experience life challenges that make it difficult for us to see a brighter side, or we may struggle with finding purposeful ways to cultivate gratitude within our students in our classrooms, or at home with our children. In this month's EQ Community Newsletter, we share tips and strategies on how to foster gratitude in your children and provide you with simple ways to practice gratitude daily as an individual and as a family. Building our emotional intelligence through the practice of gratitude will help us live a happier, emotionally healthier, and joyful life; which you deserve. We wish you a "gratitude-tastic" month ahead!

EARLY LEARNING

When fostering gratitude in children ages 0-5, it is essential to model the behaviors we wish to see. This can be done in a variety of ways. You can help your child understand what gratitude means and looks like by simply mentioning how grateful you are for a beautiful day in front of your child, or appreciating the big (and small) ways your child makes a difference (i.e. sharing with a friend). Have your child join you in volunteering or bring them with you to donate clothes or food to a local charity. The earlier you start, the more it will become 'the norm' to them and as they grow older, gratitude will not be the "exception" but the standard!

MIDDLE SCHOOL
As children enter middle school and develop more independence, they will encounter more adults and other students daily. These increased interactions with others help middle school students build more relationships and have students finding out more ways they need people in their daily lives to help them navigate their day. Building social and emotional learning skills such as gratitude requires face-to-face interactions, meaningful discussion, and reflection. Gratitude isn't just recognition, it's also about supporting and inspiring others. Studies have shown that when someone gets appreciated, they feel more socially valued, and this can lead to prosocial behavior. In other words, when someone receives thanks, they're more likely to pay it forward. Middle school is a great opportunity for showing appreciation and gratitude and paying it forward, which improves the school climate, and self-esteem of all.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Helping elementary students foster feelings of gratitude can be done in so many ways but first, it must start at home! As your child's 'first teacher', it is essential to model gratitude in every day, simple but poignant interactions. This can be as easy as discussing how lucky you are to have such a great meal at the dinner table or pointing out acts/feelings of gratitude in characters you read in books with your child. Explaining to your child how gratitude, thankfulness, generosity, and appreciation are all intertwined will also help them to understand why it is so important in our everyday lives. The more gratitude we have - the happier we, and those around us, are!

HIGH SCHOOL
Being a teenager brings on many changes and challenges and has students needing to rely on each other and other adults in their lives to be successful and navigate teenage life. Practicing gratitude is another crucial social and emotional learning skill. Ralph Waldo Emerson said "Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you and give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude." High school students are preparing for life after high school (job, college, trade school, etc..), and many people are helping them get there and prepare for their future. This is a great time for high school students to show appreciation and practice gratitude, especially to those who have helped them along their journey. During challenging teenage times, students should remember that consciously practicing gratitude can help improve their physical and psychological health? So, be grateful and pay it forward.



WE ALL NEED GRATITUDE

by Eddie Underwood Education Program Specialist

Gratitude is a form of self-care; it can reduce stress and help to reshape the way we see the world around us. Life is stressful and we are always looking for something to help reduce stress. Research shows that one way to reduce stress is to practice gratitude on a regular basis, leading to better sleep and lowering levels of anxiety. Having a negative outlook can influence the way you feel. When we allow ourselves to dwell in negativity, it will change and distort our perspective. Here are two practices to help increase positive thoughts and lower stress:

- 1. Focus on gratitude. What are you thankful for? Allow yourself time and space to focus on the things that you are thankful for, and think about how it makes you feel and allow yourself to feel that way the rest of the day.
- 2. Allow gratitude to help redirect your thoughts, recognize the positive, and refuse to focus on the negative.

Practicing gratitude is more than being thankful. It allows you to practice self-care and take control of the outcome of your day. This will allow stress levels to drop, and you will see a shift in your thinking when gratitude is a part of your day.

To access free resources or purchase resources for home, classroom, or office use please visit our website:



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GRATITUDE & THE FIVE CORE COMPENTENCIES

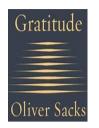
by Jordan Sims Community Program Specialist

Practicing gratitude is a great way to develop your emotional intelligence! Here are some suggestions for how you can practice gratitude using each of the five core competencies.

- 1. Increase <u>self-awareness</u> of things you are grateful for in your life by writing down one thing you appreciate or enjoyed each day. Bonus points if can write down three each day!
- 2. Compliment yourself when you practice <u>self-management</u> such as completing a step toward your goals or using a coping skill to stay calm in a tough situation. Show appreciation for the small victories that you accomplish!
- 3. Engage your <u>social awareness</u> and <u>empathy</u> by saying "thank you" to someone in your community you may not normally notice or appreciate. Show love to your bus drivers, custodians, store clerks, delivery drivers, or anyone else in your community you're grateful for!
- 4. Use your <u>relationship skills</u> to tell a loved one how much you appreciate and care about them. Send them a card, call them on the phone, or tell them the next time you see them. Let them know how important they are to you!



5. Show appreciation for the things you have by making responsible decisions to take good care of them. This means more than just material things you have, it means taking care of yourself and others, too! Practice selfcare, show kindness in your community, and take good care of the tangible things you have and are grateful for!

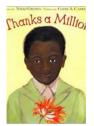












RESOURCES AND READINGS

by Elizabeth Molitor Education Program Specialist

As we enjoy the summer, take a few minutes to reflect on the moments and people we are grateful for. Embrace the joy that can be found throughout the day. Be on the lookout for moments where gratitude can be modeled for the children in our lives. Speak openly about the times in which they have brought you joy. Express how grateful you are to be a part of their lives. Ask them what they are grateful for to start building those good habits of looking at their lives with a lens of gratitude.

Here are great resources to refer to:

- The Power in Gratitude, Vulnerability and Joy - Brene Brown https://youtu.be/St2-axHpa5Y
- 2. <u>Brené Brown on Joy and Gratitude -</u> <u>Global Leadership Network</u>

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July 2022 Issue 1