

Phrases to Help With Difficult Conversations

We all inevitably need to have conversations with people that are difficult and can cause the person we are speaking with to get defensive. One way we can avoid them getting defensive is to provide them with a way out of the conversation with dignity. Try these phrases the next time you find yourself in an awkward conversation. **“You might not realize this but....”** **You probably didn’t realize this but....** **You might not know this but”** or when you don’t want to come off as a know it all. **“You might already be aware of this but”,** or **“You probably already know this but...”**

Directions: Think of a real life conversation that you have had where one of these phrases might have made the conversation go more successfully and fill in the blanks.

1. **You might not realize this but**

2. **You probably already know this but**

Steps to start a gratitude journal

1. Choose a blank notebook or journal to write in. Consider a spiral-bound journal that opens flat for ease in writing. Select lined or unlined paper. Keep this notebook next to the bed with a pen readily available.
2. Look for things during the day for which you are grateful. Make mental notes throughout the day. Notice how the gratitude journal shifts the focus to a more positive outlook.
3. Write five things you're grateful for before bedtime. Review the day and include anything, however small or great, that was a source of gratitude that day, e.g., a baby's smile, a flower in bloom, or the smell of a newly cut grass. Make the list personal. Write a few words about the five benefits or blessings. Be brief and increase the length as time progresses
4. Personalize the gratitude journal. Expand it with clippings, photos and quotes from magazines or other sources –
5. Remember the best practices for writing in a gratitude journal; be specific, choose something that has scarcity attached to it, pick something that surprised you or you weren't expecting. Focus on near misses.

Best practices modified from *Gratitude Works! A 21 Day Program for Creating Emotional Prosperity* by Dr. Robert Emmons.

Metta bhavana, or loving-kindness meditation, is a method of developing compassion. It comes from the Buddhist tradition, but it can be adapted and practiced by anyone, regardless of religious affiliation; loving-kindness meditation is essentially about cultivating love.

Loving-Kindness Practice Instructions

based on a teaching by Steven Smith

Loving-kindness, or *metta*, as it is called in the Pali language, is unconditional, inclusive love, a love with wisdom. It has no conditions; it does not depend on whether one "deserves" it or not; it is not restricted to friends and family; it extends out from personal categories to include all living beings. There are no expectations of anything in return. This is the ideal, pure love, which everyone has in potential. We begin with loving ourselves, for unless we have a measure of this unconditional love and acceptance for ourselves, it is difficult to extend it to others. Then we include others who are special to us, and, ultimately, all living things. Gradually, both the visualization and the meditation phrases blend into the actual experience, the feeling of loving kindness.

This is a meditation of care, concern, tenderness, loving kindness, friendship -- a feeling of warmth for oneself and others. The practice is the softening of the mind and heart, an opening to deeper and deeper levels of the feeling of kindness, of pure love. Loving kindness is without any desire to possess another. It is not a sentimental feeling of goodwill, not an obligation, but comes from a selfless place. It does not depend on relationships, on how the other person feels about us. The process is first one of softening, breaking down barriers that we feel inwardly toward ourselves, and then those that we feel toward others.

Take a very comfortable posture. One of the aims in this meditation is to feel good, so make your posture relaxed and comfortable. Begin to focus around the solar plexus, your chest area, your "heart center". Breathe in and out from that area, as if you are

breathing from the heart center and as if all experience is happening from there. Anchor your mindfulness only on the sensations at your heart center.

Breathing in and out from the heart center, begin by generating this kind feeling toward yourself. Feel any areas of mental blockage or numbness, self-judgment, self-hatred. Then drop beneath that to the place where we care for ourselves, where we want strength and health and safety for ourselves.

Continuing to breathe in and out, use either these traditional phrases or ones you choose yourself. Say or think them several times.

May I be free from inner and outer harm and danger. May I be safe and protected.

May I be free of mental suffering or distress.

May I be happy.

May I be free of physical pain and suffering.

May I be healthy and strong.

**May I be able to live in this world happily,
peacefully, joyfully, with ease.**

Next, move to person who most invites the feeling of pure unconditional loving kindness, the love that does not depend on getting anything back. The first person is usually someone we consider a mentor, a benefactor, an elder. It might be a parent, grandparent, teacher, someone toward whom it takes no effort to feel respect and reverence, someone who immediately elicits the feeling of care. Repeat the phrases for this person: "May she be safe and protected...."

After feeling strong unconditional love for the benefactor, move to a person you regard as a dear friend and repeat the phrases again, breathing in and out of your heart center.

Now move to a neutral person, someone for whom you feel neither strong like nor dislike. As you repeat the phrases, allow yourself to feel tenderness, loving care for their welfare.

Now move to someone you have difficulty with -- hostile feelings, resentments. Repeat the phrases for this person. If you have difficulty doing this, you can say before the phrases, "To the best of my ability I wish that you be...." If you begin to feel ill will toward this person, return to the benefactor and let the loving kindness arise again. Then return to this person.

Let the phrases spread through your whole body, mind, and heart.

After the difficult person, radiate loving kindness out to all beings. Stay in touch with the ember of warm, tender loving-kindness at the center of your being, and begin to visualize or engender a felt sense of all living beings. The traditional phrases are these:

May all beings be safe, happy, healthy, live joyously.....

May all living beings be safe, happy, healthy, live joyously.....

May all breathing beings be safe, happy, healthy, live joyously.....

May all individuals be safe, happy, healthy, live joyously.....

May all beings in existence be safe, happy, healthy, live joyously.....

Allow the phrases to be simply a conduit for the force of loving-kindness. Empower your imagination through the five phrases to touch the hearts of all forms of life in the universe, unconditionally and inclusively. Stay with all beings until you feel a personal sense of the profound interconnectedness of all creatures, all life.

Directions for writing a gratitude

Writing a Gratitude Letter to someone is a great way to show your appreciation for that person. You can write the letter to someone you talk to everyday or to someone you haven't talked to in years. The important thing is that you have not taken the time to properly thank that person for the great things the person has done for you in your life. One caution when writing the gratitude letter; make sure it is someone who you feel positively about not someone in which you feel indebted. Use the space below to write the first draft of your letter. You will want to edit it several times to get the wording just right.

Instructions for making a Gratitude visit.

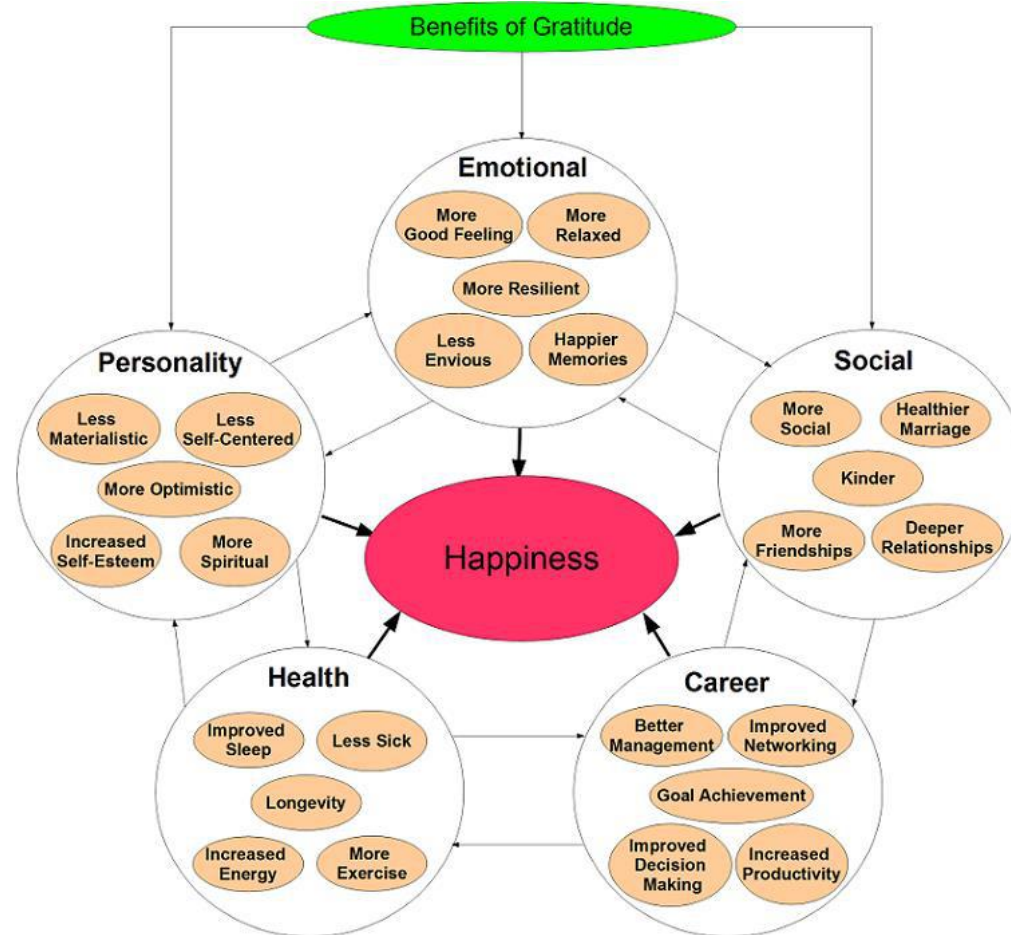
Select one important person from your past who has made a major positive difference in your life and to whom you have never fully expressed your thanks. (Do not confound this selection with new-found romantic love, or with the possibility of a future gain.) Write a testimonial just long enough to cover one laminated page. Take your time composing this; my students and I found ourselves taking several weeks, composing on buses and as we feel asleep at night. Invite that person to your home, or travel to that person's home. It is important 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; a simple "I just want to see you" will suffice. Bring a laminated version of your testimonial with you as a gift. When all settles down, read your testimonial aloud slowly, with expression, and with eye contact. Then let the other person react unhurriedly. Reminisce together about the concrete events that make this person so important to you. (If you are so moved, please do send me a copy at Seligman@psych.upenn.edu)



Building Better Relationships With Kindness and Gratitude

BY DAVID SECKMAN

The Science Of Gratitude



The Science of Kindness

- ▶ Kindness can be **learned**
- ▶ Kindness is **Contagious**
- ▶ Kindness increases **Energy, The Love Hormone, Happiness, Lifespan, Pleasure**

The Science of Kindness

- ▶ **Kindness Decreases: Pain, Stress, Anxiety, Depression and Blood Pressure.**
- ▶ **Check out this fascinating video from [Life Vest Inside](#)**

Kind Communication

Why is it Necessary?

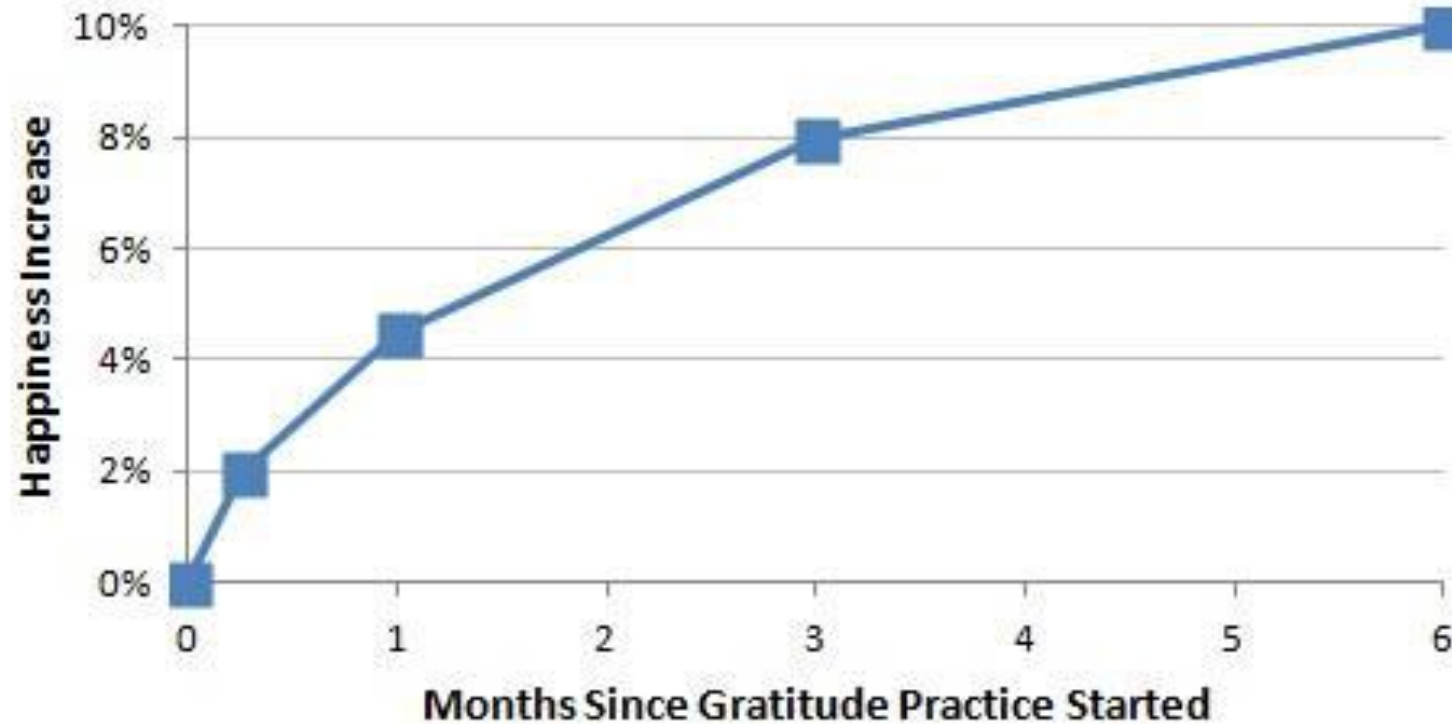
- ▶ Our emotions are Contagious [Mirror Neurons](#)
- ▶ The negativity Bias

Expressions That Create Safety

- ▶ You might not realize this but....
- ▶ You probably already know this but.....
- ▶ Contrasting statements. I don't want or intend I do want or intend

Effects of Writing in a Gratitude Journal

Effect of Gratitude Journal



Best Practices For Writing in a Gratitude Journal

- ▶ **Be specific**
 - ▶ **Surprise**
 - ▶ **Scarcity**
 - ▶ **Near misses**
-
- ▶ *Adopted from **Gratitude Works: a 21 day program for creating emotional prosperity** by Dr. Robert Emmons*

Tips for Making Your Gratitude Journal a Habit

- ▶ Do it the same day and time
- ▶ Have something to write with and a notebook handy.
- ▶ Find a time to do it when you are not rushed.

The Benefits of Practicing the Loving Kindness Meditation

- ▶ **WELL-BEING**
- ▶ **SOCIAL CONNECTION**
- ▶ **Decreases your bias towards others**
- ▶ **SELF-LOVE**
- ▶ **IMMEDIATE & LONG-TERM IMPACT**

Questions?/Stay Connected

- ▶ david@kindnessandgratitudeeveryday.com
- ▶ **Connect with me on Facebook search kindness and gratitude everyday**
- ▶ **Visit my webpage at:**
www.kindnessandgratitudeeveryday.com