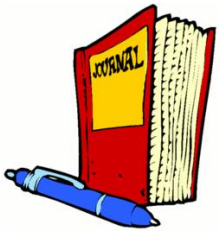

Making and Keeping a Gratitude Journal

Want to sleep better, stay healthier, and be happier? Keep a Gratitude Journal. Psychologists have found that all these benefits--and more—accrue to people who write down what they're thankful for just once or twice a week.

Supplies

Composition notebook
Scrapbooking paper and/or other decorative materials that can be used to decorate the journal cover (newspaper, magazines, wallpaper, duct tape, etc.)
Computer and printer (optional)
Scissors (decorative or regular)
Glue or glue sticks
Pens, pencils, markers

Instructions

Decorate the front of your composition notebook (your new gratitude journal) any way that makes you happy. Cut pictures from magazines, find and print images using a computer, or use any other craft papers/supplies and be creative! Use images of things you are grateful for or people, animals or things that make you happy. This is a work in progress, so add more images or items as your journal grows and matures. Somewhere on the journal cover, label it. Some ideas for names: Gratitude Journal, Thank You Diary, Book of Thanksgiving, What I'm Thankful For…,
When you take your journal home, take time to think about things you're grateful for and write an entry once or twice a week.

Gratitude Journal Tips

- Make a conscious decision to be a happier and more grateful person. It will work!
- Write a more detailed entry about one person or thing you're grateful for instead of just making a list of a lot of items.
- Focus on *people* you're thankful for instead of *things*.
- If you get stuck, think about what your life would be like *without* certain blessings.
- Write about things that surprise you instead of just your everyday routine. If it's out-of-the-ordinary, it tends to have more impact.
- Don't overdo it. Writing once or twice a week is better than writing every day.
- Don't hurry through your writing. Think about it and savor the experience. Don't let it be just another item on your "to-do" list.

[Journaling tips and research adapted from "Tips for Keeping a Gratitude Journal" by Jason Marsh. Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life. November 17, 2011. http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/tips_for_keeping_a_gratitude_journal. Accessed 03/11/2015.