



# GRATITUDE: THE SECRET INGREDIENT TO HIGH PERFORMANCE

**Unlock the Mindset That Drives  
Energy, Excellence, and  
Emotional Strength**

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TO HIGH PERFORMANCE







# Gratitude: The Secret Ingredient to High Performance



## Understanding Gratitude and Its Impact

Gratitude is commonly defined as a *thankful appreciation for what one receives*, whether tangible or intangible. [health.harvard.edu](https://www.health.harvard.edu). In practice, it means recognizing the goodness in our lives and acknowledging that its sources often lie outside ourselves. Far from being just a nice idea, gratitude is a powerful mindset that impacts both personal well-being and professional success. In fact, research in positive psychology has consistently found that gratitude is strongly associated with greater happiness and resilience – helping people experience more positive emotions, improve their health, cope with adversity, and build strong relationships. . Over two decades of studies suggest that cultivating gratitude can foster a positive mindset, boost creativity and innovation, build resilience, enhance overall well-being, and even strengthen our connections with others. [yourlifeabundant.com](https://yourlifeabundant.com). In other words, gratitude isn't just a feel-good habit – it's **the secret ingredient that can fuel high performance** in all areas of life.

- **Key Concept:** Gratitude rewires our brains to focus on the positive, leading to increased optimism and resilience.
  - **Impact:** Studies show that gratitude reduces stress, improves sleep, and enhances overall mental and physical health. These benefits contribute to greater focus, productivity, and creativity.
- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| ● <b>Improved Mood</b>          | These are just some of the <b>benefits</b> of cultivating gratitude. By consistently practicing gratitude, you create a positive feedback loop that enhances your personal and professional life. |
| ● <b>Reduced Stress</b>         |   |
| ● <b>Better Sleep</b>           |   |
| ● <b>Stronger Relationships</b> |   |
| ● <b>Increased Resilience</b>   |   |

## Actionable Strategies to Cultivate Gratitude





Building a gratitude habit doesn't require much time or money – just a bit of consistency. Here are a few proven gratitude practices that can help elevate your mindset and performance:

- **Reframe Negative Thoughts:** Challenge negative thoughts by focusing on the positive aspects of a situation. Ask yourself what you can learn from the experience and what you can be grateful for.
- **Plant Gratitude App:** Stay consistent and inspired with the *Plant Gratitude* app — take care of your plant by watering it with what you are grateful for. Set reminders to keep your practice going, create visual gratitude boards, journal, and even share appreciation with others in the community, and more. Whether you're just starting or deepening your practice, this app helps turn gratitude into a lasting habit.



- **Daily Gratitude Journaling:** Set aside a few minutes each day (or week) to write down things you're grateful for. This could be in a journal or the Plant Gratitude app – the key is to make it a routine. Research shows that people who kept gratitude journals for 10 weeks were *more optimistic and felt better about their lives and* even exercised more and had fewer health complaints than those who focused on hassles.- [health.harvard.edu](https://www.health.harvard.edu). The act of writing focuses your mind on positive aspects of your day, which over time can increase your overall optimism



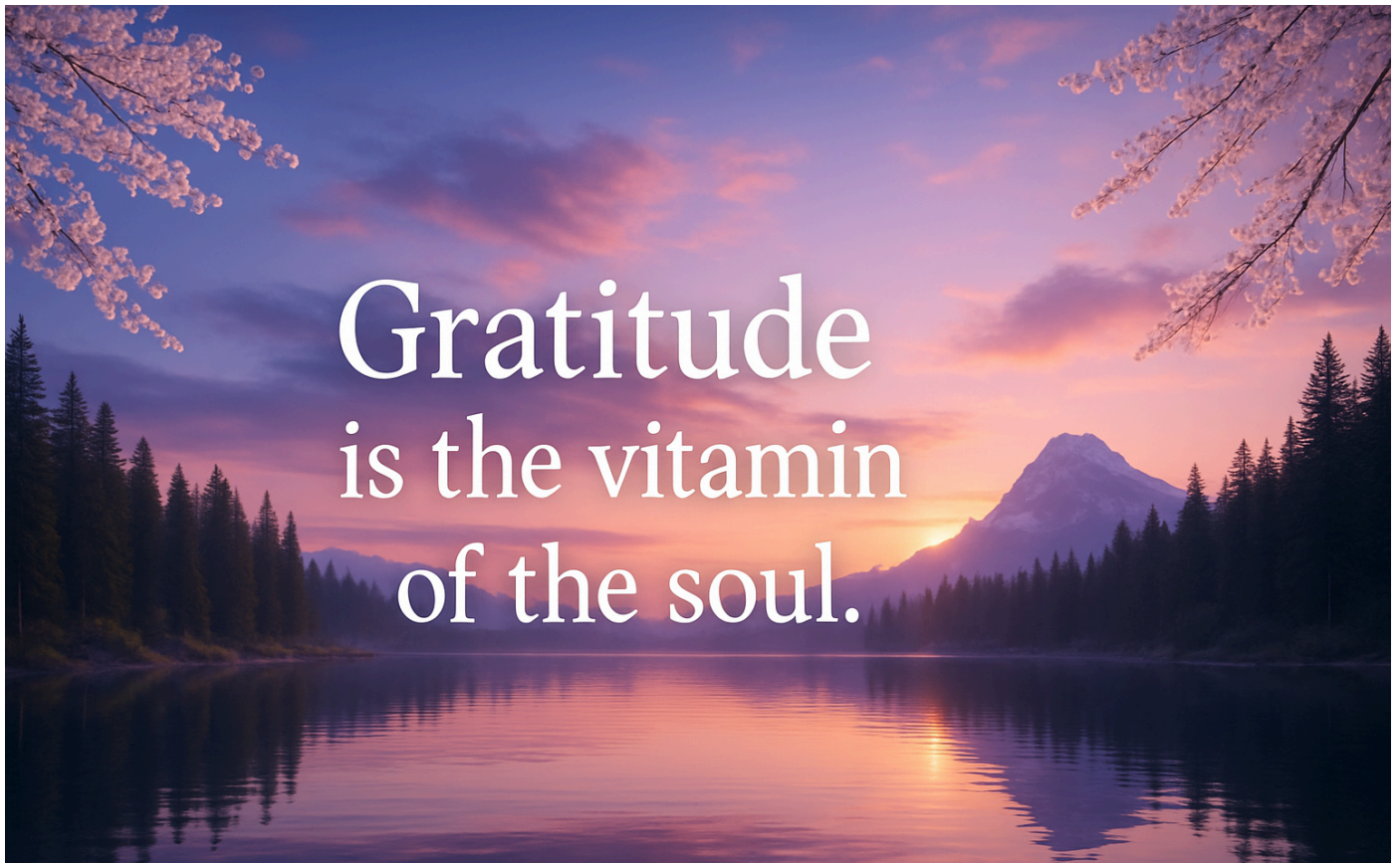
and motivation. Tip: try listing at least 3 good things each day, no matter how small – you’ll train yourself to scan for positives even in stressful times.

- **Gratitude Meditation:** Incorporate gratitude into your mindfulness or meditation practice. This can be as simple as closing your eyes and silently reflecting on the people and opportunities you appreciate or envisioning a positive experience and focusing on the feelings of thankfulness it brings. Such meditation can shift your mood by reducing stress and increasing feelings of peace. In fact, psychologists note that gratitude functions like a natural antidepressant – *regularly evoking gratitude can produce lasting effects similar to meditation or medication in promoting happiness*-[positivepsychology.com](http://positivepsychology.com). Even a brief gratitude visualization in the morning can prime your brain for a productive, upbeat day rather than a stressful one.
- **Expressing Thanks to Others:** Make it a habit to **express appreciation** to the people around you – colleagues, family, friends, mentors. This could be verbal praise, a message of gratitude to a friend, family member or community member on the Plant Gratitude app, a thank-you email, or even a handwritten note for something you value about them. Expressing gratitude not only lifts others up but also boosts your own happiness and strengthens your relationships. For example, in a classic study, participants who wrote and personally delivered a letter of gratitude to someone who had helped them showed a dramatic increase in happiness, with the positive effects lasting for a month.-[health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu). (This one-time gratitude letter had a greater impact on happiness than any other positive psychology intervention tested!- [health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu)) Similarly, couples who regularly express gratitude to each other report feeling more positive about their partner and more comfortable discussing concerns. - [health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu) – a reminder that saying “thank you” can enhance trust and communication. For a high performer, stronger relationships built on mutual appreciation can provide invaluable support, feedback, and collaboration. So, whether it’s thanking a team member for their hard work or telling a loved one how much they mean to you, *never underestimate the power of a sincere thank-you*.

By integrating these practices into your routine, you’ll start to cultivate a “gratitude mindset” that keeps you focused on opportunities and solutions rather than shortcomings. Over time, these habits train your brain to default to positivity, which can lead to better problem-solving, creativity, and perseverance – all key ingredients in high performance.



## Inspirational Stories and Quotes



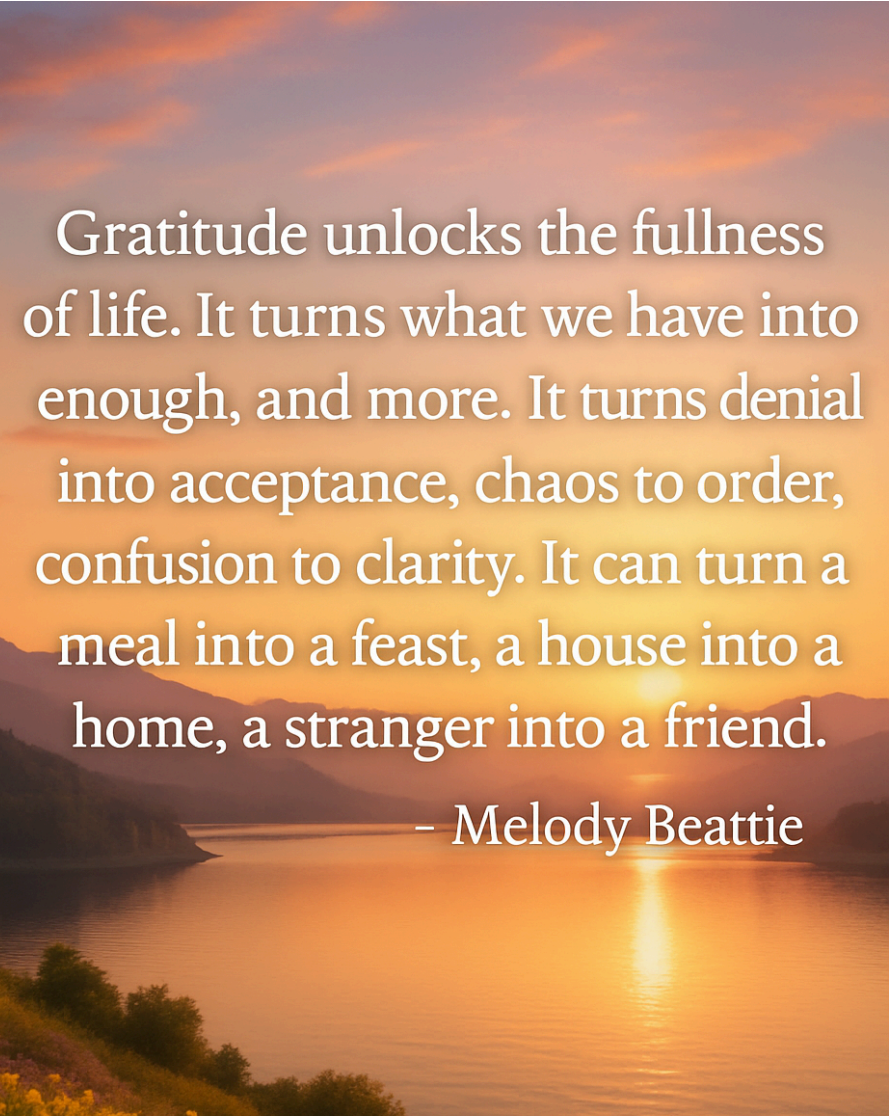
One of the best ways to understand the power of gratitude is to see how it plays out in the lives of real high achievers. Many successful individuals—from entrepreneurs and CEOs to authors and athletes—openly credit their *gratitude practice* as a crucial part of their success formula. Here are a few notable examples that show gratitude in action:

- **Oprah Winfrey (Media Executive & Philanthropist):** Oprah has long championed the practice of gratitude. She famously kept a daily gratitude journal for decades and often says that this practice was fundamental to her happiness and success- [yourlifeabundant.com](http://yourlifeabundant.com). By writing down five things she was grateful for every day, Oprah trained herself to focus on the positive. “*Gratitude is the single greatest treasure I will take with me,*” she said in the final episode of her talk show- [yourlifeabundant.com](http://yourlifeabundant.com). She attributes much of her personal growth to continually acknowledging her blessings – even during challenging times.
- **Sir Richard Branson (Founder of Virgin Group):** As a billionaire entrepreneur, Branson emphasizes the role of gratitude in leadership. He believes that *showing appreciation to employees and customers* is essential for building a thriving business- [yourlifeabundant.com](http://yourlifeabundant.com). Branson is known for fostering a positive company culture by praising effort and saying thank you. “*People flourish when they are praised,*” he noted, pointing out that even the most well-intended criticism can demoralize if it’s not balanced with appreciation- [yourlifeabundant.com](http://yourlifeabundant.com). His success story illustrates that a culture of gratitude in an organization can boost morale and performance at all levels.



- **Tony Robbins (Motivational Speaker & Peak Performance Coach):** Robbins, who coaches world-class performers, starts each morning with a 10-minute ritual focused on gratitude. He maintains that *without gratitude, you can't achieve true fulfillment*- [yourlifeabundant.com](http://yourlifeabundant.com). In his own words: *"Without appreciation and gratitude for what you already have, you'll never know true fulfillment."*- [yourlifeabundant.com](http://yourlifeabundant.com) By intentionally focusing on what he's thankful for every day, Robbins primes his mindset for success and keeps his energy and optimism high. He often recommends gratitude practices to his millions of followers as a strategy to overcome fear and negativity.
- **Sheryl Sandberg (Tech Executive & Author):** After facing the tragic loss of her husband, Sandberg (Facebook's former COO) turned to gratitude to help her cope and continue performing in her demanding role. She adopted the habit of writing down **three moments of joy** before bed each night – an approach she says *"changed my life"* by reframing her mindset- [yourlifeabundant.com](http://yourlifeabundant.com). *"Finding gratitude and appreciation is key to resilience,"* Sandberg explained in a commencement speech. *"People who take the time to list things they are grateful for are happier and healthier... counting your blessings can actually increase your blessings."*- [yourlifeabundant.com](http://yourlifeabundant.com) Sandberg's story is a powerful testament to how gratitude can build resilience. Despite immense challenges, practicing gratitude allowed her to maintain perspective, support her team at work, and continue to lead effectively.

These examples barely scratch the surface – countless other high performers, from Olympic athletes to renowned authors, have their own gratitude rituals. The common thread is clear: **gratitude isn't a luxury or "soft" skill, it's a core habit that fuels drive, creativity, and perseverance.** By learning from these role models and adopting similar practices, you too can tap into gratitude as a source of motivation and strength.



Gratitude unlocks the fullness  
of life. It turns what we have into  
enough, and more. It turns denial  
into acceptance, chaos to order,  
confusion to clarity. It can turn a  
meal into a feast, a house into a  
home, a stranger into a friend.

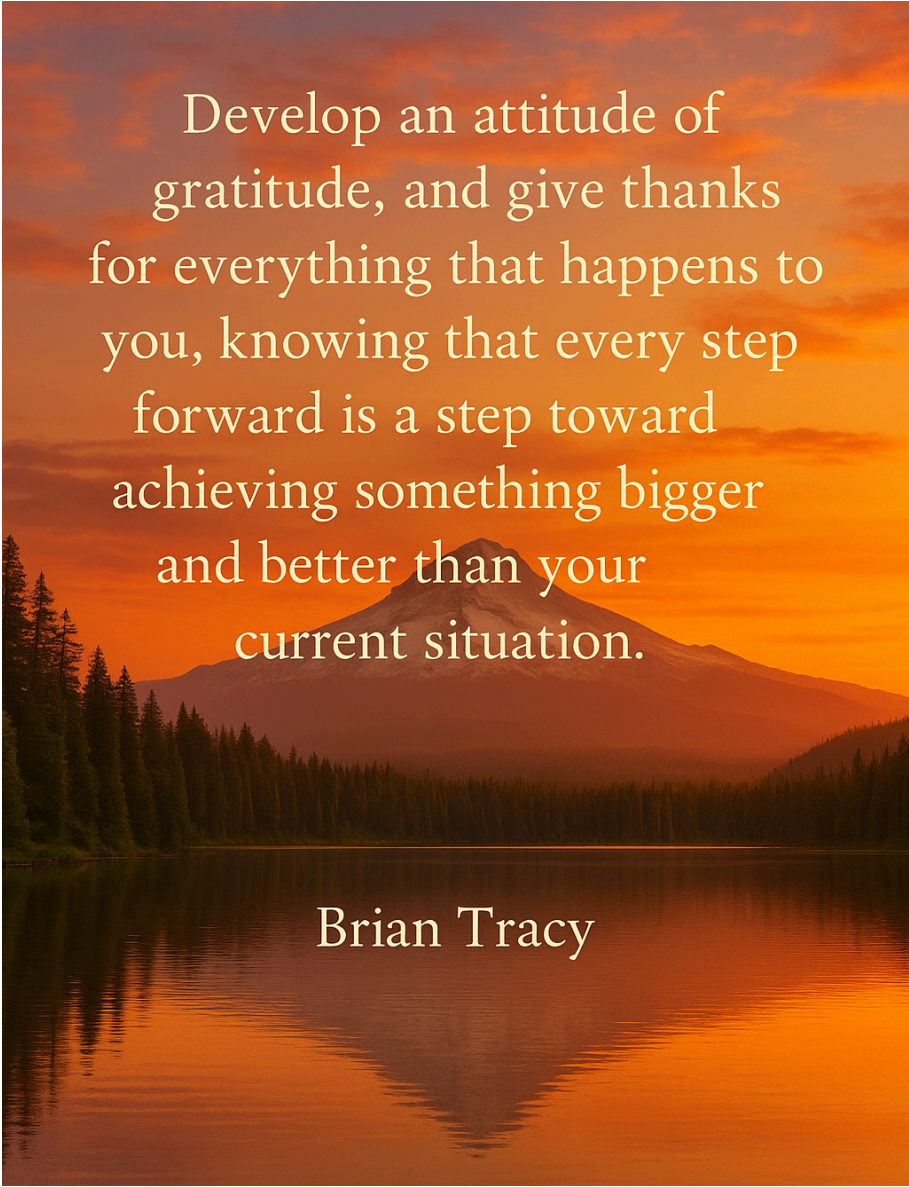
– Melody Beattie



“What you appreciate  
appreciates.”

Lynne Twist



A scenic landscape featuring a mountain peak in the background, a dense forest of evergreen trees in the middle ground, and a calm body of water in the foreground. The sky is a vibrant orange and red, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The entire scene is reflected in the still water.

Develop an attitude of  
gratitude, and give thanks  
for everything that happens to  
you, knowing that every step  
forward is a step toward  
achieving something bigger  
and better than your  
current situation.

Brian Tracy

## Implementing Gratitude in the Workplace

Bringing gratitude into an organization's culture can dramatically improve team morale, trust, and even productivity. Yet, surveys find that gratitude is often *underutilized* at work – people are actually less likely to express gratitude on the job than anywhere else, and a striking 74% of employees **never or rarely thank their boss-** [exactstaff.com](https://www.exactstaff.com). Overlooking appreciation in the workplace is a missed opportunity, since a culture of gratitude can lead to more engaged and high-performing teams. The good news is that leaders and colleagues at any level can take steps to foster a grateful workplace. Here are some strategies for **implementing gratitude in the workplace**:



- **Lead by Example:** Workplace gratitude starts at the top. Leaders and managers should model the behavior by thanking employees *formally and informally*, for big wins and small efforts alike. A simple “thank you” from a leader can have a huge impact on motivation. For instance, when managers at a university call center told fundraisers they were grateful for their efforts, those employees *made 50% more calls* in the following week than others who didn’t receive such thanks- [health.harvard.edu](https://health.harvard.edu). The effect is clear – when people feel valued, they bring more energy and dedication to their work. Make it a point to regularly acknowledge your team’s contributions. As one guide advises managers: don’t just criticize when something’s wrong, also **praise good work and express gratitude**, because employees *want to feel appreciated* for who they are and what they do- [exactstaff.com/greatergood.berkeley.edu](https://exactstaff.com/greatergood.berkeley.edu).
- **Make Appreciation Personal:** Avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to showing gratitude. Different people prefer to be recognized in different ways – some might love public praise, while others feel happiest with a sincere one-on-one thank you or a handwritten note. Tailor your expressions of gratitude to the individual. This idea is similar to the concept of “love languages” but applied to appreciation at work- [greatergood.berkeley.edu](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu). For example, you might surprise a teammate with a quick thank-you card, give a shout-out in a team meeting, or send an appreciative email, or gratitude message on the Plant Gratitude app highlighting exactly what you value about their work. Personalizing gratitude shows authenticity, which makes it far more meaningful. It sends the message that you see each person’s unique contributions. As a bonus, you’ll likely strengthen your professional relationships – coworkers tend to trust and cooperate more with those who appreciate them.
- **Encourage Peer-to-Peer Thanks:** Gratitude shouldn’t only flow from the top down. High-performing teams cultivate an environment where colleagues freely thank and support one another. You can introduce simple practices like starting team meetings with a quick “gratitude round” where each person mentions something a coworker did that they’re thankful for. Some



companies create a kudos channel in Slack or a bulletin board where employees can post thank-you notes for colleagues. When appreciation comes from *all directions*, it reinforces a sense of teamwork and shared purpose. Researchers note that for gratitude to really take hold, it should be embraced bottom-up as well as top-down- [greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu). By empowering everyone to express gratitude (and not ridiculing or ignoring it), you build a more supportive, positive team dynamic. Over time, this can transform the workplace into a community where people “have each other’s backs,” which elevates performance and loyalty.

- **Integrate Gratitude into the Culture:** Consistency is key to making gratitude part of your organizational DNA. Rather than treating it as a one-off gimmick (like an annual thank-you week), weave gratitude into everyday routines and values. This could mean opening meetings by acknowledging recent successes and the people behind them or ending the week by highlighting things the team is grateful for. Some leaders regularly include shout-outs in internal newsletters or dedicate a section of team calls to appreciation. According to experts, adding a brief gratitude practice to regular staff meetings or communications helps keep it *top of mind*, whereas a once-a-year thank-you event isn’t enough- [greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu). The goal is to **create an ongoing culture of appreciation**. When gratitude is embedded in how you operate, employees are more likely to feel seen and supported on a daily basis. They also become more comfortable voicing appreciation themselves. Over time, such a culture leads to deeper connections among team members and a stronger emotional commitment to the organization’s mission- [greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu). Employees actually *want* to come to work when they know their contributions will be valued, rather than feeling like cogs in a machine- [greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu).

Fostering workplace gratitude may require some conscious effort, especially in cultures that are used to strictly “professional” (sometimes impersonal) interactions- [greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu). But the effort is well worth it. Companies that have prioritized gratitude – like a well-known example of Campbell Soup’s former CEO who wrote **30,000 personal thank-you notes** to employees – often see higher morale and loyalty- [greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu). Gratitude and high-performance feed into each other: an appreciative environment boosts employee engagement and productivity, which in turn gives everyone more to be grateful for. By leading with gratitude and encouraging it at all levels, you create a positive feedback loop that can transform not just your workplace culture, but your bottom-line results as well.

## Gratitude for High Performance



*In summary, **gratitude is a simple practice that offers profound benefits.** By shifting our focus to the positive and recognizing those who help us, we improve our mindset, our health, our relationships, and our ability to perform at our best. Gratitude truly is the “secret ingredient” to high performance – it fuels us with greater happiness, resilience in the face of challenges, and stronger connections with the people around us. As research has shown, practicing gratitude can improve everything from sleep and physical health to creativity, decision-making, and stress levels- [positivepsychology.com](https://www.positivepsychology.com). It’s a keystone habit that makes it easier to excel in other areas of life.*

*The best part is that gratitude is **accessible to everyone**. It doesn’t require special training or circumstances – just a willingness to pause and appreciate the good. You can start small: take a minute each day to reflect on a success or kindness or say a heartfelt thank-you to a colleague. Over time, these small acts add up to a big shift in perspective. Instead of dwelling on obstacles or what’s lacking, you’ll find yourself motivated by what’s possible and empowered by the support you have. High performers often say that gratitude keeps them grounded and focused, especially under pressure. Likewise, when you incorporate gratitude into your daily routine, you create a stable foundation for sustained high performance.*

*In closing, remember that **gratitude is a practice, not a one-time achievement**. Much like physical exercise builds your body, gratitude exercises build your mental and emotional strength. Commit to practicing a little gratitude each day – whether through journaling, meditation, or a simple thank-you message – and observe how it transforms your outlook and performance. You might be surprised at how this “secret ingredient” unlocks new levels of energy, effectiveness, and fulfillment in your life. By appreciating what you have, you pave the way to achieving what you want. So start today: take a moment to acknowledge something or someone you’re grateful for, and let that feeling propel you toward your highest potential.*



# Resources



For further reading and inspiration on gratitude and high performance, check out these resources:

- **Greater Good Science Center – Gratitude Research** – UC Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center offers articles and tips on the science of gratitude, such as *“How Gratitude Can Transform Your Workplace.”* This research-based piece explores strategies for building a grateful work culture and cites studies linking gratitude to better health, fewer sick days, and higher job satisfaction- [greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu)[greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu).
- **Harvard Health – *Giving Thanks Can Make You Happier*** – An informative Harvard Medical School article that reviews research on gratitude (by Dr. Robert Emmons and others) and provides practical tips. It discusses studies where gratitude journaling improved well-being and gratitude letters boosted happiness for both writers and recipients- [health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu)[health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu). A great overview of why and how gratitude works.
- **TED Talk – “*Want to be Happy? Be Grateful*”** by *David Steindl-Rast*. In this popular TED Talk, a Benedictine monk explains the connection between gratitude and happiness, and shares wisdom on practicing grateful living in everyday life. It’s an inspiring watch that reinforces how shifting our perspective to gratitude can profoundly change our life outlook.
- **Book – *Thanks!: How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier*** by *Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D.* (2007). Written by one of the leading researchers on gratitude, this book dives into the psychology and science behind gratitude. It shares findings from experiments and offers guidance on cultivating gratitude to improve your well-being. A foundational read for understanding gratitude’s impact.

- **Book – *Leading with Gratitude: Eight Leadership Practices for Extraordinary Business Results*** by Adrian Gostick & Chester Elton (2020). This book focuses on gratitude in the workplace. It provides real company examples and practical advice for managers to build a culture of appreciation. A valuable resource for anyone looking to boost team performance and morale through gratitude.
- **Online Course – *The Science of Well-Being*** (Coursera/Yale University). This popular free course (available online) covers research-backed habits for happiness, including the practice of gratitude. It offers exercises like gratitude journaling as part of a broader personal development curriculum. A hands-on way to deepen your gratitude practice while learning the science of happiness.

Each of these resources can further expand your understanding of gratitude's role in high performance and offer new ideas to keep your practice fresh. Whether you prefer reading scientific insights, watching motivational talks, or following guided exercises, there's something here for you. Dive in and continue your journey toward a more grateful, high-performing life!

## Keep the Gratitude Going

We hope this guide has provided you with valuable insights and practical tips to harness the power of gratitude in your own life. **Now it's your turn to put it into action.** Try adopting one of the gratitude practices outlined above for the next week and observe the effects on your mood and productivity. You may be surprised at the boost in positivity and focus you experience. Remember, consistency is key – the benefits of gratitude compound over time.

If you found this resource helpful, consider *sharing the gift of gratitude* with others. Encourage family, friends or colleagues to start their own gratitude habit or invite them to join the Legacy Minds- Plant Gratitude community for more personal development, health and high-performance tips. (Rather than simply forwarding this PDF, you can let others know how to sign up to receive their own copy – that way they'll also gain access to our future exclusive content and updates.) By spreading the word about the impact of gratitude, you'll help create a ripple effect of positivity and high performance in your circle.

Thank you for reading **Gratitude: The Secret Ingredient to High Performance**. Your commitment to growth and appreciation is what this community is all about. In the meantime, keep practicing gratitude daily – and watch as new opportunities, stronger relationships, and greater success unfold in your life. We are here to help guide you on your journey of growth through gratitude!

