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SUPERINTENDENT

NORTHERN CASS
SCHOOL DISTRICT

MARCH 2021

A RURAL SCHOOL'S JOURNEY TO IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS FOR ALL

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will identify why school-based services are a necessity.
 - Participants will identify traits/characteristics of today's learners.
 - Participants will identify strategies to build wellness in self and others.
 - Participants will engage in self-reflection.
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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NORMS

- Ask questions
- Engage fully
- Integrate new information
- Open your mind to diverse views
- Utilize what you learn
- Monitor Your own device
- No Qualifiers
 - Note: Please keep your mics muted when you aren't talking

AGENDA

- Introduction
- Why
- Learners Today
- Northern Cass Approach
- Great Organizations and People Do
- Strategies to Help

A LITTLE ABOUT ME

- Educator (teacher, coach, and admin)
- Father (DelRae and Kelsa)
- Husband (Jessica)
- TEDx (The 'F' Word)

NORTHERN CASS 'WHY'

- We believe every learner can change the world; therefore, we will provide a world class education.
- **Discussion**
 - Why is knowing your 'why' so important?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU KNOW YOUR WHY?

- Know Your Why

MY WHY

- Personal to me
- Blessed with clinical depression

GREATEST GENERATION OF LEARNERS

- Think differently
- Care differently
- Expect to be challenged
- Learning must be relevant
- No regurgitation of something 'Google' can do
- 'Kids these days' are simply product of a society WE have created
- Change the world

STRANGE TIMES

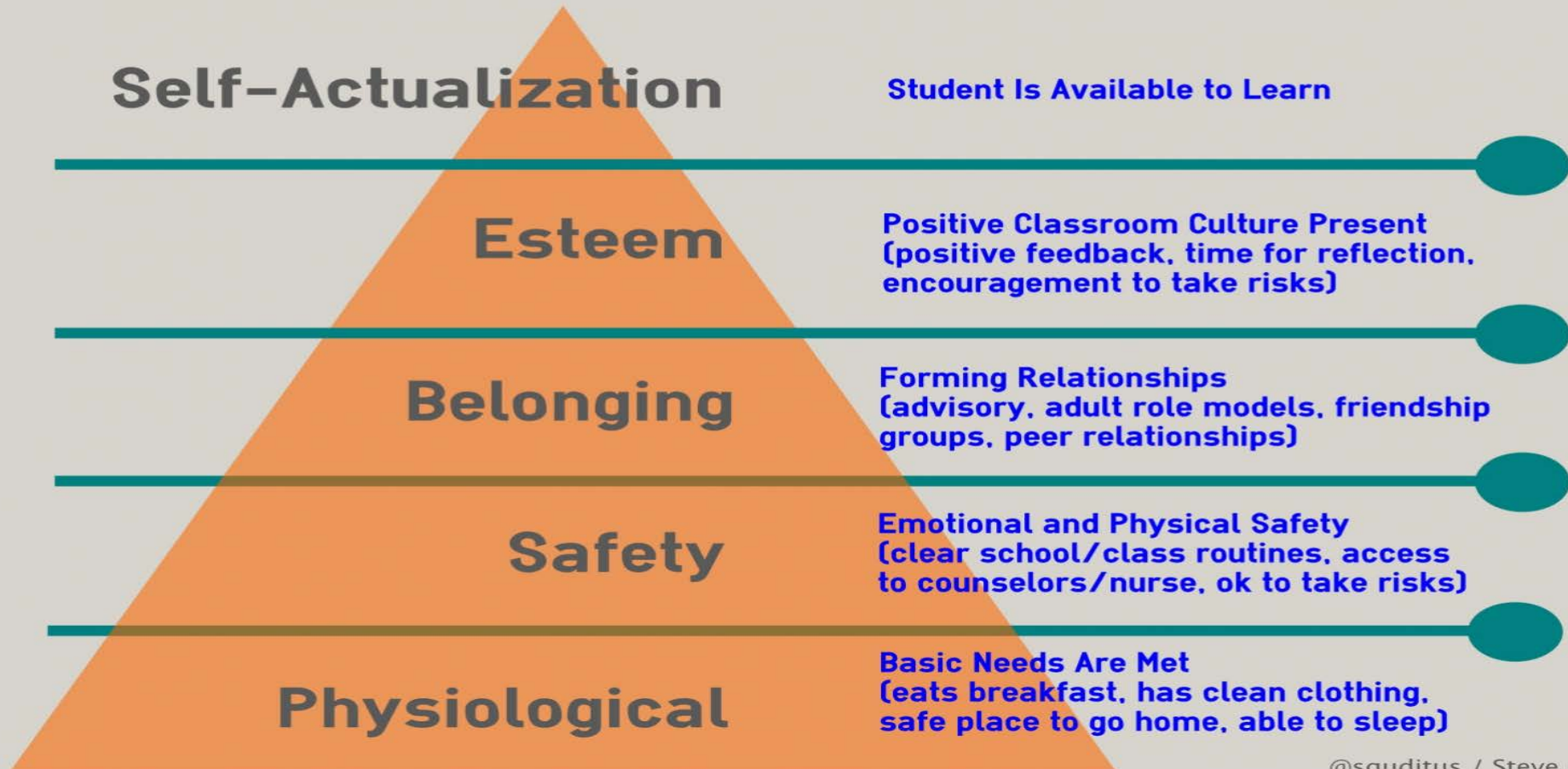
- Check engine
- Cell phone
- Head and the heart
- When we know better, we must do better

MENTAL HEALTH: A COMMUNITY PROBLEM...A COMMUNITY SOLUTION


- Epidemic
- Why should you care?
 - Workers
 - Neighbors
 - Son or Daughter-In-Law
 - Babysitter

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Maslow's Hierarchy of School Needs



WHO ARE OUR LEARNERS?

-
- Hungry (I'm starving)
 - Caretakers
 - Poor
 - Non-nuclear
 - Employed as a primary wage earner
 - Hurt (physical and emotional)
 - Grieving
 - Depressed, lonely, stressed, and anxious
 - Disregarded
 - Busy
- 

WHAT'S IN A BACKPACK?

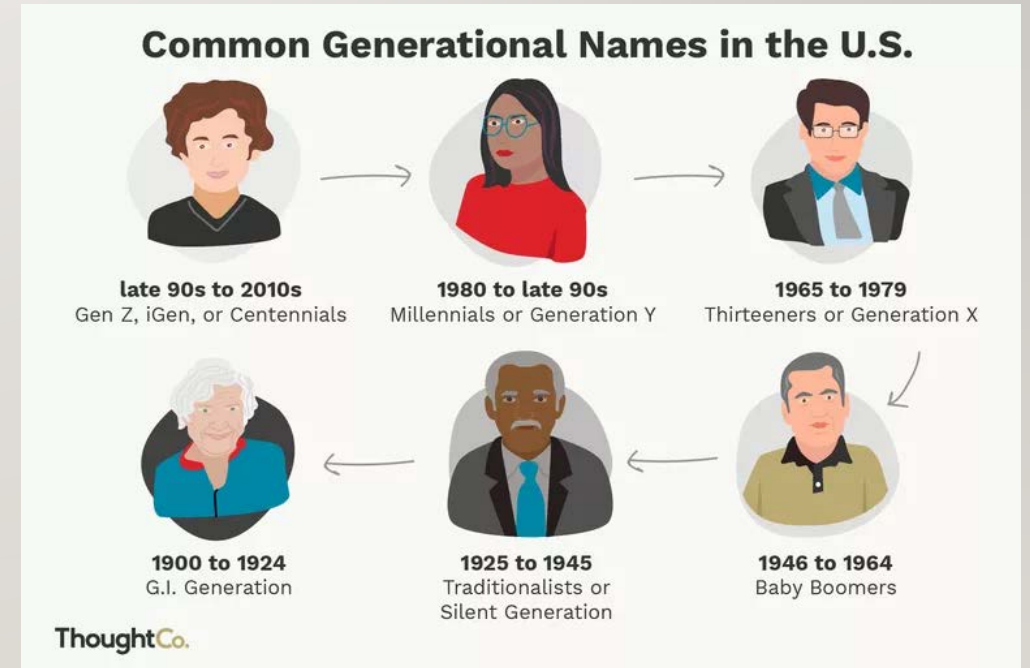
- Invisible backpack
 - Joe

SOME RESEARCH

- iGen – Why Today’s Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy – and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood (2017).
- Data from this book is pulled from 4 National Surveys
 - Monitoring the Future
 - American Freshman Survey
 - General Social Survey
 - Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System

WHO OR WHAT IS AN IGEN?

- Born after 1995
- Grew up with cell phones
- Had an Instagram page before they started high school
- Do not remember a time before the Internet



WE KNOW...

- iGen are growing up more slowly
 - Dating
 - Going places with their parents
 - Sexually active
 - Driver's license
 - Part time jobs
 - Drinking
- **Discussion: Are teens willing participants in growing up more slowly or are they being forced into it?**

MENTAL HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

- The risk for unhappiness due to social media use is the highest for the youngest teens.
 - 8th graders who spent ten or more hours a week on social networking sites were 56% more likely to be unhappy, compared to 39% for 10th graders and 14% for 12th graders
 - 31% more 8th and 10th graders felt lonely in 2015 than 2011 along with 22% more 12th graders.
 - 48% more girls felt left out in 2015 than in 2010, compared to a 27% increase for boys.

DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

- The Youth Risk Behavioral Study (YRBS) study assesses suicide risk by asking whether a student has at least one of the following:
 - Feeling very sad and hopeless for two weeks (30.5% from 28.9%)
 - Seriously considering committing suicide (18.8% from 16.7%)
 - Made a plan to commit suicide (15.3% from 14.5%)
 - Having attempted to commit suicide (13.0% from 13.5%)

- **Suicide rates among teens have increased substantially**

LACK OF SLEEP

- Teens who sleep LESS than 7 hours per night are also 68% more likely to have at least one risk factor for suicide.
- Percentage of students who got 8 or more hours of sleep on an average school night (29.5% from 31.5%).

THE NEW MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

- iGen is on the verge of the most severe mental health epidemic for young people **in history**.
- Boomers, Gen X'ers and Millennials steadily increased their view of themselves in a positive light.
- iGen put on a happy face...but is it real?

THE PARADOX OF IGEN

- An optimism and self-confidence online that covers a deep vulnerability, even depression, in real life. That's the story of iGener's life on social media, and it is increasingly the story of their generation. Like the ducks they imitate in their selfies, iGen'ers are calm and composed on the surface but paddling madly underneath.

WHAT WE DID WITH THIS INFORMATION

- Commitment to social emotional learning (SEL)
 - SEL Course
 - [Testimonial](#)
- Circles
 - Learners and Educators
- The Village Family Service Center and Northern Cass (United Way)
 - Therapist
 - Expansion of Services in Rural Districts (Burgum Foundation)
- NDSU Partnership with Counseling Department

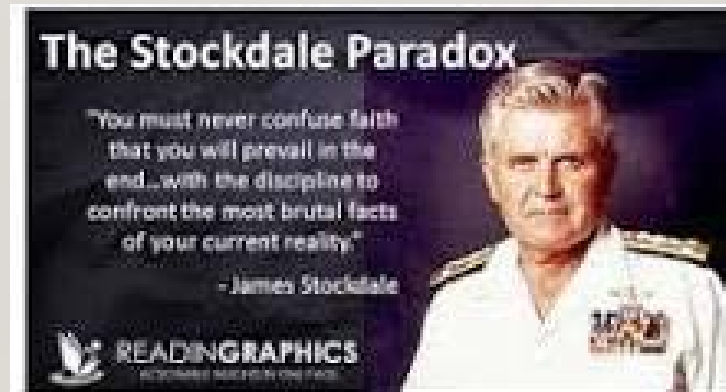
FOUNDATION OF AN ORGANIZATION OR PERSON

- **Discussion:**

- What is it great organizations do to take care of their employees?
- What is it great parents do to take care of their children?
- What is it great communities do to take care of their residents?

THEY OWN IT!

- ‘Retain faith that you will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties and at the same time confront the brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be’ (Stockdale)



THEY FOCUS

- People think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are. You have to pick carefully.
 - Steve Jobs

GREATNESS

- *“If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.’” --Martin Luther King, Jr.*



THE BATHROOM ATTENDANT DID WHAT?

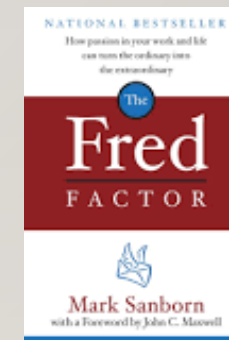


SECRET #1

- Everyone makes a difference
 - At the end of the day, you must ask yourself if you made **positive** difference
 - Don't be above doing anything you would ask others to do
- Everything is built on relationships
 - More than just saying hi, but getting to know who people are
- You must continually create value for others, and it doesn't have to cost a lot
- You can reinvent yourself...a little bit...every day

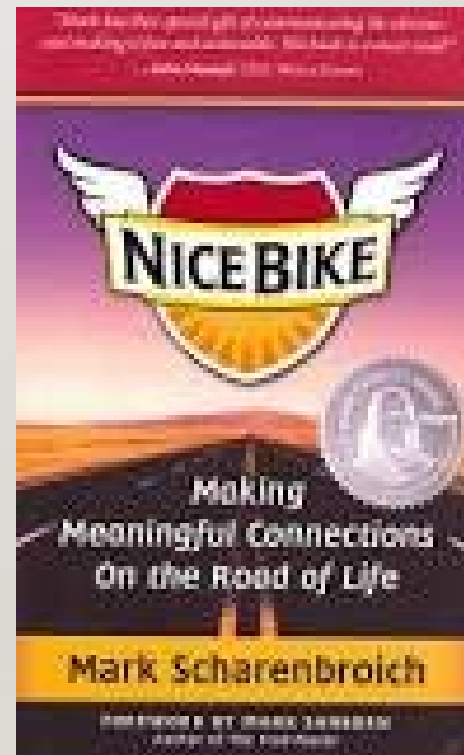
SECRET #2

- Tim...the tech guy...is a 'Fred'
- Myles...the grocery store worker...is a 'Fred'
- Your organization has these people, but are you taking the time to recognize them?



SECRET #3

- Nice Bike
 - Carlos...the taxi-cab driver
- Northern Cass Nice Bike
 - We do it once a month
 - Process
 - Select the person
 - 'Chair' and recognition
 - Read the book and pass on
- Who will you nominate?



SECRET #4

- The Bounce Back Project (Buffalo, MN) and Video
 - Kindness
 - Gratitude

WHAT CAN YOU DO?



PRACTICING GRATITUDE



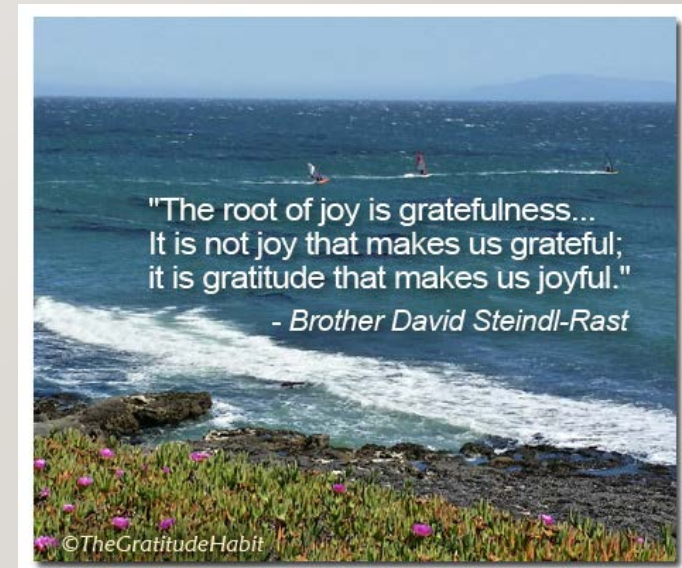
GRATITUDE SHARE

- Start every meeting/dinner/conversation with gratitude
- Let's practice

- **Discussion: What are the benefits of gratitude?**

THE BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE

- Decreased depressive symptoms and increased feelings of well-being
- Improved working memory
- Improved sleep
- Improved immune system function
- Increased empathy and reduced aggression
- Improved coping with emotional upheavals
- A more joyful life



GRATITUDE PRACTICES



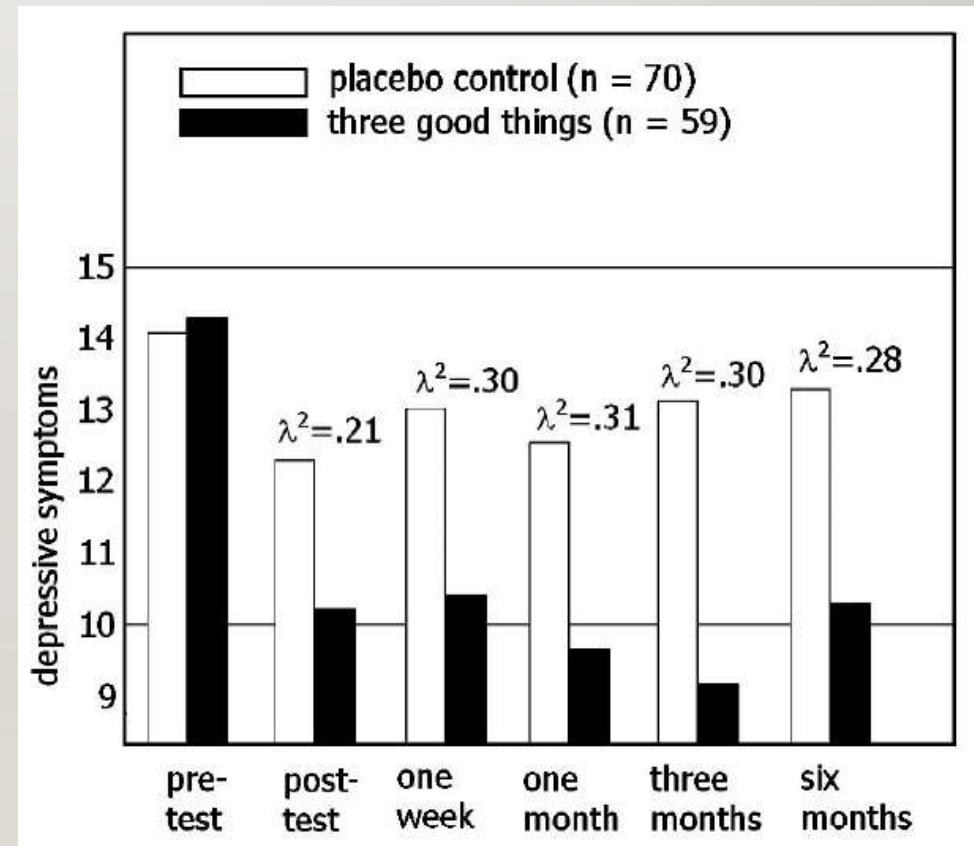
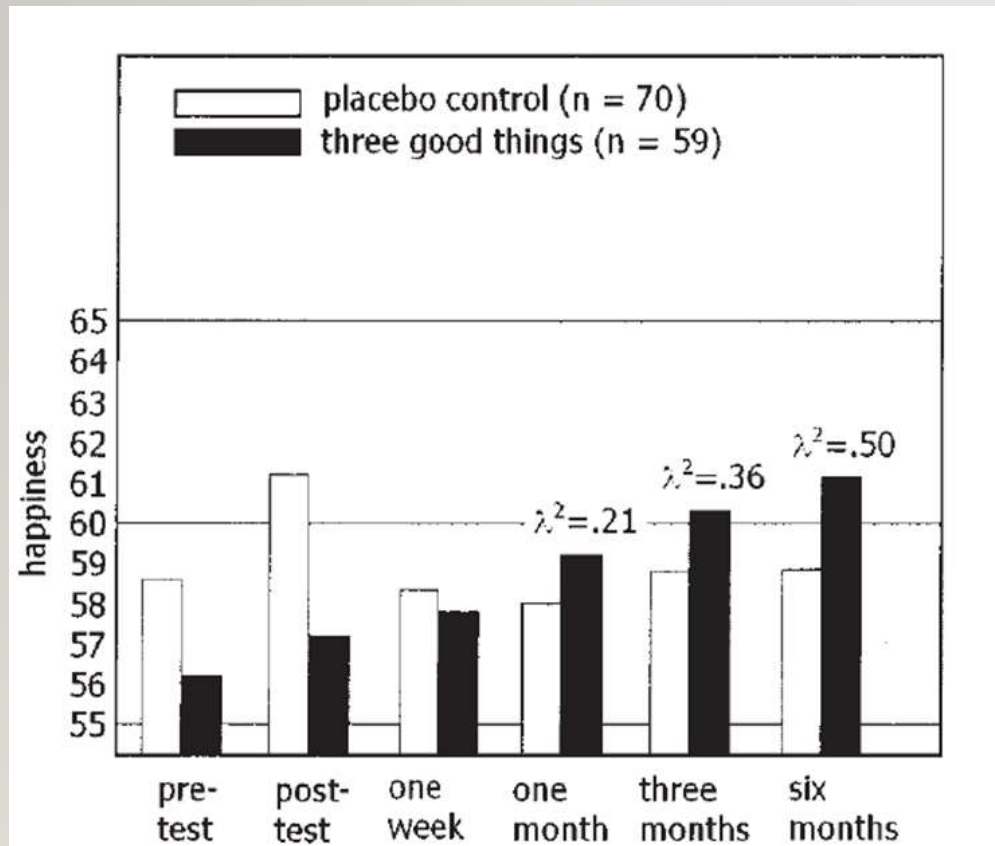
GRATITUDE PRACTICES – THREE GOOD THINGS

- Each day for at least one week, write down three things what went well for you that day and an explanation of why they went well.
 - You must write these things down; it is not nearly as effective if you just do this in your head.
- This practice gives the pause in our day to remember the good things that happened, and we can begin to focus on and savor the good in our life.
- Writing about the “why” of what went well helps us focus on the deeper goodness in our lives, not just the events.
- Time Required: 10 minutes a day or less



THREE GOOD THINGS EVIDENCE

(SELIGMAN, STEEN, PARK & PETERSEN, 2005)



GRATITUDE PRACTICES – GRATITUDE JOURNALING

- Grab a notebook or journal and begin writing what you are grateful for
 - Write up to 5 things for which you are grateful
 - What you write about can be of minor importance (I had a delicious lunch) or of major importance (I got a promotion)
 - The goal is to remember the good people, things, and experiences of the day and feel the positive emotions that come with it
 - The physical act of writing is critical – don't just do this in your head
- There is no “wrong way” to keep a gratitude journal, but for best results:
 - Write at least one entry a week for at least two weeks

BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE JOURNALING

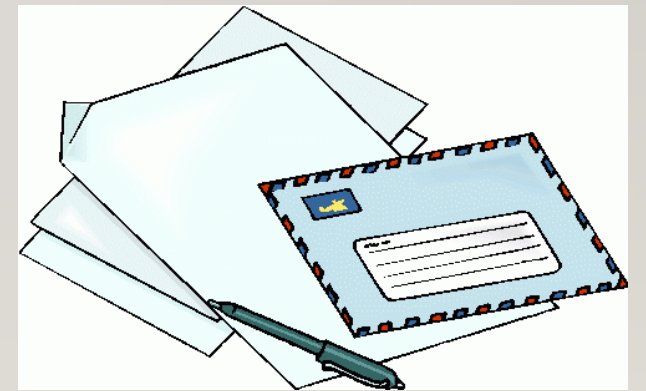


- These effects were true for people who wrote in their journals daily for 2 weeks or weekly for 10 weeks



GRATITUDE PRACTICES – GRATITUDE LETTERS & VISITS

- Write a letter of gratitude to someone, and for best results read it to them in person¹
- Call to mind someone you are grateful to but to whom you never expressed that gratitude
 - This could be a relative, friend, teacher, or colleague
 - Try to think of someone you haven't thought about in a while
 - Write it to them directly: Dear _____,
 - Describe what they did and how they affected your life
 - Keep it to about one page
 - **Who will you commit to writing?**



KINDNES S BENEFITS EVERYONE

- Acts of kindness can result in a “helpers high” that lead to more health benefits than from exercise or quitting smoking
- Do you want a longer happiness fix?
 - Five acts of kindness in a week will increase your happiness for up to three months.



LET'S BRAINSTORM

1. What are random acts of kindness you could do TODAY?
 1. Type your answer in the chat.



SIMPLE ACTS OF KINDNESS

1. Practice courtesy: Holding the door and saying “please” and “thank you” are easy ways to practice kindness.
2. Offer to return a supermarket cart.
3. Write a gratitude letter to someone who has been a positive force in your life.



SIMPLE ACTS OF KINDNESS

5. Call a relative or friend to see how they're doing.
6. Offer to pick up groceries or medications for someone who is ill.
7. Buy a cup of coffee for a stranger.
8. Write a 'Greatness Card'.

“ Kindness can become its own motive. We are made kind by being kind. ”

- Eric Hoffer



SIMPLE ACTS OF KINDNESS



9. For five minutes, listen to someone without interrupting.
10. Slow down. Research tells us you are more likely to be kind to others when you are not in a hurry.
11. Give someone you love a hug. Say, "I love you."
12. If you can afford it, contribute a few dollars when someone comes up short in the check-out line.

FINAL THOUGHT

- *"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; . . . who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."*
- ~ **Theodore Roosevelt**

QUESTIONS

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