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*“A Season for Gratitude”*

As Thanksgiving and the holiday season approach, it's the perfect time to slow down and focus on gratitude. In the midst of busy schedules, family gatherings, and endless to-do lists, taking time to reflect on what we are thankful for can bring balance and perspective to our lives.

Gratitude is the feeling of thankfulness and appreciation for what is valuable or meaningful in life. Gratitude is a mindset that helps notice the good, even in ordinary moments. Studies have shown that practicing gratitude can increase happiness, improve physical and mental health, help people cope with adversity, and strengthen relationships. In short, gratitude can change how we experience life for the better.

There are many simple ways to cultivate gratitude, whether privately or by sharing it with others. One easy practice is gratitude journaling. Take a few minutes each day or several times a week to write down three to five things you're grateful for. Be specific. Instead of writing "I'm thankful for my family," you can write "I'm thankful for the laughter around our dinner table tonight." Challenge yourself to find new things you are grateful for to avoid repeats. Another fun idea is to start a gratitude jar. Keep small slips of paper nearby, and whenever something good happens, jot it down and drop it in the jar. Over time, your jar will fill up and can be used on difficult days to remind yourself of the people and moments that bring joy and meaning to your life.

Consider writing a thank-you letter or card to someone who has made a difference in your life. Describe in detail how they've impacted you, what you admire about them, and why you're grateful for their presence. If you are comfortable deliver it in person, otherwise mailing it is just as meaningful. If writing cards isn't your style, a quick text can still make someone's day. Try setting a small goal to message one or two people each morning before a certain time. Tell them something specific you appreciate about them or simply thank them for being part of your life.

Ultimately, gratitude doesn't require grand gestures, just a willingness to notice and appreciate what's already around you. Whether you express it quietly to yourself or share it with others. Practicing gratitude can bring more joy, peace, and connection to your holiday season and everyday life.

Information comes from Kansas State University Publications.