

# *Gratitude Journal* Electronic (E)-Book



Compiled by:

**Danny Pettry, MS, CTRS**  
**Recreational Therapist**



# *Gratitude Journal* **Electronic (E)-Book**

Compiled by: **Danny W. Pettry, II, MS, CTRS**, Recreational Therapist

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Cover Graphic Acknowledgement

*Abstract heart illustration* was designed by Kristy Pargeter of England. You can visit her site online: [www.picturethespace.com](http://www.picturethespace.com).

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### **How To Feel Better - Guaranteed**

"There is nothing to be glad about today." This is the common theme I hear from the children who I provide services for at a residential treatment facility. All of these children are victims of physical, emotional, and/ or sexual abuse and they have learned to act out the same aggressive behaviors on others.

My job as a recreational therapist is to help maintain and improve each child's overall social, emotional, and physical health. Naturally, these children need to learn to be happy again, but it is often difficult for them.

I allow each child to keep a daily gratitude journal. At the start of each day, the child gets to write down one thing he or she is grateful for and shares it aloud with the group.

### **Gratitude is the Key.**

According to Wikipedia:

Individuals who are induced to feel grateful are more likely to behave prosocially toward their benefactor (Tsang, 2006)<sup>1</sup> or toward unrelated others (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006)<sup>2</sup>.

Naturally, children who are abuse-reactive need to learn to feel happier and to develop prosocial behaviors.

### **Focus on the Positive**

It is easy to focus on the negative. I often tell the children, I could complain about hundreds of things today, but I choose not to. Instead, I'm going to focus on something positive. I often share the story of the motivational speaker W. Mitchell who has survived two life-threatening accidents. First, he survived a motorcycle accident. Second, he survived a plane crash.

It would be easy for him to complain, but instead, here is what W. Mitchell says:

"Before I was paralyzed there were 10,000 I could do; now there are 9,000. I can either dwell on the 1,000 I lost or focus on the 9,000 I have left."

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<sup>1</sup> Tsang, (2006) Gratitude and prosocial behavior: An experimental test of gratitude. *Cognition and Emotion*, 20, 138-148

<sup>2</sup> Bartlett, M.Y., & DeSteno, D. (2006). Gratitude and prosocial behavior: Helping when it costs you. *Psychological Science*, 17, 319-325.

## Gratitude Journal

Bethany Hamilton is another great example. She survived a rare shark in attack while surfing, which she lost her left arm at the age of 13. Where is she today? Bethany is a pro-surfer. She could have easily complained and gave the excuse that she could never surf again because she only has one arm. In 2005, Bethany won the National Scholastic Surfing Association (NSSA) Championship. You can find Bethany on myspace: [www.myspace.com/surferbethanyhamilton](http://www.myspace.com/surferbethanyhamilton)

Start today to focus on the positive. Choose to be grateful everyday. There is always something to be grateful for, but it is your choice to focus on it.

Use this gratitude journal to keep record of all the things you are grateful for. It is your journal. Use it anyway you wish. I recommend using it once daily.

Thank you for reading. I'm glad you did and I hope you fill this gratitude journal full of wonderful things.

Yours truly,



Danny W. Pettry, MS, CTRS  
Recreational Therapist

## Gratitude Journal

Date	What are you grateful for today?

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