

10 Great Ways to Show You're Grateful Today

He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has. ~Epictetus

Have you said thank-you to someone to show how grateful you are for them today? It's such a small thing, but it can have a huge impact on your life, and the life of that person.



Photo by [kalandrakas](#)



Find little ways to [incorporate gratitude](#) in your life, and you'll be much happier ... and you'll make the people around you much happier as well. That'll have a ripple effect that will make the world a better place ... with such a small gesture!

Saying thank you isn't hard at all. But the words can lose meaning if they're just words. You need to say them with sincerity, or show your gratitude through little actions.

Can you imagine a world where everyone showed gratitude? If someone did you a kindness, you'd give them a warm smile and say thank you. If you were having a bad day, someone else would take time out of her life to comfort you, out of gratitude for a kindness you did her yesterday. People would still get angry, or sad, but would know to find ways to be grateful, even in difficult situations.

I know, I know ... I'm an idealist, and such a world will never exist. But that's OK. I can accept the world as it is ... and at the same time, show my gratitude for what a wonderful world we have. And what wonderful people (such as you guys) are in my life. And in doing so, my little acts of gratitude will radiate throughout the world, changing it in subtle but profound ways.

Corny? Perhaps. I can be corny at times. But let me tell you: incorporating gratitude in my life (even if I'm not always successful at it) has changed me and has made me happier. I recommend it heartily.

For those who'd like to do little things to show their gratitude, to a specific person or to life in general, here are a few ideas that work for me:

1. Create a Gratitude Ritual. As I described in [an earlier post](#) on this topic, on many mornings I do a little ritual: I just close my eyes, and take a couple of minutes to think of the people and things I'm grateful for. That includes those who've [donated](#) to this site, as well as all you readers. And of course, my loved ones, and others in my life.

2. Send a thank-you note. You know, it's nice to get a little note thanking you for something you did. You don't need to send someone a formal thank-you card (although that's a nice touch), but just a little note (or email) saying thank you for a specific thing the person has done for you can go a long way. And it only takes a minute!

3. Give a free hug. OK, only do this when appropriate ... but if you have a loved one in your life, give them a hug! Often we can go too long without showing our affection and gratitude, even to those who are closest to us. Don't neglect this important part of your relationship. By "free" hug, I mean don't expect anything in return — just give it as a gift of gratitude. If you give a hug to a stranger, be prepared to run very fast afterward.

4. Give thanks for today! You don't even have to thank a person ... you can thank life itself! Wake up, and greet the day with gratitude. Be thankful you're alive!

I've printed this before, but here's a favorite gratitude prayer of mine by the Dalai Lama, who tells us: "Everyday, think as you wake up, 'Today I am fortunate to have woken up, I am alive, I have a precious human life, I am not going to waste it. I am going to use all my energies to develop myself, to expand my heart out to others, to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings, I am going to have kind thoughts towards others, I am not going to get angry or think badly about others, I am going to benefit others as much as I can.' "

5. Do someone a free favor. Without expecting anything in return, do something nice for someone. Just something small. Get them a drink or a coffee, do a chore for them, offer to do an errand, anything they'd appreciate, really. Think of what the person likes, wants or needs, and try to do something (even something small) to help them. Actions speak louder than words, and doing something nice will show you're grateful more than just saying it.

6. Give a little gift. It doesn't have to be fancy or expensive, but a little gift can be a tremendous gesture. [Here are 30 ideas.](#)

7. Give someone a list of all they've done that you're grateful for. Take 5 minutes and make a list of 10 or 50 things you love about someone, or things they've done for you that you appreciate.

8. Acknowledge them publicly. Who doesn't love public praise? Find a way to acknowledge the contributions of someone, to show your gratitude, in a public way ... in your office, among friends and family, on your blog, in your local newspaper.

9. Surprise them with kindness. Actually, this is mostly the same as Item #5, but with a twist: surprise the person. That little extra step of surprising them can make a big difference. When your wife comes home from work, have a lovely dinner prepared. When your mom walks out her front door in the morning, have her car nice and clean. When your daughter opens her lunch pail, have a little note and a treat waiting for her. You get the idea.

10. Say thanks even for negative things in your life. This is the hard part, in truth. When things go wrong, when we're not happy, when people are mean to us, when we are worn down by the million slings and arrows of everyday life ... we don't want to say thank you. But in truth, this is the time when it matters most. If you've mastered the first 9 items on this list, you're ready to master this one.

When life gets you down, when you're hurt or angry or confused or frustrated, take a moment to stop and close your eyes and find things to be thankful for. Your health, your family, your job, the roof over your head, the fact that you'll have a next meal, the beauty of the world around you, the good people in your life, your new Macintosh computer. Whatever you can think of, be thankful for them ... and express that gratitude somehow. Realize that all is not bad in this world, and be happy for that.

And then, when you've mastered that skill, think of the negative things in your life ... and give thanks for them. That person who was mean to you? Thank them for teaching you patience and understanding. That dog that tore up your trash? Thank him for teaching you humility as you pick up the trash. The natural disaster you went through? Thank it for reminding you of what is important in life. The illness you are going through? Thank it for making you stronger.

This post is a part of the [Season of Gratitude](#) hosted on [Balanced Life Center](#).

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