



Be Well Aware – Health Article



Change Your Mindset: Swap Expectations for Appreciation

Changing Your Mindset Through Appreciation

Research shows that the way you think can influence your brain composition overtime, leading to more permanent changes. Individuals who focus on gratitude and appreciation can structurally change their brain to automatically allow for positive, automatic responses.

This new wave of research sheds light on how powerful our mindset is to our overall health. Perceiving situations with a “glass is half full” mindset can allow us to leave expectations behind and focus on the here and now.

A negative mindset can stem from “what-if” questions we pose to ourselves. These questions are the expression of negative expectations. For example, we ask ourselves “what if I fail?” We are focusing on the possibility of failing instead of what we can do in the present moment to accomplish our goal.

The Problem With Expectations

We set expectations for ourselves as well as others. Unfortunately, we set expectations that may not be realistic. When these unrealistic expectations are not met, disappointment occurs.

Each individual copes with disappointment differently. However, most individuals respond negatively to disappointment. Sadness and anger may occur, creating a negative mindset.

Expectations and Appreciation for Our Health

Fitness and health goals are important when trying to make positive life changes. The way we set goals is important in how our mindset changes.

Weight loss goals are common and can be either motivating or detrimental. Setting realistic goals, such as losing 1 pound per week can be useful. This goal is motivating as well as attainable. We often see individuals setting goals that will leave them disappointed when the goal is not met, such as losing 20lbs in one month. Rapid weight loss can be a detrimental expectation.

Appreciating our ability to make small changes in our lifestyle can switch our mindset to being more positive. We can appreciate our success with cutting back on sugar or adding in an extra workout this week. It is important to appreciate our health apart from aesthetics. Being grateful we can squat, raise our arms overhead, and walk down the street is a great place to start!

Mindset Matters

One can argue that a healthy mindset is the first building block to becoming a healthier, more fit individual.

Whether you are starting a new fitness journey or struggling to find motivation to continue, your mindset plays a role in how effective you are in accomplishing your goals. Working on our mindset through appreciation and meditation can lead to better overall health.

Let's start by engaging in a powerful exercise to change mindset!



Homework

Start journaling when you wake up or before you go to bed. Write what you are grateful for and any positive experiences you'd like to remember. Gratitude statements can range from being grateful you woke up to appreciating that your manager praised your hard work. The goal is to focus on positive thoughts and experiences.

Weekly Gratitude Journal

<i>Sunday</i> _____ 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____	<i>Monday</i> _____ 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____
<i>Tuesday</i> _____ 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____	<i>Wednesday</i> _____ 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____
<i>Thursday</i> _____ 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____	<i>Friday</i> _____ 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____
<i>Saturday</i> _____ 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____	

References:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201504/7-scientifically-proven-benefits-gratitude>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/8-ways-to-embrace-self-love-and-thank-your-body#4>

https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude_journal