

Workshop 12: Being thankful for what's going well?

This worksheet will help you:

- Reflect on how easy it is to become focused on negative events
- Consider some of the benefits of being thankful for positive events and actions of others
- Identify up to 3 events or actions you are thankful for
- Consider how you may use this in the future

**Have you ever walked into a kitchen or bakery which was smelling of fresh bread?
How did it feel?**

If you stayed in the room for 10 minutes though, sadly you would stop smelling the freshly-baked bread.

It is easy to stop noticing the things in our life which we enjoy and are going well, we ignore them and perhaps notice the things we don't like or which aren't going so well. Sometimes we keep reminding ourselves about the things in life which are going badly.

This focus on negative events may set us up for anxiety and depression. One way to keep this from happening is to get better at thinking about, and savouring, what went well. Being thankful for things feels good, it lifts our mood and allows us to relax.

There is a simple technique which stops us from dwelling on these negative things and instead brings to mind the positive things in our lives. Some people call this '**counting blessings**' or '**being grateful**'.

This is a tried and tested method which has shown that people who regularly spend some time thinking about what has been going well in their lives feel happier, more energetic and less depressed.

Have a go at this, and then perhaps you may want to continue with this over the next week.

You can do this by thinking about, and then writing down, 3 things in your life that you are thankful for.

It doesn't matter if you can't think of 3 when you first start, this is because we are so used to focusing on the negative things in our life.

You may want to share these with your partner, family etc., or do the exercise as a family or with someone close to you.

Your list can be of quite small or of very big things. In the past, people have come up with:

Listening to my favourite music

A colourful sunset

A beautiful bird singing

Meeting an old friend at the supermarket

Having a loving family

Receiving a letter or card from a friend

Looking forward to my birthday

My neighbour's lovely garden

It is interesting to notice that many of the things we are thankful for are simple events and actions - most cost little or no money, many are about nature, friendships and simple acts of kindness by others.

Being thankful for what's going well is not about ignoring the difficulties and challenges we meet - when these occur we have tools, like problem-solving, which can help us. It is more about not allowing ourselves to dwell on these problems indefinitely.

It may take time for it to feel comfortable with this, but we do know that people who continue to do this from time to time will feel happier in the long run than people who do not. It may be that you are also able to thank other people for their simple acts of kindness, which in turn helps you to feel even happier.

Perhaps you want to set this as a goal and you could keep a diary of the 'blessings' you counted



3 things I feel grateful for are: