



# NOVEMBER 2017

## PAY IT FORWARD

Challenged by his seventh grade social studies teacher to make the world a better place, one young student devises a plan to generate a ripple of positivity through his life. Trevor, the student, starts by performing three random acts of kindness. He asks his beneficiaries, in lieu of paying him back, to pay it forward by performing three acts of kindness for others. He hypothesizes that the effect could be exponential. Without spoiling the movie entirely, his plan has more success than he could have imagined. This little movie, released in 2000 to modest box office success and “shameless Oscar bait” reviews, spurred a global movement that is celebrated in over 80 countries today.

Paying it forward is the perfect example of gratitude in action. Gratitude is appreciation given freely without expectation of repayment or feelings of indebtedness. It is one of 10 emotions studied by positive psychologists. The world’s leading expert on gratitude, Robert A. Emmons, PhD, is a professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis and the author and/or editor of over 200 peer-reviewed journal articles and five books on the topic. His research builds a strong case for the benefits of gratitude.

### THE BENEFITS OF *Gratitude*

According to Emmons, the benefits of gratitude are realized over several dimensions.



#### RELATIONSHIPS

Showing appreciation makes people more likely to seek an ongoing relationship and can lead to new experiences and opportunities. We are social animals who need connection to thrive.



#### PHYSICAL HEALTH

Grateful people experience fewer aches and pains, exercise more often and keep their regular medical check-ups.



#### PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

Gratitude reduces toxic emotions such as envy, resentment, frustration and regret. It is impossible to be grateful and resentful at the same time.



#### BEHAVIOR

Grateful people are more sensitive, empathetic and less likely to seek revenge.



#### SLEEP

Writing in a gratitude journal before going to bed promotes better and more restful sleep.



#### SELF-ESTEEM

Gratitude reduces social comparisons. Grateful people appreciate rather than resent other people’s accomplishments



#### RESILIENCE

Gratitude not only reduces stress, but plays a major role in overcoming trauma.



# the supplement

FACILITATING VITALITY

Here is the catch. We all have a positivity setpoint. Because positive emotions are fleeting, without consistent practice we return to our setpoint. Here is the good news. With practice we can raise our set point. If you are ready to give it a try and risk a reputation as a shameless Pollyanna, here are some ways to cultivate an attitude of gratitude:

- **Notice the goodness in your day-to-day life. How beautiful is that jacaranda tree?**
- **Keep a gratitude journal. It doesn't have to be fancy, though mine does have a Paris-themed cover.**
- **Identify the positive. If you can't find a parking space nearby, the extra steps may lengthen your life.**
- **Be modest and respectful of everyone.**
- **Give at least one compliment daily.**
- **When you are in a bad situation ask yourself "where is the lesson here?"**
- **Commit not to complain, criticize or gossip for one week.**
- **Sound genuinely happy when you hear from people on the phone.**
- **Find a cause that is important to you and get involved.**

At the very least in the midst of the hustle and bustle of this holiday season, spend an evening watching *Pay It Forward*. Happy Thanksgiving!

THE

# 10

positive  
EMOTIONS

1. Joy	6. Pride
2. Gratitude	7. Amusement
3. Serenity	8. Inspiration
4. Interest	9. Awe
5. Hope	10. Love



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Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 19 years to designing and delivering wellness programs. Her events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

Pat has a PhD in holistic nutrition. In 2010, she was board certified by the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board. Her areas of research include stress management and eating habits. She is a Certified Wellcoach and a member of the Institute of Coaching. She is an annual attendee to The Harvard Medical School Conference, Coaching In Leadership & Healthcare.

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