

USEFUL FOR:

Learning how to appreciate the little and big things in life that make us smile.

**PRACTICING THE
ATTITUDE
OF GRATITUDE**

When you're feeling down, it's easy to forget the brighter moments of your day. But **reflecting on positive things** can actually make all of the bad stuff feel less important.



So what is gratitude?

Gratitude is all about focusing on what's good in life, and paying attention to the things you can take for granted. Sometimes you'll feel grateful without even having to try – and that's awesome. But consciously choosing to think about things you're thankful for can make a massive difference to your mood.

Why is gratitude great?

Because it boosts your physical and mental health. Research shows that practicing an attitude of gratitude can help with this stuff:



Becoming more resistant to stresses in life.



Having a higher sense of self-worth.



Enjoying an instant mood-booster.



Experiencing other positive emotions linked with gratitude.



Improving physical health.

How to give gratitude a go

- › Turn it into a family game or ritual: each night during dinner, get everyone in your family to say one thing they are grateful for.
- › Keep a gratitude journal: write down three things you are grateful for every day. Keep your gratitude journal to reflect on – especially when your mood is low.
- › Create a gratitude photo album or Pinterest board: take photos of things that make you smile and regularly add them your personal gratitude board.
- › Count your years in gratitude: on your birthday, write a list of things you are grateful for that happened over the past year. Make your list correspond to the age you're turning, e.g. if you're turning 14, have 14 different points.
- › Say thank you to other people: this helps you take notice of things you're appreciative of in the moment, and it makes their day a bit brighter too.

To wrap up

- › Working on an attitude of gratitude involves actively choosing to acknowledge and appreciate the things you're thankful for in life.
- › Research shows that people who practice gratitude experience better mental and physical health.
- › Try and create a habit or ritual around being grateful. Like any skill, it's one that needs to be practiced.

USEFUL FOR:

Boosting your confidence, reducing stress, and making you feel better about yourself!

SELF-TALK



Luckily everything you think isn't said out loud. But that isn't to say that the **little voice in your head** doesn't impact your life. Sometimes it's encouraging, but other times it can be negative ... and just plain wrong.

What is self-talk?

Self-talk is the inner voice in your head that talks about you and the things you see around you. It's kind of like a subtle running private commentary of your life. It's usually made up of thoughts that you wouldn't necessarily say out loud, and often happens without us even realising we're doing it.

Self-talk: the good and bad

Self-talk can be either positive or negative.

Positive self-talk is when thoughts have an optimistic spin and you're able to find, and concentrate on, the good things in your life. Negative self-talk is when your thoughts are more pessimistic, which can mean they make everything seem pretty terrible.

While it's completely normal to experience both kinds of self-talk in your life, you'll be at your happiest when the positive thoughts outweigh the negative.



A small voice with big impact

The way you talk to yourself can impact your:

1. Confidence.
2. Self-esteem.
3. Stress levels.
4. Attitude towards life, challenges and new situations.

When you're practicing positive self-talk, you're more likely to feel good about yourself and believe you can achieve your goals. But if your mind is filled with negative self-talk, you might begin to feel down about yourself, your abilities and everything around you.

Do it better

Feel like you're full of negativity? It's cool, there's hope: self-talk can be changed – it just takes a little practice.

Begin by trying to follow these tips.

1. **NOTICE** what you are saying to yourself. Take time each day to listen. Write down some of your thoughts, and tally how many are positive versus negative.
2. **CHALLENGE** your negative self-talk. Ask yourself whether there's any evidence to support what you are thinking.
3. **CHANGE** your "I can't" into "How could I?". Look for ways around challenges by thinking a little differently, or by asking someone else for help or advice.
4. **SURROUND** yourself with positive people/talkers. When we are around the people who can see the good things in life, it helps us to find it too.

To wrap up

- Self-talk is the little voice you have in your head.
- When you have more positive than negative thoughts, your self-esteem and confidence improves.
- Self-talk can be changed. Being aware of the types of thoughts you have is the first step to improving your self-talk.

USEFUL FOR:

Figuring out what you're good at and how to make the most of your most excellent qualities.



**DISCOVERING AND USING OUR
STRENGTHS**

Everyone has strengths, whether they know it or not. Working out **what you're good at** might seem tricky, but it's well worth the effort.

Why bother finding out your strengths?

Having an idea of what your strengths are can improve your health and wellbeing in some pretty major ways.

These can include your:

- › Motivation.
- › Energy levels.
- › Confidence.
- › Attitude when dealing with crappy situations.

Knowing what you're good at, and finding ways to use your strengths in everyday life, is a really simple way to boost your mood. It seems obvious, but everybody is at their best and happiest when they are focusing on the best parts of themselves.



What are your possible strengths?

It's important to know that your strengths are part of your personality. They're not related to how much you know, or the cool stuff you can do.

Scientists have listed 24 strengths that everyone has in different levels:

Curiosity	Bravery	Kindness	Fairness
Love of learning	Persistence	Leadership	Gratitude
Open-mindedness	Integrity	Self-control	Hope
Originality	Zest	Prudence	Sense of humour
Social intelligence	Ability to love/ be loved	Modesty	Spirituality
Perspective	Teamwork	Appreciation of beauty	Forgiveness

But where to start?

Check out some of the top tips you can use to help you figure out what your strong points are:

- › Ask people. Friends, family or teachers are sure to have some solid ideas on what your strengths might be.
- › Whether via a report card or a compliment from a mate, try to remember which parts of your personality have been celebrated by others.
- › Try to work out which parts of your personality helped you to succeed in your most recent achievement. Did it require self-control, bravery etc.?
- › When do you feel happiest and most like yourself? Many people find that they're happiest when doing what they're good at.
- › Take a free strengths quiz online and the hard work will be done for you. Winning.
<http://viacharacter.org/survey>

Once you've figured out your top strengths, keep them at the back of your mind and practice them whenever you can. Embrace them! Try to find activities that help you build on them even more. For example, if you're awesome at teamwork, try to find a team you could join.

To wrap up

- › Figuring out your strengths, and using them, has a bunch of perks in it for you.
- › There are 24 main strengths and everyone has each of them to different degrees.
- › After figuring out your top strengths, have a think about some of the ways you can use them every day.

USEFUL FOR:

Understanding what it means to be mindful and learning to take control of your worries.



MIND FULL OR MINDFUL?

When you're mindful, you're **paying attention to the moment**, and not thinking about the past or worrying about the future.

But what is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a special way of paying attention. It can help you cope with everyday life or deal with tough times. Plus, being mindful can have huge benefits to your physical and mental health!



Why is it helpful?

Mindfulness helps you appreciate and enjoy the moment. Being mindful can help you:



Clear your head.



To be less angry or moody.



Slow your thoughts.



Improve your sleep and memory.



Concentrate.



Relieve stress and relax.

How to start?

- › **Savouring.** Take the time to enjoy and appreciate an activity you're doing. Pay close attention to the details: the smells, tastes, sights, sounds and things you can feel.
- › **Mindful breathing.** Focus on your breathing. Pay attention to what breathing feels like. What happens to different parts of your body? What does your breathing sound like? Don't worry if your mind wanders off, just bring your attention back to your breathing when you can.
- › **Mental photography.** Try taking mental photos of things you find interesting. You can take a mental photo by thinking about what details you would like to capture.
- › **Look at the world through a new lens.** Imagine you are seeing everything for the first time. What does it look like? Pay attention to little things that you wouldn't normally notice.
- › **Progressive muscle relaxation.** This is a type of relaxation training. Focus on tensing and relaxing different parts of your body.

To wrap up

- › Mindfulness is a special way of paying attention.
- › Mindfulness helps you appreciate and enjoy the moment.
- › You can increase your mindfulness in everyday life through activities like meditation and yoga, or by paying more attention during regular activities like walking and driving. You can even be mindful while doing something as basic as brushing your teeth.

USEFUL FOR:

Recognising what a good friend looks and acts like, and learning how to be the best friend you can.

BEING A GOOD FRIEND



So what makes a good friend? Find out the signs and learn how wellbeing can be affected by the relationships you have with those around you.

Friends = life

Friends help give meaning to our lives, fulfil the need to belong, and provide support during tough times. They're pretty central to happiness and wellbeing. Research has also shown that the better the quality of your relationships, the more likely you are to be happy. When you're happier, you're more likely to attract more and better-quality relationships. Seems like one big cycle!?! It is!

What does a good friend look like? Tips on how to be a good friend

Friends come in all shapes and sizes, but a good friend is usually someone who:



You enjoy keeping company with.



Shows you unwavering support and acceptance.



Is loyal and trustworthy.



Makes you smile and laugh.



Is there to listen when you need it.

To have good friends you must also be a good friend. However, it's common not to know exactly what to do or how to show friends you are there for them.

These top tips are a good place to start:

- › **Listen.** Take the time to listen. Try to understand the situation from your friend's perspective. Ask open questions and make sure your body language is open and relaxed (face them, make eye contact, and nod).
- › **Get physical.** Hugs, smiles or even high-fives are a great way to show you care.
- › **Stay in touch.** Technology (phones, laptops, and tablets etc.) makes it easy to keep in touch with friends – even if they don't live close by.
- › **Tell them how you feel.** Every now and then, remember to tell your friends you care about them or appreciate them.
- › **Be willing to make the tough calls when needed.** If a friend does come to you for help, or you think your friend might need help, be prepared to help them seek the assistance they need.

To wrap up

- › The higher the quality of your relationships, the more likely you are to be happy.
- › To have good friends, you've gotta be a good friend first.
- › Want to show you care? Take the time to keep in touch with your friends, ask them how are they, listen to them and let them know you care.

USEFUL FOR:

Understanding why you sometimes feel pressured to act differently around some people, and figuring out what to do about it.

THE PRESSURE OF PEER PRESSURE



Wanting to belong to a group is totally normal and finding a good group of buddies has loads of benefits. But when you start to change as a way of trying to fit in, you might be **doing more harm than good**.



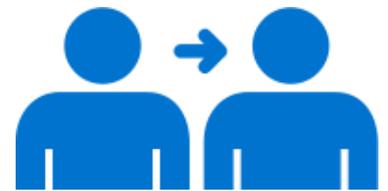
What is peer pressure?

Peer pressure is all about being influenced by the people around you to do and say things that you wouldn't normally do or say. It isn't always a bad thing. Sometimes being around your friends might encourage you to do something good, like work harder in class. But on the flip side, some influences can be negative. For example, your friends might pressure you to treat other people in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.

How does peer pressure happen?

Peer pressure happens all the time and comes in three different forms:

1. **Direct:** when someone tells you what to do.
2. **Indirect:** when you find yourself acting differently around a certain group of people without them telling you to.
3. **Self-motivated:** when you pressure yourself to fit in.



How do I deal with peer pressure?

Peer pressure can be tricky. But there are a bunch of tips you can try to make peer pressure a thing of the past.

Tips for in the moment:

- › **Say no.** If you don't feel comfortable doing something, it's okay to say "no". You might think it sounds silly or uncool but a good friend will respect your decisions.
- › **Make an excuse to leave.** Feel like you can't say no directly? Try and leave the situation that is making you uncomfortable.
- › **Change the subject.** Try to direct the conversation away from the situation at hand.

Tips to avoid peer pressure in the future:

- › **Choose mates who are a good match for you.** Hang out with people who have similar interests to yours so you're not bending your behaviour to suit them.
- › **Respect.** If you respect other people's decisions, they are more likely to respect yours.

If you've tried these tips but peer pressure is still a problem for you, talk about it with someone you trust like a parent or counsellor. They can help you get to the bottom of it.

To wrap up

- › Peer pressure is about people influencing the way you behave, and it can be good or bad.
- › Peer pressure can be direct, indirect or self-motivated (pressuring yourself to fit in).
- › Practice saying "no" to people if they're making you feel uncomfortable.

USEFUL FOR:

Understanding how having meaning and purpose in your life positively impacts your wellbeing, and finding your purpose.

PURPOSE.

THERE IS ONE FOR YOU.



Have you ever wondered ... **but why am I here?**

Finding a sense of purpose and meaning in life can help you figure that out.



Finding your purpose

Having a sense of purpose in your life helps you focus on doing the things that make you happy. It's your sense of motivation, determination and direction.

A lot of people imagine finding a sense of purpose only happens through a dramatic light bulb moment, but it isn't necessarily like that at all. It can be as simple as finding something you enjoy doing, or even just thinking about what's important to you and why it makes you happy.

Why is finding your purpose so important?

Sometimes life can be pretty overwhelming and feel a bit crazy. Research has found that having a sense of purpose in your life can help in different ways. It can help by:

- › Keeping you focused and on track.
- › Making stressful times more manageable.
- › Enabling you to find a deeper level of wellbeing (rather than just finding simple pleasures).
- › Creating more meaning in your life.



Purpose is lost? Try these tips to work it all out.

Trying to figure out your purpose? Take small steps and stop to think about things.

Ask yourself:

- › What do you love doing that is going to ensure you have a happy, fulfilling life?
- › What are you working towards?
- › What are your goals in life?

Try these steps:

- › Think about what's important to you and why it makes you happy.
- › Find something you enjoy doing.
- › Try something new. Write down a few things that you want to try, and then go out and actually do them. You might find your purpose in something you've never tried before.

Remember:

- › Passion is the result of action, not the cause of it.
- › Your sense of purpose can evolve and change, just like your interests can change over time.
- › It takes time to find a purpose. You might not sit down to think and quickly realise your purpose in life, and that's okay. Give yourself time to explore your interests and find what you love.

To wrap up

- › Purpose gives your life meaning, and gives you a sense of determination.
- › Having a purpose will increase your wellbeing and keep you focused.
- › Explore your interests and goals in life to find your purpose.

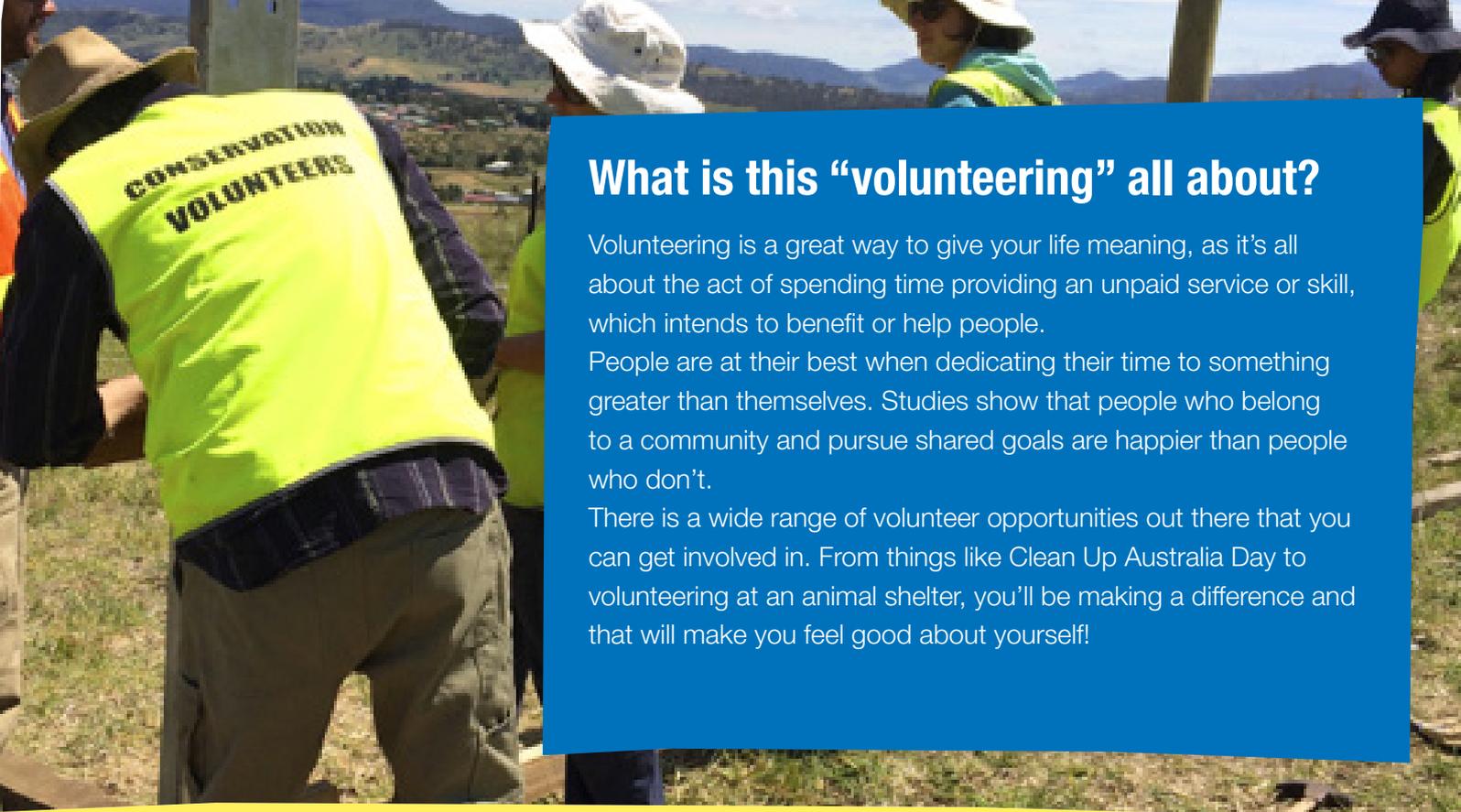
USEFUL FOR:

If you're feeling a little lost in life and you want to do something good in the world.

I VOLUNTEER



You don't have to pull a Katniss and volunteer as tribute, but you can **benefit others and yourself by volunteering**, and it's sure to make you feel great!



What is this “volunteering” all about?

Volunteering is a great way to give your life meaning, as it's all about the act of spending time providing an unpaid service or skill, which intends to benefit or help people.

People are at their best when dedicating their time to something greater than themselves. Studies show that people who belong to a community and pursue shared goals are happier than people who don't.

There is a wide range of volunteer opportunities out there that you can get involved in. From things like Clean Up Australia Day to volunteering at an animal shelter, you'll be making a difference and that will make you feel good about yourself!

Volunteering benefits the volunteer too? Yep!

It's okay to ask “What's in it for me?”. Volunteering is not only great for the cause you're helping, but there are also benefits for you.

Volunteering can help you:

- › Develop skills. Volunteering helps you learn new skills and keeps skills sharp, and can utilise your existing skills in new and helpful ways.
- › Experience personal growth. Donating your time gives you a break from day-to-day life, and you'll get hands-on experience that can teach you about a range of issues.
- › Make friends. It's a fun and meaningful way to make new friends. Volunteering will allow you to get to know other people who care about the same issues you do.
- › Find purpose and have an impact. You can find a cause you really care about and make it your passion. When you make something your purpose, you'll make a big difference in the community by getting involved.

But where do I start?

There is so much you can do to help!

Consider:

- › Talking to your school. You can ask them about volunteering opportunities within your school or community.
- › Speak to your local community centre, church groups, or centres for people with disabilities and find out if any of these organisations are in need of volunteers.
- › Look to online organisations that can help you help others, where you'll find countless opportunities that are sure to match your interests.

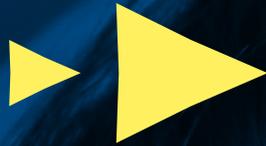
To wrap up

- › Volunteering will create meaning in your life and boost your wellbeing.
- › Volunteering not only benefits the cause, it has benefits for the volunteer, too.
- › You can get involved through your school, community groups, or online. So get to it!

USEFUL FOR:

Getting things done, figuring out your goals, and finding and keeping that energy for tasks both big and small.

MOTIVATE ME



It is important to find (and keep) motivation in your life, as it not only drives you toward achievement but also increases your general happiness and wellbeing.



What is motivation?

Motivation is what drives you to make the things you want happen, from the big things in life (goals and hard tasks) to the small things (getting out of bed in the morning!).



What can motivation help with?

Motivation helps you get the most out of life. It gives you direction, a sense of purpose and achievement in life which can lead to feeling more satisfied, positive, and increases general happiness and wellbeing.

To wrap up

- › Motivation helps you get the most out of life and drives you to do the things you want to make happen.
- › Setting small but interesting goals is a good way to find initial motivation.
- › Plotting your progress and letting people know your goals is also a good way to make sure your motivation sticks around.

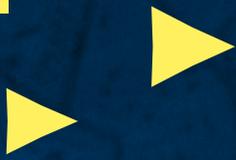
Motivation: how to find it and then keep it!

- › Set goals that can be measured and have an end point. This can help give you something to work toward.
- › Choose goals that interest you. This seems obvious, right? If you choose areas that interest you, it'll be a lot easier to find the time to do it, plus you'll enjoy it along the way.
- › Find things that interest you within goals that don't. Unfortunately not all goals or tasks will interest you. So, try and find something within that task that does motivate you.
- › Make your goal public. If you tell another person your goal or write it down, it becomes even more of a motivating factor to make a good attempt at keeping your word.
- › Plot your progress. By tracking your progress you can celebrate small wins and keep motivated.
- › Break up your goal. Break it into smaller, less-scary tasks. Start with the easier stuff first, then as your confidence increases, move on to the more challenging components.
- › Use rewards. Promise yourself some sort of reward each time you complete a task.
- › Don't do it alone. Join a class or find a teacher or someone you can share the experience with. Other people can be encouraging in hard times.

USEFUL FOR:

Understanding what a mindset is, what type of mindset you might have, and what to do if it's preventing you from achieving what you want.

**READY.
MINDSET.
GO.**



Fight or flight? Do you persist with difficult tasks or throw in the towel? It's all about your mindset.

What is a mindset?

A mindset is a series of beliefs people hold about themselves. Someone's mindset is the reason they think and act the way they do; it gives them their attitude towards the world and their outlook on life. Therefore, your mindset has a big impact on your wellbeing and sense of achievement in life.

Types of mindsets

There are two different kinds of mindsets.

GROWTH MINDSET

Someone with a growth mindset will stick to a task even when it proves difficult because they believe they can learn and develop through dedication and hard work. They are likely to:

- › Welcome challenges.
- › Be open to new things and ways of learning.
- › Recognise that failure is an opportunity to learn.
- › Know their weaknesses, and work to improve them.

FIXED MINDSET

Someone with a fixed mindset is less likely to accept a challenge because they believe traits like intelligence or talent are set at birth. They are likely to:

- › Practice negative self-talk by saying things like "I can't do it".
- › Avoid tasks where there may be failure.
- › Not deal very well with setbacks.
- › Try to hide or justify their mistakes.

How to change your mindset ...

It is possible!

Here are some tips for turning your mindset from fixed to growth:

- › "I can't do it ... yet!" Tell yourself that you can do it. You'll have a better chance at succeeding, even if it doesn't happen straight away.
- › Challenge accepted. Next time you are presented with a tricky task, embrace it. Even if you struggle along the way, you can be sure that next time you'll do better.
- › Work hard. You can't reach goals without some effort. Put the hard work in and you'll be able to enjoy the rewards.
- › Ain't no such thing as perfect. There's always room for improvement. Put forward your best effort, practice your skills and work on learning new ones.
- › Celebrate the big successes, and the small ones.
- › Be open to new ways of doing things. Don't knock it until you try it!
- › Don't let setbacks get you down. Setbacks can serve as a great way to learn. It doesn't mean you've failed – just that you need to try something different.

To wrap up

- › A mindset gives someone their outlook on the world around them.
- › Growth mindsets are more useful in life than fixed mindsets.
- › Adopt a growth mindset by taking every opportunity to learn, grow, and improve yourself.