

Ideas to go...

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Gratitude is getting a lot of press these days, and it's not just because of the upcoming U.S. holiday Thanksgiving. According to current research, expressing thankfulness may be essential to living a happier and healthier life. Those age-old adages, "count your blessings" and "be thankful for what you have," are more than time-honored insights.

Empowering the positive in your life

- Practice thankfulness in concrete ways: be a role model, express gratefulness in thought or prayer, or write thank you letters to relatives, teachers, and others from whom you have benefited.
- Keep a "gratitude journal." In recent studies, participants who wrote weekly about what they are grateful for, and why, exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms, felt better about their lives as a whole, and were more optimistic about the upcoming week compared to those who recorded hassles or neutral life events.
—From Robert Emmons and Michael E. McCullough, <http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/labs/emmons>

Cultivating gratefulness in your classroom

- Surround yourself with tireless supporters—parents, former students, close friends, your spouse—people who buoy your spirits and reassure you of the enormous impact you're making on your students.
- Read between the lines. A student who approaches you for assistance or advice, or even stops to share some corny joke, is paying you a huge compliment. You are being included in his or her life!
- Listen to energizing audiobooks about teaching. Try Frank McCourt's *Teacher Man*, Jim Fay's *Four Steps to Responsibility*, and Caroline Myss' *Finding Your Sacred Contract*.
- Post cartoons and humorous news articles about teaching. A groan with a smile is much better for the soul than just a groan.
—From Coleen Armstrong's *The Truth about Teaching*, www.inspiringteachers.com



empowerment through gratitude