

## EXERCISE: Beginning a Gratitude Journal

For the next six weeks, take five minutes once a week to focus your attention on things you are grateful for. These may be small things like noticing the strength in your arms or the warmth of the sun, or bigger things like experiencing the love of a child or even the election of a good leader. Write these down on **Worksheets 12.10, 12.11, and 12.12**. Since you are only doing this exercise once a week, it may be helpful to make a note on your calendar or in an electronic diary to remind you to do it. If you run out of space on the worksheets provided in this book, continue in a paper journal or in an electronic file.

As examples, here are some of the items Louisa wrote in her gratitude journal:

*I live in a safe neighborhood. I appreciate that my neighbors know me and wave when they see me. I enjoy watching the children play and hearing their laughter. [World]*

*I enjoyed walking with my dog. She is always excited when I get out her leash to walk her. It helps me after a hard day to know that she will be happy to see me. She cuddles with me on the couch, and I enjoy petting her. [Others]*

*I took time to help my elderly neighbor. He was trimming some plants and couldn't reach the highest ones. I value helping others, and it made me feel good to do something kind without expecting anything in return. I actually enjoyed doing it. I also felt happy that his mood seemed to lift because I was there, and that we had a nice chat while we worked together. [Myself]*

Use the categories in **Worksheets 12.10– 12.12** to help you. These ask you to think about gratitude in three areas linked to the core beliefs you have been working on in this chapter: the world and your life, other people, and yourself. Notice things you are grateful for, review what you've already written, and add new items to these gratitude worksheets each week.

As in Louisa's example above, it is more helpful to write about a few things in depth than to try to make a long list of things you are grateful for. So try writing about a few things in detail each week, even if it is just one item per worksheet. Some weeks you might write about several items on one or two worksheets instead of on all three worksheets. This is also OK.

Remember to use these three worksheets for at least six weeks (**Worksheets 12.10, 12.11, and 12.12**). Then, after filling them out for six weeks, answer the questions in **Worksheet 12.13**.

**WORKSHEET 12.10. Gratitude about the World and My Life**

Things in the world and my life that I am grateful for and appreciate:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
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20. \_\_\_\_\_