



No matter what, if you are a grateful person, your magnetic energy will attract good things to you and allow you to benefit from this book.



MONTH TWO

LEARNING LOVE AND GRATITUDE

KINDNESS TO SELF & OTHERS

In the first month, your students learned about using visualization to calm and be ready to take in positive energy. This program tries to focus on positivity, instead of negativity. But if you see it, you can have a class discussion. For example, many students (and people) do something called “awfulizing”. This is when they believe that the worst thing possible is going to happen. They are going to flunk a test. Or they are not going to be able to ride a bike or skateboard. This negative thinking is counter-productive. The way to fight this thinking is through using the journal. Another is to learn to use affirmations taken from the self-awareness discovered through journaling.

USING AFFIRMATIONS

During the first month of journaling and your classroom experiences, the students did some self-discovery. Take some classroom time, scissors and markers to make affirmation cards.

Explain to the class that an affirmation is usually a sentence of powerful words that together become a positive statement. By reading and/or saying the statement, you tap into your unconscious and conscious mind to push you to achieve your full potential.

Positive affirmations help you overcome negative thoughts that bring self-doubt. You are having a conversation with yourself to drive away the thoughts that prevent you from success. Daily positive affirmations minimize negativity. They help you see yourself in a positive light.

Some tips about affirmations:

- Affirmations are short
- Affirmations are written in the present tense and include a word that ends in “-ing”;
- Affirmations start with the words “I am...” so they belong to that person.
- Affirmations should be expressed positively. Don’t use “not” in an affirmation. Find a way to turn a “not” sentence into a “do” or positive sentence.
- Affirmations are specific.
- Affirmations “embrace feeling” words to help describe the qualities to achieve in them. Examples include “successfully” or confidently.

Making little affirmation cards to carry makes it easy to give yourself a “pep-talk”. Tell the students to look through their journals to see the most important strengths they discovered



No matter what, if you are a grateful person, your magnetic energy will attract good things to you and allow you to benefit from this book.



from writing for the prompts. They should bring three things that they feel will help them stay positive and achieve success.

Print the affirmation cards and have the students cut them up. Then have them create the three cards for themselves. Each can share their three with the class and since there are six cards to a sheet, they can add an additional three from the ones they heard from the class that they think will also help them. In this way, each student has 6 affirmations to choose from to motivate them daily or whenever they need to have a boost!

Affirmation Laundry List WALL OF INSPIRATION

For this activity, you will need 8x10 inch paper and markers. Additionally, you can get a string or yarn and enough clothespins for each student to have one. Together, you will be making a wall of inspiration to keep reminding them that they have what it needs to be successful if they believe in themselves.

- Give out paper for students to each pick the affirmation they think is important to keep in mind daily.
- Have them create a poster for their affirmation. They can do block lettering, print stuff from internet, or use magazines. The only thing that is important is that when it hangs in the front of the room or side where you hang the string, it can easily be seen.

When they have a set of affirmations ready to put to use, you can share these tips for using them:

- Use positive self-talk – you can talk to yourself in your journal as much as you need to motivate yourself and believe in your ability
- Say and visualize your affirmations every day – take out your cards and read them. If you are not in a place where you can “talk to yourself” out loud, reading them to your self is fine.
- Take time to imagine yourself accomplishing the goals you’ve set in your journal.
- Picture in your mind how good it will feel once you have accomplished your goals.

Remember *daily declarations of self-worth and strength* can “rewire the brain”. Research has shown positive affirmations can:

- ✓ Increase well-being
- ✓ Decrease stress



No matter what, if you are a grateful person, your magnetic energy will attract good things to you and allow you to benefit from this book.



- ✓ Improve academic achievement
- ✓ Make your students more open to changing behavior from negative to positive

In learning about kindness, you and your students need to be first be kind to themselves. Just like in the safety tips on an airplane ride, put on your own oxygen mask before you reach to put on others.

In order to teach kindness to others, be kind to yourself first.

Embracing Gratitude

Research has actually determined that people who embrace gratitude are healthier. The physical benefits noted include lower blood pressure, longer and better sleep and stronger immune systems. There are also psychological benefits to having gratitude in your heart. There is a stronger level of positive emotions such as joy and pleasure. People who embrace gratitude have less depression and anxiety and more optimism and happiness. In terms of benefits in relationships, gratitude produces generosity, and compassion and fewer feelings of loneliness and isolation. And the best part is that gratitude can be learned and nurtured. It requires a paradigm shift from complaints to positivity. Seeing potential in your students will help them achieve. Expectations are critical to success. With your expectation that they will be able to understand gratitude and embrace it, you will be communicating your desire for them to be happier, kinder and cooperative adolescents.

So young people who embrace gratitude are less materialistic and have a stronger sense of purpose in life. Just because they are grateful for what they have in family, friends and school support doesn't mean they will be complacent. In fact, they are motivated to help others and to contribute to society. It is possible to be grateful for what exists and yet be interested in making the world better and contributing to society. Gratitude in your heart connects you to others.

Teachers teaching gratitude should also be aware of how grateful they are to have this career and to be able to mold the next generation into adults who live appropriately and contribute to society. Next time you think of a complaint, reframe it to a positive. For example, if you are thinking "I am fed up with having to teach this subject again" reframe it to "I am lucky to have this chance to find a way to provide this knowledge in a way that the class will understand." Complaining makes people go down a rabbit hole of negativity.

"If we can swiftly transition into a "good" cycle of kindness and love and gratitude everything that we have and encounter in life will be significantly different from the past in a positive way. After all, in a world full of love, everything is vivacious and lively!"





No matter what, if you are a grateful person, your magnetic energy will attract good things to you and allow you to benefit from this book.



– Master Ted Sun October 2010, California, USA

Gratitude is learned and must be exercised like any other skill. It is a way of framing the world into a positive world view. It's not perfect but look what you have! And most of all, you can make the world better for someone else with an act of kindness.

To bring this mind set to your students, they will need to be encouraged to look for the good in their lives. They can notice:

- ✓ The material things they have - easiest to discuss
- ✓ The help they get from their parents
- ✓ The support they get from the adults in school
- ✓ The cycle of positivity that happens when they engage in kindness to others
- ✓ The many ways gratitude can be expressed
- ✓ The meaning of empathy and showing empathy
- ✓ The root of positive relationships with others

Here are some activities that may help you teach gratitude:

A Letter of Thanks To My Family

After a discussion and brainstorming session about what gratitude is, ask each student to think about why they are grateful to their family. After thinking, have them put pen to paper and write a letter of thanks to their family. This they can read to their family at the next time they are all together.

End the Day with Gratitude

Get a timer or use your cell phone set for 5 minutes. Then have each student summarize in one word what they were grateful for during the entire day. If you always close with this exercise, they will quickly be able to share something that happened that day that made them feel grateful.

Jar of Gratitude and Kindness

Find a see-through jar with the label removed and make a lid from card board to tape on top. It should have a cut slit through which a piece of paper will fit. Then cut small pieces of paper and leave a pen/marker or pencil nearby. All through the week, ask your students to note acts of kindness they saw



No matter what, if you are a grateful person, your magnetic energy will attract good things to you and allow you to benefit from this book.



and were grateful for. They should not put their name in as the author but they can cite who was kind. At the end of the week, open the jar and have a volunteer read them out loud.

Being In Someone Else's Shoes

Usually someone who does something that helps us is doing it intentionally. When we show gratitude, we can share both the meaning behind a caring act and also the benefits that came from that kindness or help. Tell the class that it is not really an accident when someone does something nice for you. They are doing this on purpose and because they want to.

Ask your students to close their eyes and think about the last time someone did something nice or kind for them. It can be a family member or a friend. It could be a teacher or someone else at the school. Tell them to recall what happened and how it made them feel.

Give them a few minutes for this recollection and ask them to continue to keep their eyes closed. Then ask why do they think this person showed this kindness or helpful act? What was the reason or **intention** in saying or doing this? And how did it make you feel?

Have them open their eyes and write some ideas about the intention of the person that helped them or was kind to them.

Pair the students and have them discuss with their partner and then switch to the other person:

- ✓ What the person did.
- ✓ What did you think their intention or reason was?
- ✓ How did you benefit from this act of kindness or help?

Have each pair come up with a role play of one of the acts of kindness or help for the whole class to see. Each pair can decide which one to perform.

After all of the roleplays, brainstorm and write on the flip chart or board words and themes that came up more than once. Summarize their thoughts.

A great way to end this experience is to have each student write a thank-you note to the person that they are grateful to for the kindness. Have them include what that made them feel and why they want thank that person for that act.

