

THE IMPORTANCE OF GRATITUDE!

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us...Albert Schweitzer

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Gratitude is a key concept in the growing field of positive psychology
- ❖ For millennia, gratitude has been viewed as an important virtue necessary for a successful civilization
- ❖ Having gratitude has long been a part of spiritual and religious practices and many people start their day giving thanks for just waking up
- ❖ Gratitude is not only thankfulness: it is the positive emotion of a deeper appreciation for someone or something that has enriched our lives
- ❖ Gratitude helps people connect to something larger than themselves such as nature, a higher power, or a divine force
- ❖ Gratitude is also the recognition of the things others have gifted us or done for us even though we may not have deserved it or not returned the gift
- ❖ Gratitude is truly the appreciation of what a person finds valuable and meaningful
- ❖ Words used to describe gratitude include praise, gratefulness, grace, recognition, appreciativeness, and thankfulness
- ❖ Gratitude has two stages according to Dr. Robert Emmons:
 - ❖ Acknowledging the goodness in our own lives which includes the recognition that in general, life is good, and full of texture and detail
 - ❖ Acknowledging the goodness from sources outside ourselves; from others, animals, and the world in general but not ourselves
- ❖ Expressing gratitude is a selfless act as it lets others know that they are appreciated
- ❖ Gratitude can also be used to apologize as well as to help others solve their problems
- ❖ Gratitude can be reciprocated in that performing an act of gratitude to one person may cause them to be gracious back to you or to pay it forward to others
- ❖ Research has shown that being thankful can improve your sense of well-being, decrease depression, increase life satisfaction, strengthen relationships, improve mental and physical health, develop stronger immune systems, and increase an overall sense of optimism about life
- ❖ Expressing gratitude will take effort but it can become a daily practice

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Before going to sleep each night, think of all the positive things that have happened during the day and give thanks for them
- ❖ Keep a gratitude journal and write down what you have given thanks for
- ❖ Ask friends and family to say to each other what they are grateful for
- ❖ Every day, actively notice new things that you are grateful for
- ❖ Go out of your way to thank others who have done something for you
- ❖ Write gratitude letters and thank others for the positive impact they have had on your life
- ❖ Find new ways to express gratitude such as keeping a gratitude bank in which you add money for each expression of gratitude, keeping a gratitude chart, etc.
- ❖ Seek professional help if you feel depressed and are unable to find anything to feel grateful about

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com

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