**SELF-CARE AND GRATITUDE**

Submitted by HOM of Well Being

What does gratitude have to do with self-care you might ask?

The answer is multi-fold because gratitude focuses on what we have rather than what we lack. Also, ‘living in gratitude’ taps into the Laws of Attraction which states that what we think about and express the most will be what we attract more of. Positive attracts positive and negative attracts negative. Fostering gratitude has wonderful positive effects on the mind, body and soul. It lifts the spirits and promotes hope for the present and the future, just to name a couple.
It may seem hard to feel grateful during challenging times but these are exactly the times that we need to be able to access gratitude.
With practice, gratitude becomes our regular state of being and developing a gratitude practice will change your life; it will affect how you operate in the world. It won’t take all of life’s challenges away but it will help you to become more resilient and able to process and respond to these challenges in a healthier and more effective way.
To go back to the notion that gratitude focuses on what we have rather than what we don’t have makes sense when it comes to the effects this has on our state of being.
For example if we often feel like we are lacking, we can feel depressed, unhappy, unfulfilled and even resentful. In turn these negative emotions will affect our whole being and can lead to more serious health concerns.
Developing a gratitude practice takes time and commitment but it is not hard. Even children will greatly benefit from being encouraged to adopt a gratitude practice. It helps us to be more optimistic and enhances our quality of life.
Simples things can create gratitude and if we can mindfully pay attention to the things that bring us joy, our task will be fairly easy.
To get started, buy yourself a blank page journal or note pad or a gratitude journal that is directive on what to write. This does not need to be expensive but it will formalize the process and create importance around your practice. You can even download a gratitude app on your phone.
Some people are able to create long lists of people, things and experiences that they appreciate. If you struggle with this, think about specific people in your life that have a positive effect on you, think about places you have visited, think about your spiritual beliefs, and think about past and present blessings and positive memories, and think about how wonderful it is that you can see, walk, hear etc.
Smile purposefully and often! This will always open you up to gratitude.
Commit to writing down at least one thing per day with the preface “I am grateful for ………” If you are able to write more that’s even better; just do it mindfully.

After making this practice part of your daily living you will begin to notice a change in your state of being and may not even have to write things down anymore.
Gratitude is a gift that you can give to yourself, but it is also one that you can give to the world because the more grateful and positive you are, the better you will communicate with others and the better you will be able to deal with challenges and the more positivity will be infused into your lives and the lives of others.
Gratitude and self-care go hand in hand and is something that we can all empower ourselves with.