

GAMES Appreciation Exercise

Take at least ten minutes to write about things that make you feel appreciation. One word of advice: Don't let yourself go into negative emotions about happy experiences. For example, if you start feeling joy thinking about your kids when they were little, don't end your writing lamenting how much you miss those days. Just stay in the feeling of appreciation that you have such memories.

Gratitude. What is happening right now for which you are grateful? *(Do you like the sky? If so, how does it make you feel? Where does it take you in your mind and emotions? Do you like the decorations? The feel of a warm blanket? It doesn't have to be something earth-shattering, just something you enjoy.)*

Anticipation. What are you looking forward to doing in the next few days? *(You can look ahead farther than that if you are really excited about something.)* Does anything about what you are anticipating make you smile?

Memories. We all have a lot of memories. Is there one that comes to mind today that makes you smile when you think about it? Take a few moments to relive that memory and write about it.

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Experiences. Take a few moments to brainstorm ways you could create an experience that others would enjoy. *(Can you invite people over? Can you send someone a card?)* Who could you do something with or for that would make you smile to share the experience with them?

Songs. Do you have some favorite songs that bring back good feelings and make you smile? Consider playing one or two of your favorites and writing about how they make you feel. *(Most songs can be found online if you don't own it already.)*

As you can probably tell, it would take you more than ten minutes to do all of these. The point is not to do all of them in ten minutes. Rather, use different forms of appreciation at different times while you develop the discipline of practicing appreciation and while you work on your goal of spending at least ten minutes each day focusing on what you have to appreciate.