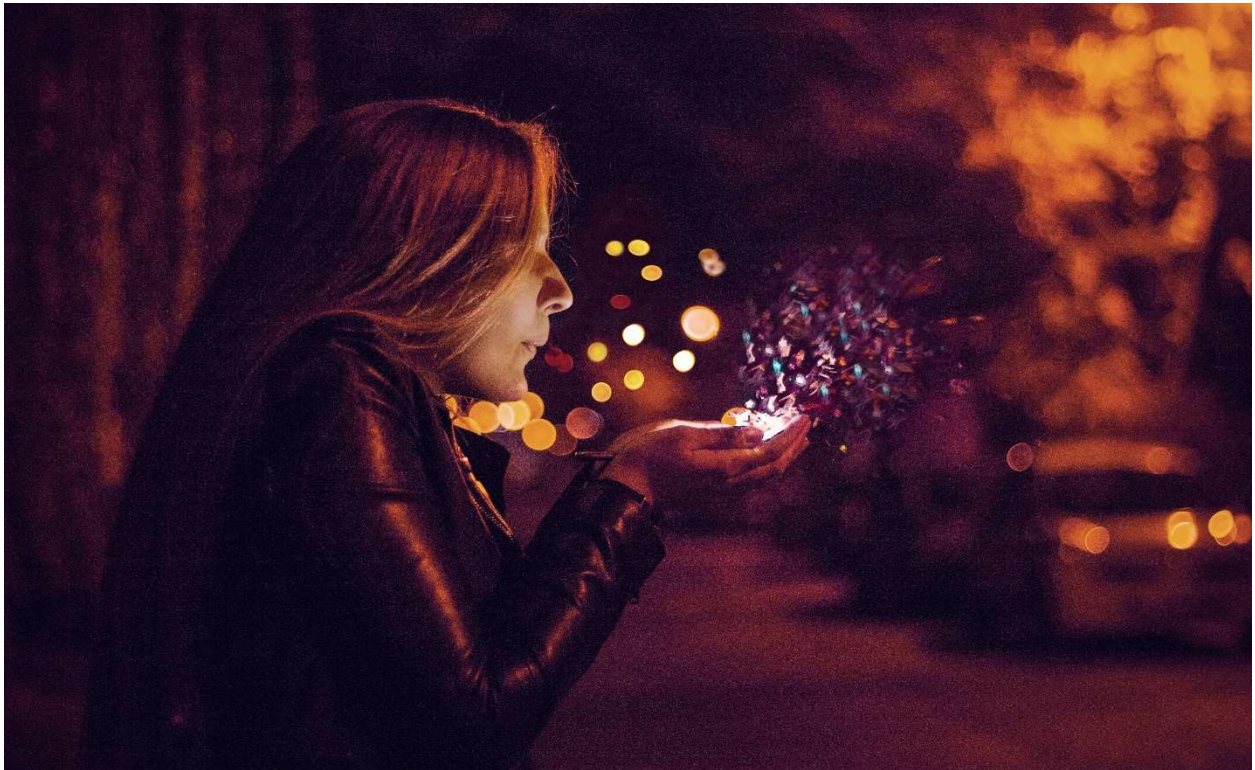


# *Start Your Day with Gratitude and Positive Thinking*



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# 1.) Why Start Your Day With Gratitude and Positive Thinking?

Did you know that starting your day with positivity is one of the best things you can do to improve your life? It has an immediate, powerful impact on your life. The benefits are numerous, and you start experiencing them from the first day you deliberately begin your day being positive and grateful.

These are the top five benefits you gain from a positive start to your day.

## **Better Mood**

Starting your day with positivity increases your mood and helps you have a better day. Being positive brings you inner peace, lowers your stress levels, increases your optimism, and makes you feel good. All of these benefits combine to put you in a better mood.

Taking time out to inject positivity and gratitude into your day improves your mood at all times of the day but it is especially effective first thing in the morning.

## **Increased Health**

Positive people are healthier than their peers. This is partly due to the lower stress levels experienced by those who practice positivity, but there is more to it than that and scientists are still working to understand it. Positive people are healthier on every level and tend to live longer as well!

Starting your day with gratitude and positive thinking sets the tone for your entire day and will lead you to be more positive throughout everything in life.

## **More Success**

Being positive and grateful first thing in the morning helps clear your mind and allows you to focus more on your tasks for the day. This leads directly to having more success every day and over the long term. Positive people, as a whole, are much more successful than others. This is true in every aspect of life, from careers to relationships.

## **Happiness**

Not only does starting your day with gratitude and positive thinking increase your mood, but it makes you happier. It boosts all of the “feel-good” hormones in the brain that make you happy. This isn’t a transitory effect, either; it lasts all day and over the long term increases your overall, permanent level of happiness.

## **Improved Relationships**

When you start your day with positivity, you clear your brain and are in a much better space to relate to the people you care about most. This makes it easier to maintain healthy, caring relationships. This improvement starts almost immediately and lasts over the long run.

These are just a few of the benefits you can get from deliberately beginning each day with gratitude and positive thinking. You will experience many more if you make it a habit!

## 2.) Deciding The Best Way for You to Start Your Day Positively

You have decided to start your days with morning gratitude and/or positive thinking. That is great. Now you have to decide how to do it. You have nearly endless options to choose from. This series is going to discuss several of them in depth, but here are some tips for deciding what to choose.

### **It Works For You**

Not every option works for everyone. That is normal and to be expected. Everyone is different, after all. Try a few of the options and see what works for you. If something does not seem to work for you, do not feel bad, and definitely do not try to force yourself to keep doing it.

There are many options out there and you will find something that resonates with your soul if you keep looking. Do not settle on the first thing you try unless it grabs you and refuses to let go. Try different options. Experiment.

### **You Can Do It Consistently**

Consider your schedule when weighing options. Some methods take more commitment than others, even if that is only a few minutes longer. How much time do you have in the morning? Not just some mornings, either, but every morning.

If you only have a few minutes most days, making a gratitude list in your head is probably a better idea than trying to fit in 30 (or even 10) minutes of yoga. That is not to say that you cannot do more than one thing. Perhaps you can do your gratitude lists every morning and do yoga as well on the weekends.

Remember that whatever you choose must be something you can do each and every day, or at least on 90 percent of them. Life does happen, after all.

### **You Like It (So You Will Do It)**

Do you know the number one reason people fail at starting a gym routine? It is not a lack of time or commitment. It is simply that they do not like what they are doing. Humans are strange creatures who are not likely to continue doing something they do not like, at least not unless they have an overwhelmingly good reason to do so.

The same thing applies to trying to create other new habits too. If you do not like something, you probably will not keep it up. Likewise, it is hard to stop bad habits because on some level you like them, and your brain goes quit? Why?

This is slightly different than the first tip (something must work for you) because they are two different things. Ninety minutes a day on a treadmill will work to make anyone fit, but few people like that enough to do it!

### 3.) Positive Morning Affirmations

Affirmations are one of the most popular self-help and personal development techniques because they are easy to do and to integrate into your daily routine. Beyond that, they are popular because they *work*. Affirmations are one of the most powerful things you can do to help yourself change and grow.

Using affirmations is simple. You pick a small number of affirmations that appeal to you. A few examples are offered below. Pick no less than two and no more than five. More will overwhelm you.

Each morning, you say your affirmations, aloud or silently, several times each. You can do this before you get out of bed or while going about your morning. You can say affirmations in the shower, while brushing your teeth, eating your breakfast, or on your morning commute.

Gradually, as you use the same affirmations over time, they will subtly change your self-talk -the constant flow of thoughts in your brain -and shift your worldview to be more in line with the affirmations. They quite literally reprogram your brain. When you have gotten all the benefits you can out of one set of affirmations, you can switch to another.

#### **Examples of Positive Morning Affirmations**

I will have a good day today.

I am joyful.

Today will be awesome.

Good things are coming my way today.

I love myself.

I am excited for today.

I can overcome any obstacle.

I am powerful.

I will be focused today.

Today will be really productive.

I have gifts to offer the world.

I am strong.

I have lots of energy today.

Nothing will stand in my way today.

I will be on my game today.

I will do a great job today.

I will have lots of great ideas today.

I am at peace this morning.

I know my worth.

I believe in myself.

Today I will be confident.

I attract success.

Opportunities are opening to me.

I am resilient.

I am a good person.  
I will do the best I can today.  
Today I will grow.  
Each day I am becoming a better version of myself.  
I will make progress on my goals today.  
I will achieve my goals.  
I will reach my dreams.

These are just a few examples of positive affirmations you can adopt for your morning positivity practice. If none of them work for you, you can find many more online or come up with some on your own.

## 4.) Morning Gratitude Practice

Starting any sort of gratitude practice is a great way to improve your life and make it more positive. A morning gratitude practice has extra benefits, however, because it also gives you all the benefits that come from starting your day off with positivity.

As with other types of morning positivity, you can choose from several types of morning gratitude practice. One is simply doing affirmations focused on being grateful. If that appeals to you, follow the instructions in the last article for using affirmations. If not, read on.

The two most common types of morning gratitude practices are list-making and gratitude journaling. Both work well to bring positivity into your morning and can be integrated into most morning routines.

### **Gratitude Lists**

Gratitude lists are exactly what they sound like -lists of things you are grateful for. You can make one whenever and wherever you want to (or need to). They can be as short or as long as you need or wish them to be.

To make gratitude lists into a morning gratitude practice, you need to make a list of things you are grateful for every morning. Try to make a list that is the same size every morning -three, five, and ten things are most common. You do not need to list the same things every morning; in fact, it is best if you do not.

Just list whatever comes to mind first. Your list will vary from one day to the next and that is a good thing! It will show you all the different things in your life that are good and help you become more positive.

How do you make your lists? You can either make them silently or aloud at any time during your morning routine that you choose. Or you can write them down. The choice is yours. Do which one feels right and works best for you.

### **Gratitude Journaling**

Gratitude journaling is a specific type of journaling where you focus on being grateful. It is often used to write down gratitude lists, as described above, but it is also used with specific gratitude prompts or to write down long paragraphs on gratitude.

You do not need a lot of time to use this method. You only need to journal for five or ten minutes a day. You can use any notebook or a premade journal and download prompts for free from the internet.



## 5.) Read Something Positive

If you like to read, consider including reading positive material into your morning positivity routine. Reading affects the brain differently than other kinds of sensory input. Studies show that when we read fiction, we hallucinate. When we read nonfiction, we process the material in different centers of our brain than we do for audiovisual material.

Some people respond better to this type of stimulus than they do to other kinds. If you are one of them, reading might be the best technique for your morning positivity routine. Positive material will give you all the other benefits of morning positivity and add brain strengthening, vocabulary building, and stress reduction.

What kind of material should you read? Anything positive will do. Avoid things from news outlets unless you have them filtered to remove negative articles or visit a site like the Good News Network. Otherwise, you are going to see a lot of negative things that will negate the effects of your other efforts.

Self-help material is always a good choice. There is an endless variety of books, articles, essays, magazines, and quotes you can devour to help you become more positive or work on various aspects of your personal growth.

Inspirational material is another good option. This does not mean religious (but positive religion and spirituality materials are also good ideas). It means material meant to inspire you -stories about overcoming obstacles, making your dreams come true, and so forth.

Some people like to read passages of affirmations or philosophy during their reading time. Readings about gratitude and how to practice it are also popular. It really does not matter what you read, as long as you do read.

How long should you read each morning? It depends on your schedule, personality, and patience, of course. Less than five minutes is ineffective; ten minutes is better. A half-hour devoted to reading positive material is ideal, but few people can make that happen on a regular basis.

Decide on something that works for you and can fit in your schedule and stick with it. On days when you have more time, there is nothing that says you cannot read for longer than you intended. You cannot make up for lost time, but you can certainly add additional time!

Reading is one of the great boons of civilization. Why not see if it can improve your life by using it for your morning positivity routine?

## 6.) Morning Exercise and Positivity

We have all heard endlessly about the many benefits of exercise and why we need to do it. It will improve our lives, lengthen them, make us healthier, and so on. It also has many mental health benefits, of course. Those of us who are disinclined to exercise probably are not moved by these benefits, or we would already be doing it.

If you do exercise, there are strong reasons for you to consider doing it in the morning. Exercise releases endorphins and other feel-good hormones that lift the mood and improve happiness.

Studies show that this burst of mood-altering chemicals lasts almost 24 hours, which means exercising in the morning will make it last all day. Who knew a runner's high was real and is stronger in the morning? Maybe that is why so many runners do their runs in the morning!

Exercising at any time also reduces the physical load of stress chemicals circulating in your body. It burns them out and leaves you feeling more relaxed and peaceful. That is a great way to begin your day and leads to better days overall.

The effect is cumulative as well. Exercising consistently leads to better baseline moods over the long run, even on days when you cannot exercise at all!

If you are not the exercise sort, reconsider because you do not have to become a gym rat to get these benefits. Nor do you need to begin your days with a five-mile run at your local park.

While aerobic exercise is the best for increasing positivity, any form of exercise will work. This includes low-impact forms of exercise such as walking, yoga, water aerobics, and tai chi. Even 15 minutes of gentle stretching will help you be more positive for the rest of the day.

Yoga and tai chi have additional benefits as well. They help control your mood better than most other forms of exercise. Likewise, they improve both physical and psychological markers of stress better than anything except intense aerobics and do so even in short sessions. A 10 or 15-minute session can do wonders for your health and mood.

If you are not used to exercising and want to introduce it to your routine, start slowly. Begin with simple low-impact exercises even if you want to move into aerobics. Always be sure to stretch before beginning. Finally, get permission from your doctor to begin exercising before you start.

## 7.) Morning Journaling

Journaling is also a popular self-improvement technique that integrates well into a morning positivity routine for many people. It does not take a lot of time and confers some unique benefits.

Writing, like reading, activates different centers and pathways in the brain than other media and techniques. Writing something down forces you to process it and think about what you are putting on paper. Nothing else has this same effect; it is even less apparent in typing, which is just a different form of the same process!

Even if morning reading is not for you, morning journaling might be. Try it and find out. You can journal in many forms. One is gratitude journaling, which is a form of gratitude practice.

Free journaling is the most popular kind. This involves simply writing about what is on your heart and mind before you begin the day. It helps you get things off your chest, process difficult emotions, dispel dreams, and so forth.

When you free journal, write about whatever comes to mind. Follow your brain. Do not force or correct yourself. You will not get any benefit if you do that. Your brain often knows what is bothering it. Trust it.

You can also use prompted journaling. This is when you write the answers to one or more prompts each morning. You can buy premade journals with prompts printed in them or find some online. You do not need an actual journal for your journaling, either. You can use a blank notebook or even loose sheets of paper.

How long should you write each morning? You do not need to write for long, but you need at least ten minutes. Fifteen minutes is usually ideal for most people. Five minutes or less is usually not enough for free journaling, though it can be for prompted journaling.

If the muse strikes you and you have time, write for as long as you like, but do not feel obligated. Do not look at or worry about the clock while you journal. That can make you too stressed to write. If you are pressed for time, a timer can keep you on track.

How much should you write? As much as it takes to get something off your mind or until your timer goes off (or you have answered the prompt). It usually does not take multiple paragraphs, much less pages and pages, of text to do this. Most people find several sentences or one paragraph to be sufficient.