

Gratitude can shift a brain

Gratitude comes in many different forms for many different reasons. To express gratitude and to feel gratitude is a powerful activity of our conscious mind, but its' hidden power is how it affects our brain.

If you've never given gratitude much thought, start with the post *It's all about gr-Attitude* . The author, references four variations to practicing gratitude that are inspiring and speaks of her own process to overcoming of negative thoughts, melancholia and judgment.

She describes it as "... **the place I want to move away from**, forward, into dynamic action, replacing negative with positive, judgment with tolerance, melancholia with deep and abiding joy. Transformation, in other words."

Building on early research on **Positive Psychology** therapy, Robert Edmonds, editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Positive Psychology* and professor psychology at UC Davis has spent a considerable number of years researching gratitude.

From a scientific perspective his research indicates that **gratitude increases overall well-being** by ...


- increasing levels of happiness by 25%
- creating a 6 month positive effect with as little as 3 weeks of gratitude journaling
- benefiting overall health including longer lasting and better sleep
- reducing cortisol and stress levels
- improving heart rate variability
- affecting the brain patterns of the frontal lobe

Planning and motivation, among others, are functions activated within the frontal lobes of the brain. It appears that like mindfulness, gratitude journaling improves these functions as

it shifts away from negativity and **allows us to get back to the more positive aspects in our lives.**

The very act of gratitude journaling appears to manifest a hidden power within our brain whereby we **gain control of our sense of well being.**

“Transformation, in other words.”

 Sources:

<http://ripplespillers.com/its-all-about-gr-attitude/>

<http://www.sharpbrains.com/blog/2007/11/29/robert-emmons-on-the-positive-psychology-of-gratitude/>