

gratitude

According to UCLA's Mindfulness Awareness Research Center, regularly expressing gratitude (the quality of being thankful and readiness to show appreciation) literally changes the molecular structure of the brain, keeps the gray matter functioning, and makes us healthier and happier. In 2008, scientists first used fMRI to study gratitude. In the study the researchers measured brain activity of participants experiencing different emotions, and found that gratitude *causes synchronized activation in multiple brain regions, and lights up parts of the brain's reward pathways and the hypothalamus*. In short, just like Prozac, gratitude can boost neurotransmitter serotonin and activate the brain stem to produce dopamine.

Some ways to practice gratitude:

Keep a gratitude journal.

Tell a coworker or a friend something you appreciate about them.

Use your morning commute to mentally list all the things you're grateful for.

Look at yourself in the mirror and think of something you like about yourself.

Sit in a quiet place and think about when something went well. How did that feel? Practice that feeling every day for a week.

Next time something bad happens consider 5 good things that happened as a result of this event.

Write someone a thank you note.

Write it down, talk about it, think about it, re-live it, meditate.

Rinse and repeat.

Which will you choose?



**CareGivers
of America**
Home Healthcare Services