



### On Gratitude

*“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order and confusion into clarity. It turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into perfect timing and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow”. Melodie Beattie*

*“Real life isn’t always going to be perfect or go our way, but the recurring acknowledgement of what is working in our lives can help us not only to survive but surmount our difficulties.” — Sarah Ban Breathnach*

A large body of evidence has recently emerged suggesting that gratitude is strongly related to all aspects of well-being. Based upon these findings, clinical interventions that foster positive functioning and psychological strengths are blossoming. One might ask, “How can thankfulness be related to trauma, depression or grief?” We can find the answer by exploring posttraumatic growth. A person’s ability to recover following exposure to trauma or a critical incident is positively influenced when they are able to find some benefit from their experience.

Survivors that display posttraumatic growth characteristics have a higher level of well-being compared to before their trauma exposure and say things like:

*“What happened is only one part of my life; there are many things that make me who I am.”*

*“I live every day to the fullest since that happened.”*

*“I appreciate all the support that family and friends provided to me. “*

*Life isn’t perfect but it is good!”*

*“Since this happened, I want to help others who experienced something similar.”*

How can we help foster characteristics of posttraumatic growth? One classic gratitude intervention involves making written lists of several things for which one is grateful on a regular basis. For example, you can keep a journal, in which you write two or three things for which you are grateful, to be completed each night directly before bed.

Studies originally proposed gratitude lists as an effective intervention for well-being enhancement and more recent studies have suggested that gratitude lists may be as effective as techniques commonly used in counseling interventions.

***“Instructions for living a Life***

***Pay attention***

***be astonished***

***Tell about it “* Mary Oliver**