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## GRATITUDE

Research has shown that expressing gratitude in our lives increases happiness and decreases depression.

- ✓ Expressing gratitude has a short-term positive effect (several weeks or months) on happiness levels. People who are grateful on a regular basis are much happier than those who aren't.
- ✓ One study showed a significant decrease in depression among those who practiced gratitude everyday for two weeks.

Take the following gratitude survey and then try the exercises that follow.

*“Insufficient appreciation and savoring of the good events in your past and overemphasis of the bad ones are the two culprits that undermine serenity, contentment, and satisfaction”*

MARTIN SELIGMAN, PH.D.

*Gratitude is one way of turning this around.*

### The Gratitude Survey by Martin Seligman, Ph.D.

Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how much you agree with it.

1=strongly disagree   2=disagree   3=slightly disagree   4=neutral

5=slightly agree   6=agree   7=strongly agree

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I have so much in life to be thankful for.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I am grateful to a wide variety of people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. As I get older, I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. A long amount of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone.

{See next page for scoring instructions.}



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### Scoring instructions:

1. Add up your score for items 1, 2, 4, and 5.
2. Reverse your scores for items 3 and 6. That is, if you scored a "7", give yourself a "1", if you scored a "6", give yourself a "2", etc.
3. Add the reversed scores for items 3 and 6 to the total from step 1. This is your total GQ score. This number should be between 6 and 42.

If you scored 35 or below you are in the bottom one-fourth of people who took the survey. If you scored between 36 and 38 you are in the bottom one half. If you scored between 39 and 41 you are in the top one-fourth. And if you scored 42 you are in the top one-eighth.

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### Increase your Level of Happiness by Martin Seligman, Ph.D.

*Following are two exercises for you to do.*

**EXERCISE ONE:** Select one important person from your past who has made a major positive difference in your life and to whom you have never fully expressed your thanks. (do not confuse this selection with new-found romantic love or with the possibility of future gain) Write a testimonial just long enough to cover one laminated page. Take your time composing this; take several weeks composing on bus rides and in the evening before bed, etc. Invite that person to your home, or travel to that person's home. It is important you do this face to face, not just in writing or on the phone. Do not tell the person the purpose of the visit in advance; a simple "I just want to see you" will suffice. Bring a laminated version of your testimonial with you as a gift. When all settles down, read your testimonial aloud, slowly, with expression, and with eye contact. Then let the other person react unhurriedly. Reminisce together about the concrete events that make this person so important to you.

**EXERCISE TWO:** At the end of each day, before going to bed, write down three things that went well during the day. Do this every night for one week. The three things can be small or large in importance. After each positive event on your list answer the following question in your own words: "Why did this good thing happen?"

This exercise was found to increase happiness and decrease depression for up to 6 months. (and 60% of the participants continued this daily habit).

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**I hope this Gratitude Tip Sheet has been helpful to you.  
Feel free to forward it to a friend. To obtain professional support for your concerns  
please contact me, David Weiskotten Ph.D., at 610-746-9588.**