



## Three Good Things, A Small Gratitude Exercise for a Large Boost of Happiness

Many people in Hawai'i have a Thanksgiving Day tradition of taking time to remember something that they are particularly grateful for. They might share that gratitude with others or just keep the thought to themselves. But in either case, the simple act of feeling grateful brings a sense of joy along with it.

The happiness often linked with gratitude has actually been the source of a great deal of scientific study in recent years. Dr. Martin Seligman, a pioneer in the field of Positive Psychology, has developed a technique that is one of the best ways to easily increase your level of happiness. It may not be scientifically clear why it works, but it is clear that it does, having been proven several times to increase long-term happiness.

The technique is called “Three Good Things,” and there are three simple parts. The first part is to think of something that happened to you during your day that you felt was good, or in some way made you happy. Step two is to simply write down in a gratitude journal what it was that made you feel good. Step three, which Dr. Seligman emphasizes is **the most important part of this exercise, is to reflect on your role in creating that moment of goodness or happiness.** That’s it. Doing these three steps should really take less than a minute or so to complete, then you repeat it two more times so you have three things listed in your gratitude journal for each day.



The “good things” can be small, like taking your dog for a walk, and once you’ve listed an item in your gratitude journal, it’s important to ask yourself “what is it about me that let that good thing happen to me today?” In other words, what quality do you possess that helped you to create or appreciate the thing that made you feel good? In a gratitude journal, someone might write that his great love for his dog helped him to appreciate the walk they shared together.

Try doing this exercise everyday for just one week. Seligman’s studies show that participants who did try it for one week were likely to continue on their own and their happiness kept on increasing—from 5% at one month, to 9% at six month.

Why not give it a try yourself? There’s nothing to lose..... and lots to gain !



..is a short term confidential counseling service, provided to you by your employer, that can assist in identifying and resolving issues that may be interfering with your job or personal life.

Our experienced counselors are available across the Islands and can be contacted by phoning or emailing our Honolulu office.

## Reclaim Your Precious Free Time

There are 168 hours in a week. That should be enough time to succeed at work, at home, and at everything else that makes up a fulfilling life. Yet we always feel stretched too thin. Follow these steps to help reclaim your time:

- **Don't fall for time sucks.** These are trivial activities that you keep doing because they're comfortable. Limit yourself to a few hours of TV or gaming a week, to 30 minutes a day on Facebook, or to just one sports team.
- **Block off free time in chunks.** An hour of play with your kids feels like more time than four distracted 15-minute interactions in between other stuff. Set aside real time for greater enjoyment, relaxation, and mindfulness.
- **Limit your technology use.** Set limits such as “no screen hours,” letting everyone at work know the one time you'll check email each night, and banning devices from the dinner table.

Adapted from “[Relax, You Have 168 Hours This Week](#)” by Scott Behson

## If You're on a Roll, Take a Break

When you're on a roll at work – completely focused, tearing through your to-do list – the last thing you want to do is take a break and lose momentum. But research shows that no matter how engaged we are in an activity, our brains inevitably tire, and we become more vulnerable to distractions. Sporadic breaks replenish our energy, improve self-control and decision-making, and fuel productivity.

We just have to get better about stepping away before we burn out. So try blocking out a couple of planned 15-minute intermissions on your calendar, one in the morning, one in the afternoon – and find something active to do with this time. Talk a walk, stretch, run an errand, go with a coworker for a snack, etc. The important thing is to step away from your computer so your focus is relaxed and your mind drifts. Checking Facebook doesn't count.

From “[Schedule a 15-Minute Break Before You Burn Out](#)” by Ron Friedman.

## Remake Your Internal Sound Track



We all talk to ourselves all day long. Our self-talk can be neutral, positive, or negative.

With **negative self-talk** we speak to ourselves in a harsh, hurtful, sometimes brutal manner, e.g. “I’m so stupid”, “I hate the way I look”, “I’m not good enough”. These thoughts undermine our well-being.

**The good news is that it is possible to erase negative self-talk tracks and upload new ones.**

Picture your thoughts as pop-up windows on a computer and imagine closing them. Pretend your thoughts are on the television or radio and imagine turning them off. Some people imagine they are letting smoke out of a chimney as they let their negative thoughts go. Others talk back to their internal negative statements by either disagreeing in a strong way or reacting in a compassionate, softer way.

If you would like to find ways that work for you to change, stop or replace your habitual self-talk—call EAP for an appointment, we can help you with an upgrade!



### Employee Assistance of the Pacific

1221 Kapiolani Blvd, Ste 730  
Honolulu, HI 96814

[Www.EAPacific.com](http://www.EAPacific.com)

Phone 808 597-8222  
Toll Free 877 597-8222

Email: [info@EAPacific.com](mailto:info@EAPacific.com)