

## Connection Practice #1

# Gratitude Letter and Visit

.....

**Duration:** 30 minutes for writing, plus one hour for the visit

**Frequency:** Every few months, or more frequently if desired

**Level of Difficulty:** Moderate/Difficult

**Overview:** Increasing both gratitude and interpersonal connection are two of the most effective ways to increase our happiness and well-being according to a number of studies. This exercise invites you to cultivate both of these valuable skills, through the direct expression of gratitude towards someone who has helped you in the past. As the name suggests, you'll be writing a letter of thanks to someone important in your life, and delivering your letter directly to that individual.

**Instructions:** We all have people in our lives—friends, teachers, colleagues, coaches, parents, and so forth—who have helped us a great deal throughout the years. Take a moment and reflect on these individuals, and try to identify one such person who has helped you along the way but whom you haven't fully thanked in the way that you'd like to. For the purposes of this exercise, try to choose someone who lives nearby you, as you will be delivering this letter in the coming days or week. Once you've picked someone, write his or her name.

*Person I am grateful towards:*

---

---

---

Take a moment, closing your eyes if it's helpful, and reflect on what this person has meant to you, and how they've helped you along the way. Next, write a detailed letter of thanks directed at this individual, keeping the following pieces of guidance in mind. Write down any notes, memories, or reactions that come up for you. After you've done so, use a separate piece of paper (or computer) to write your letter.



Once you've written your letter, arrange to meet this individual (if possible) to deliver your letter in person. Don't tell them the exact purpose of your visit—allow that to be more of a surprise. You might simply tell them that you'd like to meet and have something you'd like to share.

Once you meet this individual face-to-face, let him or her know that you'd like to read a letter of gratitude to them, and that you'd like to share what they mean to you. Take a deep breath and read the letter, trying not to rush through it. As you read, notice whatever emotions come up inside of you, and see if you can notice the other person's emotional reactions as well. Once you're finished, take a moment and share with each other what the experience was like. Before leaving, remember to give the person the letter as a token of your gratitude.

**How and why it works:** Fostering gratitude and improving our interpersonal relationships are two of the most powerful and effective methods to increasing personal happiness. This practice combines the power of these two factors, by facilitating the expression of gratitude towards someone who's helped you along the way. Studies suggest that the benefits of writing and delivering a "gratitude letter" can be long-lasting, with some research suggesting gains can be maintained for up to two months.

**Notes/Impressions:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

