



# ALLONE EMPLOYEE

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## FINDING GRATITUDE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

From personal gratitude practices to paying it forward with random acts of kindness, gratitude and giving back can help spread much-needed joy this holiday season. Here are some ideas to get started:

### **Create a Daily Gratitude Practice**

Taking a moment each day to focus on what matters most can help with improving mental health, strengthening relationships, and building resilience in the face of challenging situations. Try taking a deep breath and expressing thanks first thing in the morning, enjoying a 20-minute gratitude walk in nature, or simply writing down a few things to be grateful for at the end of the day.

### **Consider the Health Benefits**

According to a University of San Diego School of Medicine study, people who were more grateful had improved heart health, reduced inflammation, and healthier heart rhythms. Additionally, people with a daily gratitude practice experienced up to 25 percent reduced dietary fat intake, 23 percent lower stress hormones like cortisol, and reduced effects of aging on the brain.

### **Pay It Forward**

Whether looking to express thanks to frontline workers, service members, or loved ones near and far, get creative with giving thanks. Sending a gratitude care package, writing personal letters of

thanks and encouragement, or organizing drive-by thank you events are a few ways to show heartfelt appreciation. Random acts of kindness like paying for someone in the drive-thru, offering to help a stressed parent, or running errands for a neighbor can also make a meaningful impact.

### **Focus on Giving Back**

Find any volunteer activity that feels comfortable and look into offering support. Nursing homes and long-term care facilities were hit especially hard during this pandemic and many local food banks are working to help those in need this holiday season. Your Assistance Program can help provide referrals for donation and volunteer opportunities in your area.

### **Get Kids Involved**

Gratitude and giving back can also help bring the whole family together. Kids might enjoy planting a gratitude garden, painting gratitude rocks, or keeping a gratitude jar as fun family activities. Kids can also be involved in giving back to the community, participating in toy drives, and helping others through service.

Considering COVID-19 adds a whole new dimension of stress and uncertainty for the holidays, it may help to talk it out with a mental health provider, available through your Assistance Program.