

PSYCHOLOGY GRATITUDE ASSIGNMENT

Throughout the calendar year, we think & talk about being thankful (both intentionally and unintentionally), but did you know that expressing gratitude may actually make you a happier person? Psychological studies have shown that gratitude positively correlates with joy, happiness and life satisfaction.

This exercise is called the Gratitude Letter. It was developed by Martin Seligman, founder of Positive Psychology.

Instructions:

1. Select one important faculty member from Bartlett High School from your past or present who has made a major positive difference in your life, preferably someone to whom you have never fully expressed your thanks. Do not confound this selection with the possibility of a future gain. Think about people who may have gone out of their way to help you, offer encouragement or given you an opportunity. It may be a teacher, admin, coach, counselor, secretary, etc. (as long as they work at the Academy or BHS) who said or did something that made a positive difference in your life.
2. Type at least a half page-long testimonial. Take your time composing this. Detail exactly what that special person did and why it had such an impact on you. Thank them for their impact on your life. Try to be as specific as possible.
3. Turn your letter in on Curve by April 8th in the dropbox located within the folder titled, "Psychology Gratitude Assignment". I will send it to them!

You may be surprised to know that there is empirical evidence supporting the positive effects of this exercise. In Seligman's 2005 study, participants were given one week to write and then deliver a letter of gratitude in person to someone who had been especially kind to them but had never been properly thanked. After completing this task, participants saw increased happiness and decreased depressive symptoms compared to a control group. While the increase in happiness was relatively short-lived, it suggests that there might be ways to use gratitude to improve happiness long term.