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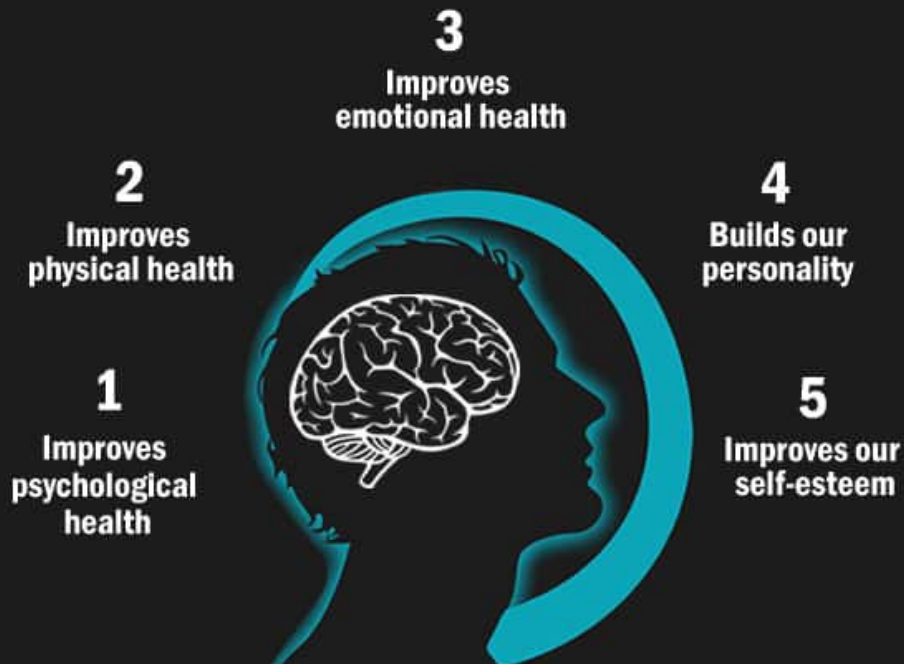
December 2022



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MINDJOURNAL

# Benefits Of Gratitude



MIND  HELP

The next Mindful Monday series will begin on Monday January 9th at 12:00 and 12:30. We will be taking 7 weeks to work on Gratitude. [Register Here](#)

We have added many new resources to the workshops and webinars tab above including lots of workshops through CalPERS and CalSTRS.

NEW SERIES

## Developing Your Leadership Skills

*with Jaclynn Robinson*



Are you interested in developing your Leadership Skills? Gallup is launching a new Podcast just for you! **Access the LIVE Program** at <http://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/live>  
You can watch directly on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9cWuqTlcuDLhA264zAKCgg>  
You can also get more information on the Health and Wellness [Webinars and Workshop](#) page



## Emotional

### Holiday Survival Guide

Holidays are an especially stressful time for everyone, how can we combat that?

#### Gratitude practice

Even though gratitude is already a holiday tradition, studies show we have a lot to gain by committing to regular gratitude practices. Much like showering, gratitude practices seem to be most effective when practiced daily or at least several times a week. [Gratitude](#) helps us move away from a self-centered thought process because it directs us to think of others, which enhances wellbeing, resilience, and our sense of community.

Some are able to adopt a more grateful mindset simply by thinking about it. Most of us need a tangible practice to optimize gratitude, some way to make the practice easier to reflect on. This is why most studies use some form of writing to capture and document moments of appreciation. **A gratitude journal** can be used to recognize what we are grateful for on a daily basis.



## Why it works

With each day prompting a small, personalized lists, **we can identify exactly why we are grateful and refer to it in times of need.** [This practice enhances our well-being.](#) Plus, [studies show this makes us more sensitive to future feelings of gratitude.](#) As a result, a gratitude journal helps us notice new reasons and things in our lives for which to be grateful.

Gratitude is not a passive experience. Imaging studies indicate that [many areas](#) of the brain are active when are grateful. These areas are involved in thinking about how we fit in with our social group and moral reasoning, and [help us to feel closer to others.](#) Perhaps this is why gratitude [protects and improves our interpersonal relationships.](#)

[Not all](#) kinds of gratitude refer to others, as some items on your list could be appreciating the weather, the warmth of your home, or the plentiful food you have. Gratitude for things and situations can still benefit your view of the world because you are noticing how things are going your way, rather than the common tendency to focus on what is wrong. Even when we are not focusing on gratitude for others, [studies show that daily gratitude](#) journaling reduces feelings of loneliness and can improve mental health.

One of the leading ideas behind how gratitude works involves the calming effect it produces. Gratitude practices such as journaling [may activate special receptors that dampen our perception of pain, stress and loneliness](#) (called mu-opioid receptors). Instead of noticing the negatives, gratitude helps you practice noticing the positives in our lives.

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(Read the full article here: <https://treowellness.com/blog/gratitude-banishes-the-holiday-blues/>)



# Financial

Every holiday season, the idea of giving gifts to everybody you love can cause a lot of pressure. You may even end up spending more than you can truly afford just to prove your love for someone. As we all know, this year has proven to be challenging for many. Allow yourself permission to reflect on if it still makes sense to give gifts in the traditional sense. You can decide that you do something completely new to honor family time together, but not have to give gifts. This is your life, you can create it however you want. There are no rules and it can be fun to find new ways to approach this year's holiday season. To help you get started, here are 8 new ways to think outside the box.

## **Support small businesses or minority-owned businesses.**

If you still want to give gifts to your loved ones, the first place is to start with a [budget](#). Make sure you're only spending the money you truly have on these gifts. Then you can consider supporting small businesses or minority-owned businesses, as they may need the extra support. Start by looking online for local small businesses. You can also ask your friends if they know any businesses that may need some extra love. Support them by purchasing their products or services and telling your family and friends about them too. Nothing is appreciated more than a referral from a happy customer.

## **Donate to a charity or organization in honor of someone.**

Another way to give gifts is by making donations to a specific charity or organization in honor of a loved one. For example, let's say someone you love has experienced a medical condition in their lifetime. Instead of giving them a material gift, you can donate to a specific charity or organization that supports that specific medical research in honor of the person you love.

## **Give the gift of services.**

Gifts that really pay off for the recipient are usually the ones that help someone or provide an inner investment or experience. Giving the gift of financial planning to someone by covering the costs of the financial planner fee is a good example. You can search for a qualified certified financial planner by using the [CFP board search engine](#). Another idea is paying for someone to have a life or career coach session to help them get started on a new path or career in life with the intent they continue with the sessions on their own thereafter. Or even pay for someone's therapy session if they are going through a hard time in life. You can search for a licensed therapist [online](#).

## **Open up an Investment account for someone.**

You can even open up an investment account for your kids and buy into a diversified mutual fund that can grow to provide them assets once they turn 18. Take it a step further and go through the process with your child. Teach them how to open the account, add money into it, and invest in a specific investment. Financial education is a gift that can pay off for years to come. What better way to teach your child the importance of investing than by helping them get started!

## **Organize Money free experiences.**

Plan special experiences with someone by carving out the day to do a hike or beach or picnic in nature and share all the reasons you love that person. You can write love notes, to your kids, parents, best friends, and significant others. Ultimately, sharing from your heart can create a meaningful connection. Usually, these free types of gifts are the ones that make a lasting impression and memory with someone and can be healing and beautiful for the receiver and the giver.

## **Host a Gift exchange.**

This helps you only buy for one person versus many. This can be really fun and if you decide to do the exchange over zoom or a social distant meet up outside, it can invoke great cheer and laughter as sometimes these gift exchange games are a hoot!

## **Leverage credit card reward points.**

Many credit card reward points go unused every year. Make this the year to review your points and redeem them for [cash back](#) to pay for gifts, gift cards, or other items. This can be a creative way to give gifts and not come out of pocket per se.

## **Invest in yourself.**

And finally, the importance of investing in yourself. Prioritizing self-care practices, and factoring that into one's budget, has always been one of my biggest tips for clients. This year has really enforced us all to recognize the importance of that. We all need to make sure we are finding ways to spend time and money wisely to take care of ourselves from a holistic well-being point of view. Whether it's carving out time to do a day trip in nature, or establishing a savings goal in your [Mint](#) app to try out a new self-care routine monthly. Self-care can also look like hiring a professional licensed therapist. Regardless of the method, self-care is more important than ever and should be considered as a gift to yourself this holiday season.

As a bonus, you can get a head start on next year by using the Mint savings features. You can even set up a specific holiday fund and save throughout the year for next year's holiday gifts or anytime next year. Regardless of how you decide to celebrate your loved ones during this holiday season, remember to focus on love. Love is healing and we all could use an extra dose of love's powerful healing capabilities this year. Wishing you the most memorable and wonderful holiday season yet!

Source: <https://mint.intuit.com/blog/relationships-2/8-ways-to-think-outside-the-gift-box/>

# The 12 Days of Holiday Budgeting

*'Tis the season to be budgeting!*

Stay off the naughty list by celebrating on a budget with these tips.



Saving tip



Budgeting tip



Spending tip

1



Make a shopping list and check it twice



2



Set a price limit to avoid overspending



3



Buy ahead of time to avoid price spikes



4



Look for discounts on every purchase



5



Create DIY gifts instead of buying new



6



Propose a secret gift exchange to spend less



7



Price check to find the cheapest option



8



Shop older versions of tech gadgets



9



Repurpose decorations for a new look



10



Account for shipping or choose store pick up



11



Suggest a potluck and cook your favorite meal



12



Track your spending and save receipts





Source: <https://mint.intuit.com/blog/budgeting/holiday-budgeting/>



## Social

### COZY COFFEE RECIPE

As the days and nights get colder, cozy up with friends or loved ones with this yummy sweet treat!



This specialty drink is a great holiday coffee to appease the sugar dragon in all of us! Feel free to make this recipe as light or teeth-achingly sweet as your heart desires.



## Ingredients:

- 2 shots espresso or ½ cup strong-brewed coffee
- 1 tbsp. (½ oz.) caramel syrup
- 1 tbsp. (½ oz.) vanilla syrup
- 1 cup (8 oz.) milk (1%, 2%, or your favorite milk substitute)
- Drizzle caramel sauce

## Directions:

1. Heat milk (or milk substitute) over medium heat in a medium saucepan and whisk warm milk until frothy (about 30 seconds). Or use a [Bodum French Press](#) to froth the warm milk once it's heated. This can be achieved by filling the carafe and rapidly plunging the filter until the milk reaches your desired consistency.
2. Combine caramel syrup, vanilla syrup, and espresso in a mug.
3. Top with foamed milk, drizzle some caramel sauce (if you prefer some added sweetness).
4. Serve and enjoy!

You can find more delicious holiday drinks [HERE](#).



## Community

### Give Back This Season

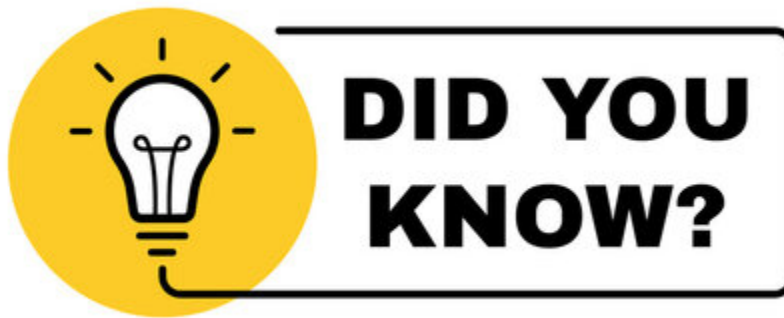
[Marine Toys for Tots](#) provides an opportunity to give back.

[Ways to Donate](#)




Other Local Organizations:  
**SANTA CLARA COUNTY**

- [African American Community Service Agency \(AACSA\)](#)
  - [Wender Weis Foundation for Children: Holiday Heroes](#)
  - [Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley](#)
  - [Heart of the Valley Senior Services](#)
  - [NAMI Silicon Valley](#)
  - [Streetcode Academy](#)
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[The Well](#), SCCOE's Employee Health and Wellness website is **ALL NEW!** You can easily find resources here to help increase your wellbeing in the areas of Career, Social, Financial, Physical and Community Wellbeing. Additionally, you can easily find all of the mental health resources offered by the SCCOE in one spot from this page. You can also access the [New Virtual Wellness Center](#) from this page!

## Kaiser Permanente had partnered with Ginger to expand their Mental health Support offerings!



### On-demand emotional support with **ginger**

- Immediate 1-on-1 support for coping with many common challenges — from stress and low mood to issues with work and relationships, and more.
- Highly trained emotional support coaches are ready to help 24/7
- Adult Kaiser Permanente members can use Ginger for 90 consecutive days at no cost.

#### What can you do with the Ginger app?

- Text with your coach anytime, anywhere, 24/7 for 90 days
- Discuss goals, share challenges, and create an action plan with your coach
- Get personalized, interactive skill-building tools from your coach
- View recaps from each texting session, track your progress, and more



The Ginger app offers 1-on-1 support for many common challenges — from anxiety, stress, and low mood to issues with work, relationships, and more. Ginger's skilled emotional support coaches are ready to help 24/7. Kaiser Permanente members can use the app at no cost, no referral needed.

What can employees do with Ginger?

- Text with a coach anytime, anywhere, 24/7.
- Discuss goals, share challenges, and create an action plan with their coach.
- Get personalized, interactive skill-building tools from a library of more than 200 activities.
- View recaps from each texting session, track progress, and work with their coach to adjust action plans as needed.

## COVID-19 Testing

Routine testing for essential education workers and their families is a healthy practice and improves public safety. We encourage monthly testing.

You and your families have access to free routine COVID testing at SCCOE locations, through your health provider, and through public events

- Weekly [routine testing](#) is available to all SCCOE staff. It is an essential practice that contributes to the health and safety of our employees and the public.
- It is possible to have an active COVID-19 virus infection and be contagious without having symptoms (asymptomatic).

- In Santa Clara County, in addition to testing symptomatic patients, health care providers are required to provide easy access to routine testing for asymptomatic essential education sector workers who are in frequent proximity to students and/or the public.
- [OptumServe Testing](#) Open to the public with a focus on Santa Clara County education sector employees and their families.
- [Site-specific testing](#) is an observed, walk-up, self-administered [anterior nasal-swab test](#) available to employees and students at SCCOE sites where in-person learning and services are taking place.



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## About the Santa Clara County Office of Education

*Working collaboratively with school and community partners, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) is a regional service agency that provides instructional, business, and technology services to the 31 school districts of Santa Clara County. The County Office of Education directly serves students through special education programs, alternative schools, Head Start and State Preschool programs, migrant education, and Opportunity Youth Academy. The SCCOE also provides academic and fiscal oversight and monitoring to districts in addition to the 22 Santa Clara County Board of Education authorized charter schools.*

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