

PHASE 1: GRATITUDE FOR 5 MINUTES

Our brain needs fuel to run properly. The fuel that our brains were intended to run on is joy. Very simply, joy is what you experience when you can see in another person's face and eyes that they are happy to be with you. Our brains have a default emotional state that was likely set to one of the six unpleasant emotions our brain recognizes- sadness, fear, anger, shame, disgust, or hopeless despair- early in our lives. Here is the good news: we can reset our default emotional state to joy! This happens as a response to repeated exposure to a state of gratitude. Gratitude is the on-ramp for raising joy in our lives!

1) Start compiling a list of grateful memories as described below.

- Think of a memory in your life for which you are grateful. It can be big (i.e. the birth of a child) or small (i.e. a beautiful sunset). It doesn't matter, as long as you feel gratitude when you think about it. Each memory should have these two characteristics:
 - You feel gratitude in your body.
 - You feel a connection with God in the memory.
- Give each memory a 2-3 word title (i.e. "Shining Goldfish", "Balloon Soccer", "Dave and Dan") and write them in a journal or notebook.
- Eventually, you want a list of at least 8-10 grateful memories.

2) Once a day, spend 5 minutes residing in gratitude using your list.

- This will be mostly nonverbal. You are simply feeling a connection with God in your body as you relive memories of gratitude.
- Note: Spending five minutes reliving memories without being distracted is difficult if you have never done it before. It will take you a while to be able to sustain the full five minutes without daydreaming. Give yourself grace. You are probably exercising a muscle in your heart that hasn't been used much. Simply keep using your list of memories during the five minutes. Some days a single memory will sustain you. More commonly, you will need 2-5 memories to fill five minutes. When the gratitude of one memory fades, go to another one on the list.

3) Once you can consistently sustain a solid five-minute state of gratitude, you are ready to start the Thirty-Day Joy Exercise.

PHASES 2 & 3:

THE THIRTY-DAY JOY EXERCISE & JOY MAINTENANCE

1) Spend five minutes of gratitude three times a day.

- Do it first thing in the morning, at midday, and the last thing you do at night before going to bed. Do this for thirty days. Consistency is the key!

2) Sometime during the thirty days, your brain will respond to this repeated exposure to gratitude!

- It will reset your default emotional state to joy. You will likely start to feel different when you wake up, and you will notice when you slip out of joy as you live your life. **Not feeling joy will feel abnormal to you.** You will want to return to joy as soon as possible.

3) After the thirty days are over, maintain your joy levels by spending five minutes each day in gratitude.