



# ChallengeME

## MONTHLY MINUTE

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Monthly topic: **Gratitude**

**ChallengeME**  
MaineDOT Healthy Workforce



### Giving thanks to others improves your own happiness.

The holiday season is expected to bring joy and festivities to all, but for many this time of year comes with its own struggles. Financial troubles, seasonal depression, and even loneliness can really hit home around the holidays. Sometimes, it can be just plain old stressful to spread yourself thin to meet everyone's expectations.

When you get down in the dumps in these winter months it can be easy to reach for the comforting junk food, isolate yourself, and start to spiral into negative thinking. If you do find this happening, try practicing gratitude! When you force yourself to think about what you are grateful for rather than what makes you resentful or regretful, the most profound moments of your life will resurface. You will remember the family, friends, and moments that you can be grateful for.

When you have control of your negative emotions, you can start to make it a regular practice of recognizing the small things we so easily forget to be thankful for. It may be a great book we read, laughter with a friend, or even the joy of eating ice cream in the sunshine. Whatever these simple pleasures may be, consciously expressing our gratitude for them can help us grow our daily gratitude practice beyond the surface level.

Looking for more information?

Living Resources (EAP)

[www.guidanceresources.com](http://www.guidanceresources.com)

Harvard Health

<https://www.health.harvard.edu>

Greater Good In Action - Berkeley

<https://ggia.berkeley.edu>

### How to Practice Gratitude

#### Have You Heard of Gratitude Journaling?

Do you already have a journal or schedule you regularly use to track appointments and deadlines? Next time you flip it open, take a moment to jot something you are grateful for. Doing this can encourage you to have positive feelings rather than negative emotions when looking at a packed schedule.

#### Not Ready to Commit to journaling? Try a Letter

Set aside about 10 minutes to write a letter for someone to whom you never properly communicated your deep gratitude. If you can, think about meeting this person face to face and reading the letter to them yourself. Finding the courage to do this may be hard, but the payoff will be exponential.

#### Can you brave the cold?

If words aren't your thing, try doing a "savoring walk." Bundle up to fight off the cold fronts and spend 20 minutes walking outside at least once a week. As you walk, try to notice any small details that make you happy. As you notice each positive thing in nature, let it simmer in your mind, and try not to let it quickly slip away. Try to walk a different route as often as possible, or else you may take these natural gifts for granted!

Visit the ChallengeME Website:

**Sign up for Health Coaching:**

Call: TTY: 800.697.0353 | Online: [guidanceresources.com](http://guidanceresources.com)

WellStarME: [wellstar@mcd.org](mailto:wellstar@mcd.org) | 207-620-9202

**Health & Wellness Navigation Team**

[wellnessnavigator@mcd.org](mailto:wellnessnavigator@mcd.org) | 207-620-9209

**For benefits questions, please contact Employee Health & Wellness:** (207) 624-7380 or 1-800-422-4503 TTY: dial Maine Relay 711 or visit [maine.gov/mdot/challengeme](http://maine.gov/mdot/challengeme)

**Coming up January: A New Year**

Comments, questions, ideas, or submissions?  
Please email [Elizabeth.Moulton@maine.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Moulton@maine.gov)