



## ON GRATITUDE

As an emotion, gratitude is an attribution-dependent state that results from a two-step cognitive process: (a) recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome, and (b) recognizing that there is an external source for this positive outcome. Lazarus argued that gratitude is one of the “empathic emotions” whose roots lie in the capacity to empathize with others. The core relational theme associated with gratitude is recognition or appreciation of an altruistic gift...

A grateful response to life circumstances may be an adaptive psychological strategy and an important process by which people positively interpret everyday experiences. The ability to notice, appreciate, and savor the elements of one’s life has been viewed as a crucial determinant of well-being... Frijda (1988) stated that “adaptation to satisfaction can be counteracted by constantly being aware of how fortunate one’s condition is and how it could have been otherwise, or actually was otherwise before...enduring happiness seems possible, and it can be understood theoretically”...

Seen in the light of this model, gratitude is effective in increasing well-being as it builds psychological, social, and spiritual resources. Gratitude inspires prosocial reciprocity... and indeed, is one of the primary psychological mechanisms thought to underlie reciprocal altruism... The experience of gratitude, and the actions stimulated by it, build and strengthen social bonds and friendships. Moreover, encouraging people to focus on the benefits they have received from others leads them to feel loved and cared for by others...

Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: Experimental studies of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 377-389