

# with thanks

Cultivating gratitude is a skill, and one that can prove trying at times. Yet research continually shows that being thankful is strongly associated with improved psychological and physical health, and leads to greater happiness and a calmer approach to life's day-to-day.





If you're in need of a gratitude boost, allow these simple prompts to revitalise your spirit.

\* Something that made me laugh today

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\* I am good at

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\* My favourite song to dance to

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\* A recent act of kindness shown to me

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\* I recently showed an act of kindness by

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\* My favourite quote

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\* I am inspired by

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\* My favourite memory involving my children

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\* A thing my children do that always makes me smile

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\* My favourite childhood memory

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\* My favourite meal to share with friends or family

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\* A difficult experience that taught me strength and resilience

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\* My go-to self-care practice

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\* My most enjoyed yoga pose

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\* An incident that happened this week where all I could do was laugh

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\* My favourite day of the week is \_\_\_\_\_ because

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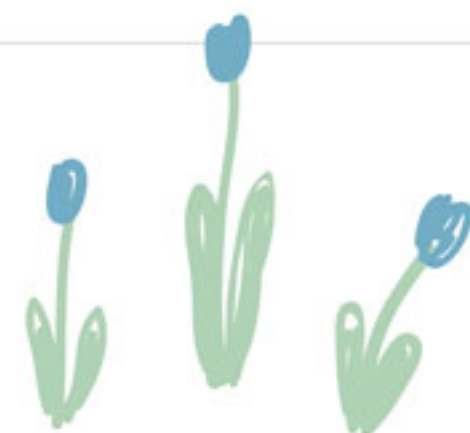
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\* I am happiest when

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# HOW TO COPE WHEN THE CHAOS OF FAMILY LIFE CONSUMES YOU

**1 Minimise sensory overload.** Seems easier said than done, but a course of decluttering proves very therapeutic for sensitive people. Fewer things mean less chaos and worry. Make sure your kids' clothing and toys are under control too. Plan your social events with caution. A weekend packed full of friends' birthdays and picnics is only okay if you reserve the following days for some downtime and recuperation. Monitor your mobile phone use: turn the sound and notifications off, and make sure to not use your phone after 8 pm.

**2 Always take time to explore your interior landscape.** Allow the feelings you encounter to act as your guides. If you are overwhelmed or too emotional, it is a sign you need some time off – either alone or in a safe space with an adult companion. The main secret for all HSPs is to do less and accomplish more. Think: when you are rested, you are twice as effective as a parent, so this time off is your investment in the quality of your family life.

**3 Create a Family Emotional Barometer.** It can be a picture drawn on a blackboard, a wheel of emotions cut from cardboard, or a bought pre-made poster if you are short on time. Such a barometer indicates the level of intensity of the feelings that everyone (or just you, if you are the only HSP in the family) is experiencing. It serves as a visual cue that keeps everyone aware of their changing emotions, helping to become self-aware and to develop empathy and compassion. If you're feeling overwhelmed, write this emotion on the board and let everyone know that, for now, you're easily triggered.

Words by Alex Reszelska

Alex is a Bondi-based writer and Japanologist, trying to combine a passion for Zen and psychology with the mental load (and joys, too!) of parenting her two little humans.

**4 Build your own HSP village.** A support infrastructure beyond your most immediate family. Find a good friend or a neighbour who can occasionally sit with the kids if you have started to experience anxiety and your partner or grandparents are nowhere near to help. Network with other HSPs: the internet has a great way of connecting like-minded people, so make use of all the forums and support groups available.

**5 Journal!** Ask yourself: Am I treating sensitivity as my superpower? Am I nurturing my best self? Have I taken time to prioritise me? You have to ask these questions daily: this should become your early morning or late evening self-care practice.

**6 Meditate.** This is the best FREE self-care tool one can get. Breathing and meditation are great ways to calm your mind and your senses. It may become a part of your downtime routine, and you can combine it with other gentle self-soothing practices: walking in nature, topping up your vitamin D on the balcony, diffusing calming essential oils, gardening, and listening to music.

## FURTHER READING

- \* *The Highly Sensitive Person: How to Thrive When the World Overwhelms You*, Elaine N Aron
- \* *The Power of Sensitivity: Success Stories by Highly Sensitive People Thriving in a Non-sensitive World*, Ted Zeff
- \* *The Highly Sensitive Parent: Be Brilliant in Your Role, Even When the World Overwhelms You*, Elaine N Aron (to be published in March 2020)





## WRITING AS MEDITATION

Gratitude practice is the easiest way to set your compass towards life's positives and boost wellbeing. Using author Tim Sanders' POET method below, meditate on the following questions and then jot down the answers.

**P:** I am grateful for these amazing People:

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**O:** I am grateful for these Opportunities:

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**E:** I am grateful for these Experiences:

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**T:** I am grateful for these Things:

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# a pinch of love

## MEMORY MAKING IN THE KITCHEN

**T**he fondest memories I have of my childhood involve chilly winter afternoons in the kitchen with Mum. To this day, the heavenly aroma of baked goods is a nostalgic reminder that brings me boundless joy. So is it possible to recreate this homely tradition with your loved ones, without turning on the oven? Here you can enjoy cacao crackles, nice crispies and spiced pumpkin tarts in their rawest form meaning you save time on 'baking' while enjoying nutritious, plant-based versions of your childhood favourites.

### CACAO CRACKLES

**Makes** 6

**Time** 15 minutes preparation,  
plus 8–12 hours dehydrating time

**Equipment** bain-marie, dehydrator,  
non-stick sheet

Remember the chocolate crackles from your sixth birthday party? These crunchy bite-size crackles are the perfect, healthy alternative for kids' parties or school lunch boxes. Best of all, they're completely nut free. Dip them in a melted chocolate bar of your choice – if you're anything like us, you'll have trouble sharing them with the kids.

#### CHOCOLATE SYRUP

- \* 90 g (¾ cup) cacao powder
- \* 140 ml coconut nectar
- \* 100 ml filtered water

1. Place all the ingredients into a bowl and whisk together until smooth and shiny.

- \* 3 teaspoons chocolate syrup
- \* 35 g puffed millet
- \* 45 g bar of Pana Chocolate of your choice, broken into pieces

1. Combine the chocolate syrup and puffed millet in a bowl, and stir to ensure the millet is well coated.
2. Roll mixture into tablespoon-sized balls.
3. Place the balls on a dehydrator tray and dehydrate at 40°C for 8–12 hours.
4. Line a tray with baking paper.
5. Melt the chocolate bar over a bain-marie.
6. Drop the dehydrated crackles into the melted chocolate, coating thoroughly.
7. Use a fork to retrieve the crackles. Tap the fork on the side of the bowl to remove any excess chocolate.
8. Set the crackles on the lined tray in the refrigerator for about 15 minutes, or until the chocolate is set.
9. Serve in little paper cases, if desired.



# COLOUR IN

