

## 5 WAYS TO COUNT YOUR WINS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

*Contributed by Mandy Enright, MS, RDN, RYT*

This year, the holidays may bring a greater sense of normalcy compared to the past few years. Family gatherings are most likely gearing back up again, and your calendar will once again be filled with holiday parties and events. There's one thing we can all agree on – we have experienced A LOT during the pandemic and have learned and grown as a result.

This is why it's important to take some time during this season to count your wins and be grateful as we prepare to enter the holiday season. This sense of gratitude can help foster a wave of positivity that can take you well into the new year.

Here are five ways you can bring an attitude of gratitude to your holidays:

### 1. Make a List of Things You Have Instead of Things You Want

The holiday season is traditionally a time to make wish lists and receive gifts. This year, instead of focusing on things you may lack, make a list of the things you have. Count your blessings and note how having these people or things in your life make you feel. You may notice that once you start this exercise, you find more and more things to be grateful for.

### 2. Write a Thank You Note

When is the last time you gave someone a handwritten note? Who are the people in your life that you truly value? Take a moment to write thank-you notes to those people and let them know why they are important to you.

Even a simple “thank you for being a friend,” will work wonders. That note of gratitude will bring a smile to someone's face and may set off a chain reaction of positive notes being sent all over. A short note can have a huge impact!



### 3. Practice Acts of Kindness

If you've had opportunities to reflect and count your blessings, then it may be time to pay it forward to others who are less fortunate or may have hit hard times. There are so many ways to give back, find something you enjoy or that utilizes your unique talents.

- Volunteer your time with a local organization.
- Donate food, toys, or gently used clothing.
- Bake cookies or snacks for a neighbor or your colleagues.
- Pick up litter in your neighborhood
- Organize a fundraiser for a local charity



These acts of kindness are intended to serve others, but they also boost our own mood and gratitude in the process.





#### 4. Focus on Your Health

One upside of the pandemic is that our personal health has become more top of mind. Focus on all of the positive aspects of your health.

- When was the last time you were sick?
- Do you choose foods that support your overall health and immunity?
- Do you move your body on a regular basis?
- Are you able to do activities of daily living on your own without assistance?
- How have you made YOU more of a priority in the last year?

Take time to be thankful for what your health allows you to do.

#### 5. Make Gratitude a Group Activity

At your next holiday gathering, encourage everyone to practice gratitude. Perhaps have everyone go around the table and share one to three things they are grateful for in their life at that moment.

If people prefer to remain anonymous, have blank pieces of paper set out and an empty jar somewhere your guests will see as they arrive. Invite your guests to write down 1-3 things they are grateful for without sharing their name. Fold up the paper and place it in the jar.

Have everyone gather around the table and each person pull out one piece of paper to read anonymously. This brings a sense of gratitude without putting anyone on the spot who may not want to share.

Remember – gratitude is about focusing on what we have rather than what we lack. Make it authentic. Sharing gratitude in public forums like social media is wonderful as long as you are walking the walk and not doing it for show or public acknowledgement.

When we are practicing gratitude in an unassuming way, it can boost our mental health and help those around us. Make it a goal this holiday season to increase your gratitude and count your blessings over the holidays and into the near year.

***How will you count your wins during the holidays? Don't forget to get friends, family, and colleagues involved and encourage them to do the same!***



*Mandy Enright MS, RDN, RYT, is a Registered Dietitian, Yoga Instructor, and Corporate Wellness Expert, as well as main content contributor for Wellness Concepts. Mandy is a featured presenter, both virtually and onsite near her home in Neptune, NJ.*

