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**Gratitude Practice**

A daily practice of gratitude for what we have and the people and things that bring us joy, is a very effective way of strengthening our bonds and relationships with ourselves and others. We release serotonin when we feel grateful and the effects of just 1 gratitude writing activity can have a lasting effect of happiness and wellbeing.

“The benefits of gratitude start with the dopamine system, because feeling grateful activates the brain stem region that produces dopamine. Additionally, gratitude toward others increases activity in social dopamine circuits, which makes social interactions more enjoyable.

Like the anti-depressant Prozac, gratitude increases circulating levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin.

Thinking of things, you are grateful for forces you to focus on the positive aspects of your life. This simple act increases serotonin production in the anterior cingulate cortex!”

Gratitude and the sharing of our appreciation is a very special part of the NVC process. It really lets the other person know how much we value our connection and the things that they have done which bring a spark of joy into our lives.

We often say “thank you” to one another and this is a beautiful start. If we really want the other person to receive our thanks with the full effect of our gratitude towards them then we can also use the NVC process to help us share why we appreciate them so much.

**Exercise:**

*Can you remember someone or some people who you would love to say thank you too now? These can be people who you have not had the chance to thank fully or people who you have thanked but would love to thank again in this way*

**The Gratitude Process**

1. Remember something that someone did for you that you feel grateful for:
2. Which of your needs were fulfilled or contributed towards by them doing so?:
3. How did you feel when they did this for you?:
4. What did I do to enable this?: