

Attitude of gratitude

Grateful people aren't just kinder people, according to University of Kentucky psychology professor Nathan DeWall. They are also less aggressive. Giving thanks lowers daily aggression, hurt feelings, and overall sensitivity.

"If you count your blessings, you're more likely to empathize with other people," he said. Gratitude motivates people to express sensitivity and concern for others and stimulates pro-social behavior, according to DeWall.

The study, in Social Psychological and Personality Science, links gratitude to "a nonviolent heart," with those less inclined to aggression.

"We know that grateful people are nice people," said DeWall. "But this is the first study to really show that they're not very aggressive either."

An activity as basic as writing a letter or mentally counting your blessings can be enough to decrease aggression.

"Take a step back, and look at what you've got," said DeWall. "Don't spend every waking moment being grateful, but one time a week definitely increases your well-being over time."

