

GRATITUDE

Gratitude is the quality of being thankful, the readiness to show appreciation and return kindness. It makes us aware of the good things that happen and connects us to a sense of life's wonder.

There is no diminishing return for gratitude. Thanking others makes us more tolerant of differences, creating a sense of camaraderie and belonging.

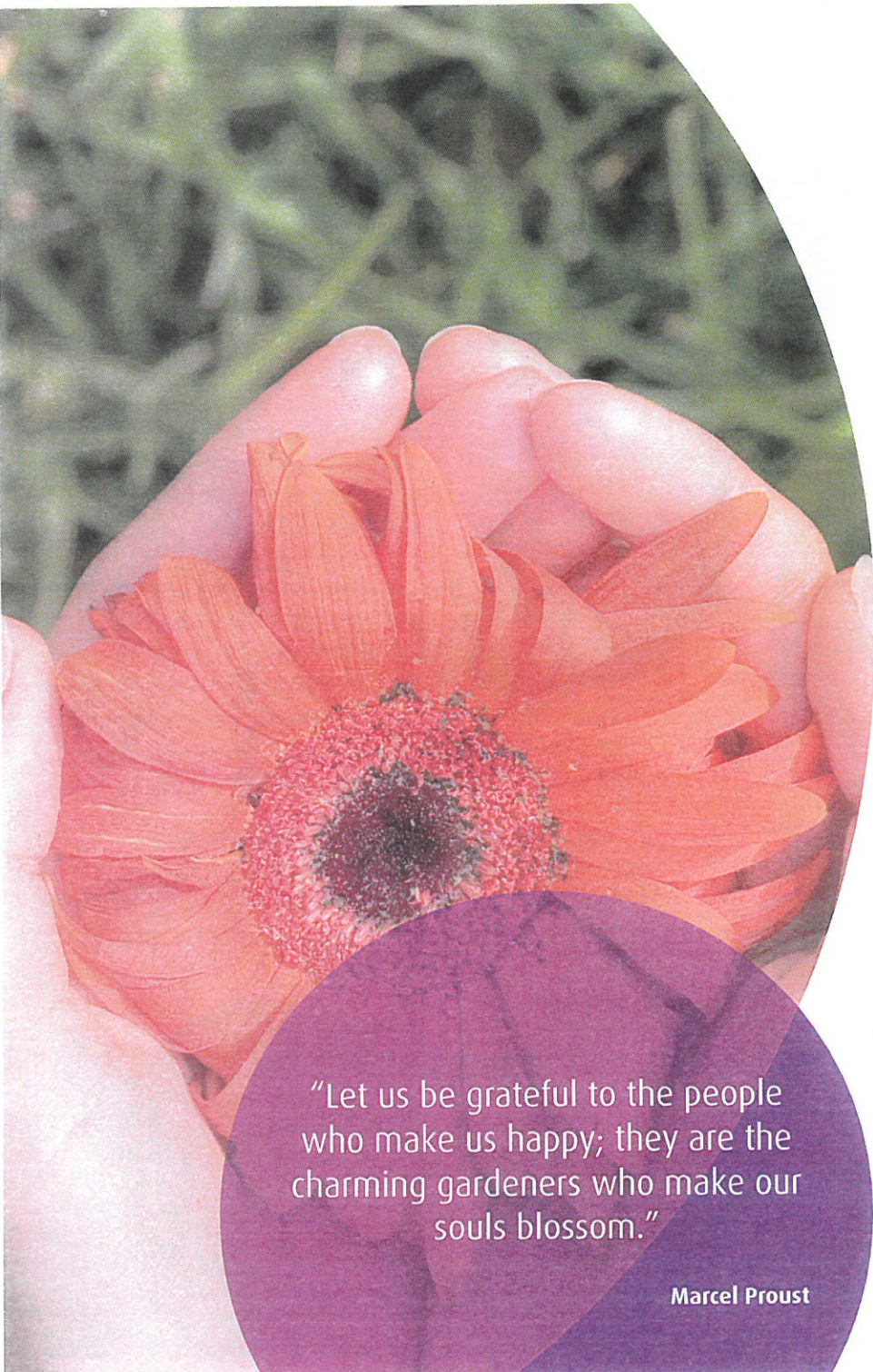
Researchers also associate gratitude with psychological growth and a coping style known as positive interpretation. When we appreciate something it increases in value and we are more able to realise it's full worth.

Ken Sheldon and Sonja Lyubomirsky found that when people with high levels of appreciation experience significant life changes they are more likely to value the experience and feel glad it happened. Continued appreciation of positive changes - a new romance, dream job or successful weight loss - counteracts the natural tendency of humans to adapt and revert back to previous levels of happiness.

Rather than taking happy events and successes for granted, continuing to remind ourselves why they made us feel good in the first place makes us happier for longer.

All this shows why gratitude is one of the most powerful antidotes to negative emotion and depression. Studies show that when people write regularly about the things they are grateful for, their mood, coping behaviour and even physical health improves.

Start a weekly gratitude journal. You can also keep a checklist in your mind—as long as you do it mindfully. The most important thing is to make this activity meaningful, not something you do because you have to. You are also training your brain to notice positive experiences that happen to you, increasing your natural positivity.



"Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."

Marcel Proust