This fall, London Warburton first-year lowa State University student was invited by Iowa State University President Wendy Wintersteen to participate in the 2019-20 President's Leadership Class. London majors in aerospace engineeringand is a graduate of Bow H.S.

Each fall, 30 first-year students are selected for the class based on high school leadership experience, academic achievement, and involvement in school and community service. The President's Leadership Class builds on these abilities and experiences, serving as an important training ground for students who will go on to become campus leaders; and ultimately, leaders in their professions and communities.





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GIVING THANKS AND BEING GRATEFUL

This month we celebrate the official holiday of Thanksgiving (made official by President Lincoln in 1863 and by Congress in 1941). When you have done something for someone, and they show real gratitude and you feel good. It is not only the receiving of gratitude that 'feels good,' it is also the giving of gratitude, or thanks, that makes us feel good and is good for our health.

I remember the very positive feelings I got when my wife and I made a special trip - many years after graduation - to see my high school history teacher to thank him for his great teaching.

Why is it that we experience positive feelings when we 'give thanks'? Gratitude is thankful appreciation for what you have received – it could be something tangible or it could be intangible. Usually the origin of what we are thankful for is something or someone outside of ourselves.

Giving thanks is appreciating what you have rather than going after something new in hopes that it will make you happier or more satisfied. Gratitude improves your physical and psychological health. It enhances empathy and reduces aggression. You sleep better and have reduced stress.

Although it is hard to 'prove' a cause and effect, most studies do support an association between an attitude of gratitude and an individual's wellbeing (Psychiatry Nov. 2010). According to UCLA's Mindfulness Awareness Research Center, regularly expressing gratitude changes the molecular structure of the brain, keeps the gray matter functioning and makes us healthier and happier.

Higher levels of gratitude predict better subjective sleep quality and sleep duration. (Wood, et al. Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 2009). Brain scans can show how our thoughts about being thankful are integrated and give rise to gratitude. (Hongbo Yu, et al. Journal of Neuroscience 23 May 2018).

So what can you do to develop a pattern of gratitude? Here are some suggestions from the Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy:

- Journaling about things for which you are grateful
- Thinking about someone for whom you are grateful
- Writing & sending a letter to someone for whom you are grateful
- Meditating on gratitude (present moment awareness)
- "Count your Blessings" at the end of the day before you go to sleep
- Say 'thank you' in a sincere and meaningful way
- Pray prayers of thanksgiving



We would love to provide you a quote or answer your questions.

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