

Gratitude

Course

Study and Practice Guide

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As I enter this course, I have these thoughts, questions and feelings.

What are my understandings of gratitude as I begin this course?

What are your questions about gratitude that I bring to my learning?



Practices in Gratitude

The journey of personal discovery can take many pathways. There are multiple ways of processing our understandings. The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society has identified the multiple routes of contemplative practice. These may include:

- Stillness - of meditation and silence
- Generative activities - of visualization, beholding and loving kindness meditation
- Creative activities - journaling, singing, improvisation and the arts
- Activism - acts of social justice and pilgrimage
- Relational - through deep listening, storytelling and dialogue
- Movement - yoga, meditative dance or walking
- Ritual/Cyclical - Retreats, ceremonies, establishing personal/sacred space

We are each different in our emotional intelligences and how we come to understanding.

An array of practices is offered to support you in your development of a grateful life.

Note Your Learning

Angeles Arrien has identified four universal portals of gratitude. They are:

- Health and Well-Being
- Relationships - with self and others
- Finance - the experience of generosity and abundance
- Protection - compassionate service and caring for others

Pause to consider the meanings of these portals to gratitude. Acknowledge where they have and have not been present in your experience.

Journaling

Research has shown that gratitude is enhanced by daily journaling on gratitude.

Start a journal and record where you find gratitude each day, whether it is in thought, words, or deeds.

Practice Gratitude

Remember someone or something for which you are grateful.

Commit an act to express your gratitude. For example, you may write a thank you note. If this is not a person but an experience, find a way to express gratitude. Light a candle, plant a seed, read a poem or blessing in honor of that grateful experience.

Speak with Others about Gratitude

Share your learnings about gratitude with others. You may do this through participation in the discussion forum or gather your friends or associates to talk about gratitude.

Take a Daily Action in Gratitude

Identify the place in your life where gratitude, compassion, service, mercy or reciprocity have meaning.

Do one thing each day support that purpose. It may be that you provide your mate with gratitude. You may dedicate time for a cause or spend time in service. Perhaps you revisit your experience and remembrance.

Daily Reflection

Take pause daily to reflect and affirm how gratitude has entered your life. The audio affirmations may support you with your practice of daily reflection.

- Explore the portals for gratitude
 - Blessings
 - Learnings
 - Mercies
 - Protections
- Identify the benefits of gratitude
 - Health and Well-Being
 - Relationships
 - Finance
 - Work



Reflections

Reflection is one form of contemplative practice. Through reflection, the questions provoke inquiry, thoughtful reflection, and conscious awareness of what is being learned or revealed to us in our inner work. You are also provided with a set of questions.

With each lesson, you will be provided with questions to support you in your exploration of gratitude.



Affirmations of Gratitude

Affirmations offer inspiration and support in building the capacity to identify and remember gratitude each day. The audio download provides affirmations that you may choose to adopt and practice.

From research, we know that something must be repeated 7 times to be remembered. Each affirmation within the audio download is repeated 7 times so that you may remember the words. The affirmations are also provided here, in print so that you may place them in front of you, at your choosing.

Lesson 1

Gratitude

What It Is and Is Not



As I enter today's lessons, I have these thoughts, questions and feelings.

What is your understanding of gratitude?

What are your questions about gratitude?



Notes:



Reflections

Take this opportunity to identify the questions that draw your attention. Select two or three questions that are meaningful to you and explore them deeply.

- **What has been your experience with gratitude as a recipient and benefactor of gratitude?**
 - Consider your experience with gratitude in terms of the portals of health, relationship, finance and protection.
 - Where has gratitude been present?
 - Has gratitude been un-recognized or forgotten?

- ***“Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.” Eckhart Tolle***
 - Where is your acknowledgement for the good in your life?
 - How has the good been manifested?
 - As a blessing?
 - As learnings?
 - Your experience of mercies?
 - Protections given to you and that you provide to others?

- **What is your experience of benefit from gratitude?**
 - How do you remember those persons who benefited you?
 - In what aspects of your life were your experience found?

- **In what capacity are you aware of non-gratitude or in-gratitude in yourself or others?**
 - What are your understandings of the dynamics to the lack of gratitude?
 - Are there future actions to address the lack of gratitude?

- **What are the persons or activities that may support you to develop gratitude in your life?**
 - How will you proceed to explore your experience of gratitude?
 - What are you willing to accept as your grace for acknowledgement of gratitude?

- **What are your personal learnings in gratitude?**
 - Appreciate the experience of gratitude
 - Consider the openings to you through gratitude



Affirmations of Gratitude

Affirmations offer inspiration and support in building the capacity to identify and remember gratitude each day.

I am thankful.

I am grateful for the blessings of my life.

I am grateful to have forgiveness.

I am grateful for the abundance of my life.

I am grateful for the protections I have received from others.



List of Quotes

"Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance."

Eckhart Tolle

"Nothing more detestable does the earth produce than an ungrateful man."

Decimus Magnus Ausonius

"Gratefulness is a gesture of giving meaning to our life by receiving life as a gift."

Brother David Steindl-Rast

Source of All Blessings Prayer Meditation, by Rabbi Warren Stone

Source of All Blessings

I am Grateful

for My life

for the Blessings

of

My breath

the beating of My heart

Source of All Blessings

I am Grateful

for Beloved Ones who

share life with me

those in our world beside me

and those in worlds beyond my knowing

Source of All Blessings

I am Grateful

to share life with our Human Family

Jewish, Christian, Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh

May we walk gently upon our Earth

Source of All Blessings

I am Grateful

to be one with All Creation

the flight of birdwings

the swirling of blueshools oceans deep

the runnings of wilderness creatures

the sway of forests green

Source of All Blessing

I am Grateful

to be part of the spiraling

of all space and time

beyond my imagination

Yes and again Yes I am grateful

to always be here

where else could I go?

For all this and more

I am Grateful

Let us rise up and be thankful

For if we didn't learn a lot today,

At least we learned a little,

At least we didn't get sick,

And if we got sick,

At least we didn't die:

So, let us be thankful.

The Buddha

“Gratitude is the way the heart remembers - remembers kindnesses, cherished interactions with others, compassionate acts of strangers, surprise gifts, and everyday blessings. By remembering we honor and acknowledge the many ways in which who and what we are has been shaped by others, both living and dead.”

Robert A. Emmons

I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.”

Gilbert K. Chesterton

“Nothing more detestable does the earth produce than an ungrateful man.”

Decimus Magnus Ausonius

“Ingratitude is the essence of vileness”

Immanuel Kant

“Five great enemies to peace inhabit us: avarice, envy, anger and pride. If those enemies were to be banished, we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Work is love made visible”.

Kahlil Gibran

“Find the good and praise it.”

Alex Haley

Lesson 2

Gratitude

Of the Open Heart



As I enter today's lessons, I have these thoughts, questions and feelings.

What is your understanding of gratitude of the open heart?

What are your questions about gratitude of the open heart?



Reflections

Take this opportunity to identify the questions that draw your attention. Select two or three questions that are meaningful to you and explore them deeply.

- **What has been your experience with gratitude?**
 - Consider your experience with gratitude in terms of the portals of health, relationship, finance and protection.
 - Where has gratitude been present?
 - Has gratitude been un-recognized or forgotten?

- ***“Gratitude is not in the words but in the heart which expresses it.”***
— ***Luffina Lourduraj***
 - How has gratefulness nurtured your love?
 - What meaning do you draw from these words?
 - As a blessing?
 - As learnings?
 - Your experience of mercies?
 - Protections given to you and that you provide to others?

- **What has been your experience on the path of the four-chambered heart?**
 - What are those occasions in which others responded to you with a heart that was full, open, strong or one of clarity?
 - How have you given to others with a heart that is full, open strong, or one of clarity?

- **In what capacity are you aware of challenges to your heart in thought, word or deed?**
 - What contributes to any thoughts, words or deeds that were half-hearted, weak-hearted, closed-hearted or confused?
 - What understandings can you draw from these acknowledgements?

- **How might you find the gratitude in the heart to be physically and mentally healthier?**
 - How will you proceed to explore your experience of gratitude?
 - What are you willing to accept as your grace for acknowledgement of gratitude?

- **What are your personal learnings in gratitude?**
 - Appreciate the experience of gratitude
 - Consider the openings to you through gratitude

Daily Reflection

Commit to a daily meditation on gratitude.

The Dalai Lama Guidance for Practice for Love and Happiness

1. Spend five minutes at the beginning of each day remembering that we all want the same thing -

To be happy

To be loved

To feel connected

2. Spend five minutes cherishing yourself and others

Let go of judgements

Breathe in cherishing yourself

Breathe out cherishing others

If the faces of people you are having trouble with appear, cherish them as well

3. During the day, extend that attitude to everyone you meet

We are all the same – “I cherish myself and you too”

4. Stay in the practice no matter what happens



Affirmations of Gratitude

Affirmations offer inspiration and support in building the capacity to identify and remember gratitude each day.

I am grateful for the gifts I receive from others.

My heart holds gratitude toward others, myself, and the greater good.

I am open to receive and give love.

I release hurts through compassion, kindness and thankfulness.

I am grateful for my health.

I rejoice in the way things are.



List of Quotes

"Gratitude is not in the words but in the heart which expresses it."
Luffina Lourduraj

"The heart is where we belong. We belong there as our proper place, no matter how estranged we become. And when we are there we belong, because what makes home home is that each belongs to all and all to each..." "We grow in love when we grow in gratefulness. And we grow in gratefulness when we love...This makes gratefulness a school in which one learns love."
Brother David Steindl-Rast

"When the four-chambered heart is full, strong, open and clear, it is healthy, and gratitude comes to us naturally. We choose to live a meaningful life filled with integrity and purpose, one that offers unlimited ways to be thankful and to express our gratitude to those around us."
Angeles Arrien

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast. It is not proud. It is not rude. It is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails".
I Corinthians 13:4-8a

“Happiness is not so much in having as sharing. We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

Norman MacEwan

“When couples struggle, it is seldom over who does what. Far more often, it is over the giving and receiving of gratitude. The struggle for marriage in the contemporary context is the struggle to cultivate gratitude between men and women”

Arlie Hochschild

“It is gratitude that enables us to receive and it is gratitude that motivates us to repay by returning the goodness that we have been given. In short, it is gratitude that enables us to be fully human”

Robert Emmons

*“If you look to others for fulfillment
You will never be truly fulfilled,
If your happiness depends on money,
You will never be happy with yourself.*

*Be content with what you have,
Rejoice in the way things are,
When you realize nothing is lacking,
The whole world belongs to you.”*

Lao-tzu



“The four-chambered heart has provided a path to keep up aligned with courage, commitment, clarity and being open to all that life presents...When we shift our perspective to look for what is working in our life and for the good in ourselves and our circumstances, we see the interconnectedness of all things. We open to the great mystery of love and the gift of life itself.”

Angeles Arrien

“We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.”

~Thornton Wilder

Lesson 3

Gratitude

In Service to Others



As I enter today's lessons, I have these thoughts, questions and feelings.

What is your understanding of gratitude in the workplace?

What are your questions about gratitude in service to others?



Reflections

Take this opportunity to identify the questions that draw your attention. Select two or three questions that are meaningful to you and explore them deeply.

- ***“Compassionate service cultivates mutuality, reciprocity, and gratitude.” ~Angeles Arrien***
 - Where are you involved in compassionate service in your life?
 - What are you learning?

- ***“Embody the love, gratitude, and compassion you want to promote.”***
Dennis Rivers
 - What do these words summon as you consider their meaning and intention?
 - What meaning do you draw from these words?
 - As a blessing?
 - As learnings?
 - Your experience of mercies?
 - Protections given to you and that you provide to others?

- **How might expressions of gratitude and compassion enhance your relationships as you service others in our work and deeds?**
 - How do you remember those persons who benefited you?
 - In what aspects of your life has compassion created openings for you?

- **What are might interfere with your opening to compassion in service to others?**
 - What contributes to any thoughts, words or deeds that were reactions preventing you from having compassion in your works?
 - What understandings can you draw from these acknowledgements?

- **How might you find the compassion in service to others to foster your physical and mental well-being?**
 - How will you proceed to explore your experience of gratitude?
 - What are you willing to accept as a your grace for acknowledgement of gratitude?

- **What are your personal learnings in gratitude?**
 - How do you appreciate the experience of gratitude and compassion?
 - Consider the openings to you through gratitude.



Practice Gratitude

To bring compassion into your work and your life experience may take practice. There are ways of developing your awareness of compassion and connectedness to others. Pause to reflect on these ways of developing compassion:

1. Identify and live by your core values. This may take reflection and focus to explore and identify the virtues that you bring to your day. Take action to apply those virtues to your thoughts, words and deeds. This will take practice and learning. You will be more authentic with yourself and others by being true to your values.

2. Practice self-care. Be aware of your physical and mental well-being. Develop an awareness of how you may be personally impacted by your work. Pay attention to your needs for rest, to have healthy habits and to take care of yourself emotionally.

3. Practice mindfulness. Develop resilience through mindful reflection. Apply the RAIN steps to bring focus to your practice.

Recognize what is happening,

Allow life to be just as it is,

Investigate inner experience with kindness, and

Non-identification (or resting in Natural awareness)

4. Model positive values for the people at work. Act with patience, receptivity, awareness, authenticity, forgiveness, courage, integrity, honesty, mindfulness, respect, empathy, and compassion,

5. Be present and attend to other's emotions. Appreciate what workmates are feeling and be a support to them. Recognize their need for support and they are not at their best. Respond to them with kindness and generosity.

From: Sarah Tollefson, Fetzer Institute

Take a Daily Action in Gratitude

Identify the place in your life where gratitude, compassion, service, mercy or reciprocity have meaning. Do one thing each day support that purpose. Commit an act of gratitude toward someone who has been good to you.

Consider beginning with these steps from this lesson:

- Be brave
- Start small
- Use what you've got
- Do something you enjoy
- Don't overcommit



Affirmations of Gratitude

Affirmations offer inspiration and support in building the capacity to identify and remember gratitude each day.

I acknowledge that there is pain and suffering in life.

My service brings good to others.

I am kind.

I belong.

I am compassionate.



List of Quotes

“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

Mother Teresa

“To be of service to others, we have to truly pay attention to individuals to understand who they are and their situation as they see it”.

Anthony Chavez

“If you develop a pure and sincere motivation, if you are motivated by a wish to help on the basis of kindness, compassion, and respect, then you can carry on any kind of work, in any field, and function more effectively with less fear or worry, not being afraid of what others think or whether you ultimately will be successful in reaching your goal.”

“When people act on their experiences of gratitude...they create meaningful situations for others...This socioemotional cycle centered on gratitude could continue indefinitely. In this manner, positive emotions tend to beget subsequent positive emotions. Accordingly, the broaden-and-build-theory predicts that positive emotions not only produce individuals who function at higher levels, but also produce organizations and communities that function at higher levels.”

Barbara Fredrickson

“Compassionate service cultivates mutuality, reciprocity, and gratitude.”

Angeles Arrien

“You work that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth.

*For to be idle is to become a stranger unto the seasons,
And to stip out of life’s procession, that marches in majesty and
proud submission towards the infinite.*

*When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering
of the hours turns to music.*

*Which of you would be a reed, dumb and silent, when all else sings
together in unison?*

*Always you have been told that work is a curse and labour a
misfortune.*

*But I say to you that when you work you fulfill a part of earth’s furthest
dream, assigned to you when that dream was born,*

*And in keeping yourself with labour you are in truth loving life,
And to love life through labour is to be intimate with life’s inmost
secret...”*

Kahlil Gibran

*“Embody the love, gratitude, and compassion you want to
promote.”*

Dennis Rivers

*We should not expect good to come to us but rather to flow out
from us. The challenge of love beckons us to pour out, to transform
attitudes of grasping into giving.*

Stephen Sims

Lesson 4

Gratitude

Forgiveness and Atonement



As I enter today's lessons, I have these thoughts, questions and feelings.

What is your understanding of gratitude in forgiveness and atonement?

What are your questions about forgiveness and atonement?



Reflections

Take this opportunity to identify the questions that draw your attention. Select two or three questions that are meaningful to you and explore them deeply.

- **What has been your experience with forgiveness in your daily life?**
 - Consider your experience with gratitude in terms of the portals of health, relationship, finance and protection.
 - Where has forgiveness been present?
 - Where are you feeling in need of forgiveness?

- ***Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow. ~Melody Beattie***
 - What do these words summon as you consider their meaning and intention?
 - What meaning do you draw from these words?
 - As a blessing?
 - As learnings?
 - Your experience of mercies?
 - Protections given to you and that you provide to others?

- **How might expressions of forgiveness enhance your relationships at work? In your family? Within your community?**
 - How do you remember those persons who harmed you?
 - What is the work you need to do to have forgiveness?

- **When you experience suffering or harm, how do you maintain hope and a capacity to trust?**
 - Where are the concealed mercies?
 - Where are you experiencing the presence of mercy and forgiveness in your life?

- **What self-forgiveness work is being revealed to you?**
 - What is the reparation or act of mercy that will enable you to forgive yourself and others?
 - What is it that you are not prepared to forgive?

- **What are you now aware of in your need for forgiveness?**
 - What are the truths to acknowledge in your journey?
 - Consider the openings for mercies that may come to you through gratitude.



Practices in Gratitude

Forgiveness is a form of gratitude. When we forgive others, we show them the mercy that we have often received and been thankful for.

Sarah Ban Breathnach

- Reflect upon these words and consider,
- How has gratitude shaped your capacity to forgive?
- What are you learning?

In your daily meditation, recite this verse from the Avatamsaka Sutra:

*For all the harmful things I've done, with my body, speech and mind,
from beginningless greed, anger and stupidity,
through lifetimes without number, to this very day;
I now repent and I vow,
to change entirely.*

Take a Daily Action in Gratitude

Identify the pace in your life where gratitude, compassion, service, mercy or reciprocity have meaning. Do one thing each day support that purpose.

- **Make amends in one or two areas of your life.**
- What actions are you ready to take?

Daily Reflection

Take pause daily to reflect and affirm the mercies in your life for which you feel gratitude.

Meditate on the Three-Part Practice of Forgiveness

Part 1: Asking forgiveness from those you have harmed

The first step to forgiveness is to explore our humility. It requires a recognition of the thoughts, words and actions that we have taken that were harmful or wrong, even if in response to a wrongdoing from another. It is finding the truth of what we have done.

During the meditation, reflect upon these words:

“If I have hurt or harmed anyone, knowingly or unknowingly, I ask their forgiveness.”

Accept whatever images, people, events, or memories come to you, release your guilt by asking for forgiveness:

“I ask your forgiveness.”

Part 2: Offering forgiveness to those who have harmed you

In time, the process will move to an opening for the capacity to offer forgiveness to those who have harmed you. Judgment of others breaks away as we acknowledge our own wrong. This is a place of honoring the intention in our minds. The thoughts and impulses to seek revenge and harm the wrongdoer dissolve. There is a search in the heart to do no harm to the other. This will take much time. Slowly the focus is to wish no harm and to forgive.

Use this recitation:

“If anyone has hurt or harmed me, knowingly or unknowingly, I forgive them.”

If there are thoughts of a person or memory that comes to mind, repeat:

“I forgive you.”

Part 3: Offering forgiveness to yourself

There are ways that we harm ourselves or others. Things that we failed for which we hold guilt and shame. It is time to let go of the unkindness toward yourself.

The work of forgiving yourself is supported with these words:

“For all of the ways I have hurt or harmed myself, knowingly or unknowingly, I offer forgiveness.”

From Lovingkindness by Sharon Salzberg

<https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/three-ways-practice-forgiveness/>



Affirmations of Gratitude

Affirmations offer inspiration and support in building the capacity to identify and remember gratitude each day.

I love you.

I forgive you.

I forgive myself.

I trust that by forgiving you, I will end the suffering we share.

I am grateful for the opportunity to make peace.



List of Quotes

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.

Melody Beattie

"Ingratitude is the essence of vileness".

Immanuel Kant

Forgiveness is a form of gratitude. When we forgive others, we show them the mercy that we have often received and been thankful for.

Sarah Ban Breathnach

"Our attitudes of ungratefulness cause us, and those around us, much suffering. When we release them, the gratitude portal of mercy open wide within. We are able to forgive. We can embody kindness. Merciful actions, whether extended to others or received from them, become fortunate moments for which we are immediately grateful. All acts of mercy produce healing and restore the soul."

Angeles Arrien

For all the harmful things I've done, with my body, speech and mind, from beginningless greed, anger and stupidity, through lifetimes without number, to this very day; I now repent and I vow, to change entirely.

Avatasaka Sutra

"Forgiveness says you are given another chance for making a new beginning."

Desmond Tutu

“When I harm another, whether intentionally or not, I inevitably harm myself. I become less than I am meant to be. I become less than I am capable of being. When I harm another, I need to restore what I have taken from that person. Or make a gesture of recompense. I need to restore what I have lost within myself through my harmful words or actions.”

Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu

“Atonement...refer(s) to an act that rights a wrong, makes amends, repairs harm, offers restitution, attempts compensation, clears the conscience of the offender, relieves the anger of the victim, and serves justice with a sacrifice commensurate with the harm that has been done.”

Phil Cousineau

“Use the present to repair the past, and prepare the future.”

George Ivanovich Gurdijeff

“One is responsible for one’s deeds; nobody can transfer mistakes to another, and nobody can escape the results of behavior. There is one exception to this rule. Repentance can erase negative consequences - that is, the ultimate repentance that reveals the true nature of the self.”

Reverend Heng Sure

“Trust yourself to open to forgiveness. Believe that you can redeem horrible acts by your own vulnerability. Let go of anything that separates you from other human beings. In so doing you honor all those lost. Your act of forgiveness holds their story in its highest possible glory. And you honor life itself; There could be no greater legacy.”

Phillip Moffitt

Lesson 5

Gratitude

Cultivating Society and Protecting the Earth



As I enter today's lessons, I have these thoughts, questions and feelings.

What is your understanding of gratitude that cultivates society and protects the earth?

What are your questions about gratitude and protecting the earth?



Reflections

Take this opportunity to identify the questions that draw your attention. Select two or three questions that are meaningful to you and explore them deeply.

- **What experience in nature has triggered your extension of gratitude?**

- ***“Love the world as your self;
then you can care for all things.”
Tao TeChing***

- How has your experience of nature increased your sense of love for others?
- What meaning do you draw from these words?
 - As a blessing?
 - As learnings?
 - Your experience of mercies?
 - Protections given to you and that you provide to others?

- **Does your experience of nature connect you to your past, present and future?**
 - What do you remember when you are with nature?
 - What do you pay attention to when you are in nature?

- **Are you aware of challenges to your experience of interconnectedness in your daily life?**
 - How will you demonstrate more collaboration and reciprocity in your life?
 - Where will you seek connection with nature? With others?

- **How might you find peace and atonement for humanity's damages to the Earth?**
 - How will you proceed to explore your gratitude to the earth?
 - What are you willing to accept as a your grace for acknowledgement of gratitude?

- **What are your personal learnings in gratitude in nature?**
 - How do you appreciate the experience of gratitude for nature?
 - Consider the openings to you through gratitude.



Practices in Gratitude

Note Your Learning

Angeles Arrien has identified lessons in survival that come to us through our appreciation of nature. These are:

- *Keen Awareness*
- *Flexibility*
- *Resourcefulness*
- *Patience*

Pause to consider the meanings of these lessons in survival in relationship to the portals to gratitude.

Acknowledge where they have and have not been present in your experience.

Take a Daily Action in Gratitude

Take a daily action that supports tending to nature and natural environments. In small or large ways, take actions that support increased ecological sustainability.

Plant a tree. Recycle. Walk or ride a bicycle. Conserve energy. Join a community project to care for the community or earth.

Go outside.

Start the day with a prayer in gratitude for the gifts of life and the earth.

Daily Reflection

Commit to a daily mandala on gratitude. In the tradition of the Byakko Shinko Kai, mandalas of bright words are words of gratitude, beauty, compassion, joy, and love. They carry a wonderful energy and power. When we create a mandala using bright, positive words, we are imbuing ourselves with the qualities that we want most. We are calling those qualities forth from our universal source. We are instilling them in our consciousness, in our bodies, and in the world around us.

If you want to fill your heart with love, you will write a mandala that says *“Infinite love”*.

If you want to fill your heart with gratitude, you will write a mandala that says, *“Thank you”*.

A mandala that is grateful to nature will say,
“Thank you, dear earth, Thank you dear water, Thank you dear animals, and Thank you, dear sun.”

For more information on how to write a mandala to nature, you may refer to this document:

<http://byakko.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Mandalas-of-Bright-Words-Gratitude-to-Nature-English.pdf>



Affirmations of Gratitude

Affirmations offer inspiration and support in building the capacity to identify and remember gratitude each day.

I am thankful for this new day filled with blessings of the earth, the sky, and the waters.

I am one with nature.

I am open to receive and give love for my humanity.

I am a caregiver to the earth that provides gifts to me.

I am grateful for the gifts of nature.

I am one with humanity.



List of Quotes

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin”

William Shakespeare

“Nature’s beauty is a gift that cultivates appreciation and gratitude.”

Louie Schwartzberg

“In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.”

Robert Muir

“Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better.”

Albert Einstein

*“Love the world as your self;;
then you can care for all things.”*

Tao TeChing

“Some people are always finding fault with Nature for putting thorns on roses; I always thank her for having put roses on thorns.”

Alphonse Karr

“The heart of interdependence requires collaboration and reciprocity.”

Angeles Arrien

*"My words are tied in one with the great mountains,
with the great rocks, with the great trees, in one with my body and
heart.*

All of you see me, one with this world."

Yokuts Prayer

*"Let us give thanks for the world around us.
Thanks for all the creatures, stones and plants
Let us learn their lessons and seek their truths,
So that their path might be ours,
And we might live in harmony, a better life.
May the Earth continue to live,
May the heavens above continue to live,
May the rains continue to dampen the land,
May the wet forests continue to grow,
Then the flowers shall bloom
And we people shall live again."*

Hawaiian indigenous prayer

"And into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul."

John Muir

"The essence of justice is mercy."

Edwin Hubbel Chapin

"The earth does not belong to us: We belong to the Earth."

Marlee Matlin

"Gratitude bestows reverence...

changing forever how we experience life and the world"

~John Milton

Lesson 6

Gratitude

Mindfulness Practice and Gratitude



As I enter today's lessons, I have these thoughts, questions and feelings.

What is your understanding of mindfulness practice and gratitude?

What are your questions about mindfulness practice and gratitude?



Reflections

Take this opportunity to identify the questions that draw your attention. Select two or three questions that are meaningful to you and explore them deeply.

- **What has been your experience with gratitude in your mindfulness practice?**
 - Consider your experience with gratitude in terms of the portals of health, relationship, finance and protection.
 - Where has gratitude been present?
 - Has gratitude been un-recognized or forgotten?

- ***“Let go in peace. Look ahead in gratitude”* Anonymous**
 - What do these words mean to you?
 - What might you release to find acceptance?
 - Through what portals might your gratitude become manifest?
 - As a blessing?
 - As learnings?
 - Your experience of mercies?
 - Protections given to you and that you provide to others?

- **What is your experience of benefit from gratitude?**
 - How do you remember those persons who benefited you?
 - In what aspects of your life were your experience found?

- **In what capacity are you aware of challenges to your gratitude?**
 - How might you turn those challenges into learning opportunities?
 - Are there future actions to address the challenge?

- **What are your personal learnings in gratitude?**
 - Appreciate the experience of gratitude
 - Consider the openings to you through gratitude



Practices in Gratitude

The journey of personal discovery can take many pathways. There are multiple ways of processing our understandings. The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society has identified the multiple routes of contemplative practice. These may include:

- Stillness - of meditation and silence
- Generative activities - of visualization, beholding and loving kindness meditation
- Creative activities - journaling, singing, improvisation and the arts
- Activism - acts of social justice and pilgrimage
- Relational - through deep listening, storytelling and dialogue
- Movement - yoga, meditative dance or walking
- Ritual/Cyclical - Retreats, ceremonies, establishing personal/sacred space

Note Your Learning

Angeles Arrien has identified four universal portals of gratitude.

- Health and Well-Being
- Relationships - with self and others
- Finance - the experience of generosity and abundance
- Protection - compassionate service and caring for others

Pause to consider the meanings of these portals to gratitude. Acknowledge where they have and have not been present in your experience.

Journaling

Research has shown that gratitude is enhanced by daily journaling on gratitude.

Start a journal and record where you find gratitude each day, whether it is in thought, words, or deeds.

Practice Gratitude

Remember someone or something for which you are grateful. Commit an act to express your gratitude. For example, you may write a thank you note. If this is not a person but an experience, find a way to express gratitude. Light a candle, plant a seed, read a poem or blessing in honor of that grateful experience.

Speak with Others about Gratitude

Share your learnings about gratitude with others. You may do this through participation in the discussion forum or gather your friends or associates to talk about gratitude.

Take a Daily Action in Gratitude

Identify the place in your life where gratitude, compassion, service, mercy or reciprocity have meaning. Do one thing each day support that purpose. It may be that you provide your mate with gratitude. You may dedicate time for a cause or spend time in service. Perhaps you revisit your experience and remembrance.

Daily Reflection

Begin a daily reflection as you develop your gratitude mindfulness practice. Whatever comes to mind, allow it to be present. Do not try to change or fix it.

1. Begin by settling into a relaxed posture and calm yourself.
2. Take a few deep, calming breaths to relax and center.
3. Let your awareness move to your immediate environment: all the things you can smell, taste, touch, see, hear... **Say to yourself: "For this, I am grateful."**
4. Bring to mind those people in your life to whom you are close: your friends, family, partner.... **Say to yourself, "For this, I am grateful."**
5. Turn your attention onto yourself: You are unique. Whatever comes to you when you think of yourself, your feelings or experiences, allow them to be present in your thought... **Say to yourself: "For this, I am grateful."**
6. Finally, rest into the realization that life is a precious gift. Think of the abundance that is present in your life - it may be prosperity, opportunity, nature, or perhaps well-being. Accept what comes to mind as life's gifts that come to you... **Say to yourself: "For this, I am grateful."**

Adapted from Stillmind. <https://stillmind.org/gratitude-meditation/>

Repeat these words each morning

“Just for today:

I will let go of worry.

I will let go of anger.

I will do my work honestly.

I will give thanks for my many blessings.

I will be kind to every living thing.”

Reiki Precepts



Affirmations of Gratitude

Affirmations offer inspiration and support in building the capacity to identify and remember gratitude each day

I am grateful for... (your own thoughts)

I am grateful for being alive

I am grateful for everyone and everything I took for granted

I am grateful for all people and things I experience in life

I am grateful for love in my life

I am grateful for my body mind spirit

I am grateful for all the universe gives me

I am grateful for lessons life teaches me

I am grateful for all that I have

I am grateful for the beauty of life around me

I am grateful for the forgiveness that has been shown to me

I am grateful for each day

I am grateful for the challenges of my life



List of Quotes

“Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing, for instance, that there’s a “right” or “wrong” way to think or feel in a given moment. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we’re sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.”

Greater Good Magazine

“A FEW WEEKS AGO, in the country, far from the lights of the city, I saw the entire sky “powdered with stars” (in Milton’s words)...It was this celestial splendor that suddenly made me realize how little time, how little life, I had left. My sense of the heavens’ beauty, of eternity, was inseparably mixed for me with a sense of transience—and death... I have been comforted, since I wrote in February about having metastatic cancer, by the hundreds of letters I have received, the expressions of love and appreciation, and the sense that (despite everything) I may have lived a good and useful life. I remain very glad and grateful for all this—yet none of it hits me as did that night sky full of stars.”

(Sacks, Oliver. Gratitude (p. 25). Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.)

“Let go in peace. Look ahead in gratitude”

Anonymous

Let it Go

*“Let go of the ways you thought life would unfold:
the holding of plans or dreams or expectations – Let it all go.
Save your strength to swim with the tide.*

*The choice to fight what is here before you now will
only result in struggle, fear, and desperate attempts
to flee from the very energy you long for. Let go.
Let it all go and flow with the grace that washes
through your days whether you received it gently
or with all your quills raised to defend against invaders.
Take this on faith; the mind may never find the
explanations that it seeks, but you will move forward
nonetheless. Let go, and the wave’s crest will carry
you to unknown shores, beyond your wildest dreams
or destinations. Let it all go and find the place of
rest and peace, and certain transformation.”*

Danna Faulds

“Just for today:

I will let go of worry.

I will let go of anger.

I will do my work honestly.

I will give thanks for my many blessings.

I will be kind to every living thing.”

Reiki Precepts

*Mindfulness is about love and loving life. When you cultivate this
love, it gives you clarity and compassion for life and your actions
happen in accordance with that.*

Jon Kabat-Zinn

“You should sit in meditation for twenty minutes every day—unless you’re too busy. Then you should sit for an hour.”

Old Zen Adage

“The cultivation of mindfulness...really allows us to become present for our own body, for the person in front of us, for the life we’ve been given. Out of that grows quite naturally the spirit of gratitude.

...Cultivating an opening to gratitude also helps us to become more mindful of the life around us and what circumstance we’re in.”

Jack Kornfield

“Gratitude practice is simply being thankful for the good in our lives. By focusing us on positive rather than negative thoughts, it helps us to see the cup of life as half-full rather than as half-empty. It reminds us not to be greedy and to find satisfaction in what we have, though we may strive for more. Gratitude requires no sacrifice but provides great rewards in compassion, happiness, and mindfulness.”

Your Skillful Means

“If the only prayer you ever say is “Thank You” that will be enough.”

Eckhardt Tolle

Self-Observation Without Judgment (Danna Faulds)

Release the harsh and pointed inner voice. it's just a throwback to the past, and holds no truth about this moment.

Let go of self-judgment, the old, learned ways of beating yourself up for each imagined inadequacy.

Allow the dialogue within the mind to grow friendlier, and quiet. Shift out of inner criticism and life suddenly looks very different.

I can say this only because I make the choice a hundred times a day to release the voice that refuses to acknowledge the real me.

What's needed here isn't more prodding toward perfection, but intimacy - seeing clearly, and embracing what I see.

Love, not judgment, sows the seeds of tranquility and change.

From "One Soul"

http://www.mindfullivingprograms.com/resources_poetry.php

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"I blend a combination of depth and practicality to my mindfulness and meditation teachings."

Mindfulness Coaching

In person and via Skype, I coach individuals and teams on a variety of mindfulness skills, holding them accountable for growth.

Classes and Workshops

Lasting between thirty minutes and two days, my classes and workshops introduce key mindfulness practices into organizations for sustainable success.

Program Development

My science-based mindfulness programs infuse a sense of energy and focus into organization's cultures.