

# Gratitude

What It Is and Is Not

**Study and Practice Guide**



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

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What is your understanding of gratitude?

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What are your questions about gratitude?

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## 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.

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



## 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





## **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.

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 blueshoals 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



## **Credits**

Arrien, Angeles. Living in Gratitude: Mastering the Art of Giving Thanks Every Day, A Month-by-Month Guide. Boulder, Colorado: Sounds True. 2013.

Emmons, Robert A. The Little Book of Gratitude: Create a Life of Happiness and Well-Being by Giving Thanks. Octopus Publishing Group, 2016.

Emmons, Robert. Thanks!: How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier. Houghton-Mifflin, 2008.

Gratitude. Psychology Today.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/gratitude>

Gratitude Practice Explained. Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

<http://ei.yale.edu/what-is-gratitude>

Sharing Gratitude. MindfulnessExercises.com.

<https://mindfulnessexercises.com/sharing-gratitude/>

The 31 Benefits of Gratitude You Didn't Know About: How Gratitude Can Change Your Life. Happier Human.org.

<http://happierhuman.com/benefits-of-gratitude/>

What is gratitude? Gratefulness.org.

<https://gratefulness.org/resource/what-is-gratitude/>

Thank You Patricia Drake,

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## About Sean Fargo



### **Mindfulness Coaching and Consulting**

Founder, [MindfulnessExercises.com](http://MindfulnessExercises.com)

Former Buddhist monk of two years

Certified Instructor for Search Inside Yourself

Leadership Institute (*mindfulness program at Google*)

Certified Integral Coach (*from New Ventures West*)

*"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.*