

Gratitude

Of the Open Heart

Study and Practice Guide



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

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?**
 - 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



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 chambers of the heart.

They are:

- The Open Heart
- The Strong Heart
- The Full Heart
- The Clear Heart

Pause to consider the meanings of these heart chambers in relationship to the 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. Continue this practice daily.

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

Talk to significant others about gratitude in your relationship.

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. Commit an act of gratitude toward someone who has been good to you.

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. 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 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

Credits

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About Sean Fargo



Mindfulness Coaching and Consulting

Founder, 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.