

THE BLESSINGS OF A GRATEFUL HEART



New perspectives on a spiritual discipline



"Celebrate what you want to see more of." Tom Peters

This workbook is designed as a two-week introduction to the spiritual practice of Gratitude. Always rewarding, gratitude fosters satisfaction and a deeper, more lasting happiness and joy. Take this journey, experience the blessings of a grateful heart and make note of your insights and thanksgiving.

© 2009 Inspiration House. All rights reserved.

Special permission has been given to The Well Spirituality Center community during 2016-2017 to reproduce copies of this book for the free use of the community and its friends. All others who would like to reproduce this book in any form including electronic or mechanical means, photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, should seek permission in writing from the publisher, carol@inspirationhouse.org.

This edition has been formatted to print on US Letter size paper – 8.5 x 11".

ISBN 978-0-557-18193-3

Excerpt on Day Two and Day Three taken from *Attitudes of Gratitude* by M. J. Ryan. Copyright 1999 by Conari Press.

Day One

Consider one thing that you are grateful for today. Perhaps it is an idea, person or thing based on the senses – one sight that caught your eye, one beautiful sound, one appealing smell, etc. Make note of it here:

*“Waking up this morning, I see the blue sky.
I join my hands in thanks for the many wonders of life;
for having twenty-four brand-new hours before me.”
Thich Nhat Hanh*

Day Two

"In wonderment, children are our greatest teachers. Wonder is a natural state, one that we often lose track of as we become numb to life. Since wonderment is the willingness to be surprised by life, and gratitude springs from wonderment, to practice gratefulness we need to let it surprise us, with a glorious sunset, a luxurious back rub, a mysterious phone call, or the kindness of a stranger. "

Pause for a minute now and note your amazing observations:

"Oh, for the wonder that bubbles in my soul." D. H. Lawrence

Day Three

"We can capture our sense of wonderment at any moment. All it takes is to open our senses and let the world come into us anew. Try it for one minute. First, listen to the sounds around you: perhaps an airplane is overhead. Isn't it amazing that airplanes can fly? It doesn't seem possible. What kinds of scents are in the air? I can smell jasmine. Isn't it amazing that so many flowers have such distinctive scents? Now turn to your sense of sight ..."

Focusing on the senses – sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch – chose one. Note three things, ideas, actions, people you are grateful for today using that sense:

Today's sense: _____

1.

2.

3.

Day Four

Chose a different sense today and note three things, ideas, actions, people that you are grateful for today based on that sense:

Today's sense: _____

1.

2.

3.

*"One chief idea of my life . . . is the idea of taking things with gratitude
and not taking things for granted. "*
G. K. Chesterton

Day Five

Some people start their day with a prayer as part of their spiritual gratitude practice. It is often as simple as, "Dear God, what wonders are you going to show me today?" Write a brief prayer that opens your heart to the spirit of gratitude:

Day Six

Name three people that you're grateful to have in your life:

1.

2.

3.

Chose one person and note five qualities about them for which you are grateful:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Now, write or call this person and let them know!

*"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present
and not giving it." William Arthur Ward*

Day Seven

It's been a week of experiencing and practicing gratefulness. What's different?
What's changed in your ability to observe things to be grateful about?

"Beginning to tune into even the minutest feelings of ... gratitude softens us ... If we begin to acknowledge these moments and cherish them ... then no matter how fleeting and tiny this good heart may seem, it will gradually, at its own speed, expand."

Pema Chödrön

Day Eight

During the day note at least six things you find yourself pausing about and feeling grateful for:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

"Are we really grateful for the good already received? Then we shall avail ourselves of the blessings we have, and thus be fitted to receive more." Mary Baker Eddy

Day Nine

Think of a person that you are having trouble with in your life.

List five things that you can be grateful for and appreciate about this person:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

"Gratitude is the intention to count-your-blessings every day, every minute, while avoiding, whenever possible, the belief that you need or deserve different circumstances." Timothy Miller

Day Ten

Over the course of the day find five people/occasions to express gratitude "on the spot."

List them here:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

*"Our work-a-day lives are filled with opportunities to bless others.
The power of a single glance or an encouraging smile
must never be underestimated." G. Richard Rieger*

Day Eleven

Note six things you are grateful for today:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

"To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us — and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful person knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference." Thomas Merton

Day Twelve

Look back over the past year. Find a half dozen extra-ordinary events or observations that you are especially grateful for. Note them here and write a phrase about what made them profound:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

"Gratitude is here presented as more than a feeling, a virtue, or an experience; gratitude emerges as an attitude we can freely choose in order to create a better life for ourselves and for others. The Nigerian Hausa put it this way: Give thanks for a little and you will find a lot." David Steindl-Rast

Day Thirteen

Look ahead to the next few months. List ten things you appreciate already and can anticipate being grateful for during these next several weeks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

*"To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble,
but to live gratitude is to touch Heaven."
Johannes A. Gaertner*

Day Fourteen

This is the last day of the two-week exercise developing a new perspective on the spiritual practice of Gratitude. Congratulations! Please take a few moments to identify the value of this exercise. What benefits did you receive from engaging with this spiritual discipline?

What action can you envision taking as you go forward to incorporate gratitude as one of your own spiritual practices?

"There is a calmness to a life lived in Gratitude, a quiet joy." Ralph H. Blum

Resources and Further Reading

Words of Gratitude for Mind, Body, and Soul
by Robert Emmons and Joanna Hill

The Book of Psalms

Attitudes of Gratitude by M. J. Ryan

Gratefulness, the heart of prayer by Brother David Steindl-Rast

Moments of Gratitude – Quotations from Mary Baker Eddy

Spiritual Practices feature on www.spiritualityandpractice.com



www.inspirationhouse.org