

Appreciation & Gratitude

Make a Gratitude List

Going from the present to the past, list the many people you have encountered through the years who have contributed to your life in ways that you are grateful for.

- Once you've completed this gratitude list, make sure to reach out and let each person know that you treasure them and are deeply grateful for them in your life.
- To take this gratitude experience a step further, go back through the years again and look at those who have hurt you in some way, perhaps challenged you or rejected you. After enough time has passed, we might see that our life has unfolded in ways we are grateful for that we could not have imagined when we were feeling wronged. We can even find gratitude for those we have held resentment against. Ask yourself, "What is the gift that has come into my life because of that event?" Reclaim the wisdom and the gifts of your life and turn the straw into gold!

"Write the wrongs that are done to you in sand, but write the good things that happen to you on a piece of marble. Let go of all emotions such as resentment and retaliation, which diminish you, and hold onto the emotions, such as gratitude and joy, which increase you."

~Quoted in Angeles Arien's book, "The Fourfold Way"

Go on Gratitude Walks

As you walk, if possible, speak softly out loud in a continuous stream for five minutes about what you are grateful for. Set a timer if you can, and keep going, even as you feel you are running out of things you are grateful for. You may find that you come out of your thoughts, out of searching inside for what you can name, and into the moment, into the world around you, such that your gratitude becomes immediate and in the moment.

For example: "I am grateful for the conversation with my friend this morning, I am grateful for the love of my sister, I am grateful for the vacation I have coming up, etc. (eventually shifting into) I am grateful for the warmth of the sun, I am grateful for the sensation of my feet on the warm earth, I am grateful for the many colors in the bark of that tree, I am grateful for my eyes, I am grateful for my love of color and the joy it brings me, I am grateful for the energy and motion of my body, I am grateful for the sounds of the birds, I am grateful for my ears and my ability to discern subtleties of sound, etc." – and maybe you will even come to, "I am grateful that I am grateful!" Or even "I am grateful that I am!" You may see in this example that your gratitude and self-appreciation overlap, and that this is actually a practice of self-love – both in that it brings you present to what you appreciate about yourself and that it nourishes your joy.

Buddy Up

Find a buddy, a good friend, an intimate. Both of you will do the daily gratitude and appreciation practice, finding three things you appreciate about yourself and three things you are grateful for. After you have done this, send a brief text or email exchange to each other listing one thing you appreciate about yourself and one thing you are grateful for. Keep it simple, only listing those two things, so that it never comes to feel like a burden. This is a surprisingly intimate exchange, and you will support each other in your practice. If you are in intimate daily contact with this person, add one thing that you appreciate about each other to your exchange.

Nature. Beauty. Gratitude. A beautiful video from Louis Schwartzberg's on the power of being grateful for every day:

- <https://youtu.be/gXDMoiEkyuQ>

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity.... It turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow."

~Melodie Beattie