

# Gratitude in the Crunch

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The practice of gratitude is powerful fast-acting medicine, plugging us back into our essential nature, grounding us in reality-deepening perspectives, breathing more life into our capacity for compassion.

Central to the practice of gratitude is doing it when we least want to, as when we're tangled up in disillusionment, depression, disappointment, despair, shame.

This doesn't mean glossing over or bypassing the difficult stuff, but making heart-centered room in which to face it, gifting ourselves with a more-than- intellectual reminder of what truly matters.

Here, we stop turning our pain into suffering (meaning the dramatization of pain), facing it not just with head and guts but also with heart. We further fuel this by cultivating gratitude for the very capacity to feel and express gratitude in even the most difficult of circumstances.

Gratitude for being able to evolve, for having the capacity to work through trauma, for being able to move beyond dysfunctional ways of doing relationship.

Gratitude for being able to feel, for having the ability to become more emotionally literate and compassionate.

Gratitude for the time we have, short as that might be.  
Gratitude for the arrival of our next breath.

Gratitude for simply being.

Gratitude for what beats our heart.

The practice of gratitude bends us without breaking us, stretching us in ways that deepen our dignity, integrity, and essential presence.

Gratitude for simply being alive, now and now and now, for simply being here, for having the capacity to awaken, to heal, to be empathetic, courageous, loving, present, vastly alive.

Gratitude for what we ordinarily take for granted.

Gratitude for incarnation, for this body, this mind, this exquisitely refined nervous system, this ability to outgrow our conditioning, bring our shadow out of the dark, recognize who and what we truly are.

And Hallelujah – Hallelujah! – right to our core, as we once again get back on track, scarred but not ruined, broken but not shattered, navigating the daily grind with a touch more grace and ease, grateful to still be here, surrendering what needs to be surrendered as we once again open to the raw Mystery of our existence.

The practice of gratitude asks only for a few focused minutes of your time here and there.

Do it when you don't want to do so, and you'll become more intimate with the you who is lost in entitlement, reactivity, fearfulness, self-doubt. Meeting that one up close – and with unconditional compassion – is an immensely worthwhile adventure, asking for and bringing forth the very best in us, step by step.

Remember to practice gratitude. Remember to remember. Don't rush through it. Keep your articulation of it clear and present, not letting the words you use slip into mechanical recitation.

The practice of gratitude is essentially sacred remembrance in the flesh, commonsense prayer, guiding us to the heart of whatever we find ourselves in, bit by bit. Trust it, use it, letting it restore and enrich you, again and again catalyzing in you a wondrously practical sense of your true nature.

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