

The Practical Practice of Gratitude

[Gratitude: A Deeply Practical Practice](#)

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The practice of gratitude is powerful medicine.

It quickly and effectively realigns us with our essential nature, grounding us in reality-unlocking perspectives, relieving us of our self-centered myopia. Call it a soul-centered homing device – unconditional thanksgiving in the heartfelt raw.

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

This doesn't mean glossing over or bypassing the difficult stuff, but bringing heart and deep-cutting perspective to it, gifting ourselves with an instant, more-than-intellectual reminder of what truly matters.

Here, we stop turning our pain into suffering (the overdramatization 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.

Imagine if we simply did not have the capacity to recognize and work with our shadow elements. Imagine if we could no more

than remain slaves to our conditioning, bound to our programming with no possibility of illuminating, uprooting, and outgrowing it. Imagine if we didn't have the equipment for practicing gratitude.

Gratitude for being able to evolve, for having the capacity to work through trauma, for being able to move beyond both codependent and co-independent ways of doing relationship.

Gratitude for being able to feel, for having the ability to become more emotionally literate and compassionate. Gratitude for being able to see through what's before us. Gratitude for the time we have, short as that might be. Gratitude for the arrival of our next breath. Gratitude for simply being.

The practice of gratitude bends us without breaking us, humbling but not humiliating us, leaving us seeking something more real than answers, bowing in ways that deepen our dignity, integrity, and core 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, 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, and 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, opening to a deeper wholeness, navigating the daily grind with a touch more grace and ease, grateful to still be here, grateful even for death, surrendering what needs to be surrendered as we open, more and more fully, to the essential 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, and you'll become more intimate with the you who is lost in entitlement, exaggerated specialness, and walled-in or spiritualized egoity.

Meeting that one up close and with full-blooded compassion is a hugely 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 holy 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 you, bringing you into an awakened innocence and wondrously practical, ever-deepening sense of who and what you truly are.

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