

My Gratitude Journal



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Gratitude is an emotion. It's how you feel when you're thankful for something. Think right now about something that you're thankful for. It can be small like the socks on your feet or it can be larger like the roof over your head, your job, your family or your life.

Gratitude is also an awareness or recognition. When you express or feel gratitude, you're acknowledging that there is good in your life, in you, in the world and all around you.

Feeling grateful changes how you feel inside.

It's easy to let the negative thoughts, words, situations, events, and actions in the world take over your heart and mind. Many in society seem to focus on the negative. It's on the news, in magazines and newspapers, and it may be the general tone of the conversations you encounter during the day.

Yet, the simple emotion and expression of gratitude diminishes all of that negativity in a powerful way.

Over the past ten to twenty years many disciplines have conducted studies on the impact of gratitude.

What they've found is nothing short of amazing. People who practice gratitude have found:

- They're happier. It increases feelings of optimism, joy, and satisfaction.
- Have less anxiety and depression.
- It's good for your health. Studies have shown that a gratitude practice strengthens the immune system, lowers blood pressure, and reduces symptoms of illness.
- Get more sleep.
- Recover more quickly from challenges and even from traumatic events.
- Have stronger relationships.
- Stronger connections. People feel more connected to their community.

Gratitude changes your perspective on the life that you've been given. When you have gratitude in your life you:

- Feel less victimized by others or by life. Blaming no longer exists. Rather than look at what you lost or what you don't have, you're able to reframe situations and move forward focusing on what you can do and what you have.
- Have a more open heart. Gratitude helps you become more compassionate and empathetic. You'll be able to connect with people even if you don't think you have much in common with them. It's a more rewarding way to live.
- Glass half full approach. With gratitude you'll be able to recognize and appreciate what you have rather than what you don't. As you begin to become aware of what is good and positive in your life, what is good and positive will grow.
- Attract more gratitude and happiness. It's often found that people attract experiences and people based on what they expect. If you focus on and expect good things to happen, more good may show up.

The bottom line is that people who practice gratitude reportedly have a better quality of life. However, this is one of those things in life that you have to experience for yourself before you will be able to fully believe it and before you'll embrace it into your life.

Start each day with a grateful heart.

How Do You Practice Gratitude?

The concept of practicing gratitude begins by creating a habit. For most people, the simplest habit, and the most effective one, is to create a gratitude journal. A gratitude journal is a process of writing down what you're grateful for during the day.

Many people journal in the morning, or at night, or both as they are quiet times. You can keep the journal right next to your bedside. First thing when you wake in the morning, you journal about gratitude or last thing before you go to sleep at night.

Now you can, of course, journal whenever it feels right for you. For example, you might find that journaling in the middle of the day, at lunchtime, helps you have a more positive afternoon and evening.

Also, many people journal on paper. They handwrite what they're grateful for. The process of writing it down, as opposed to dictating your gratitude or typing it on to your computer or mobile device, seems to have a stronger impact on your brain and mindset. The act of writing seems to wire your brain differently and create a connection between your thoughts and the words on the page.

Does this mean that you can't or shouldn't create a digital journal? Absolutely not. If dictating your gratitude or typing it works for you then by all means do that. There are no rules for a gratitude journal.

Why Journal?

Why journal? Why not just set aside a few minutes each day to think about what you're grateful for? Journaling is the first step to creating a gratitude mindset. After all, the goal isn't to be grateful for a few minutes each day. The goal is to shift how you think so that gratitude is your natural reaction and thought process.

Journaling helps you create a daily habit. You'll think about gratitude once or twice a day for one month, two months, six months or more. The longer you do it, the more it becomes ingrained in your mind.

Once gratitude becomes a part of your daily routine, your thoughts begin to shift. Keep at it, continue journaling, and those changes become even more entrenched. Will you shift back to a negative mindset if you stop journaling? It can happen. If you're aware, and this does happen, all you have to do is resume your commitment to a gratitude journal.

So What Do You Need to Start a Gratitude Journal?

There are a few considerations to start your gratitude journal. Not all of them are necessary requirements. However, it's a good idea to have some sort of plan in place. It will make your gratitude practice easier and more successful.

Patience

Gratitude takes practice. Being grateful and shifting your mindset, thoughts, and beliefs isn't an overnight process. It'd be wonderful if you could go to bed one night with the burdens of the world on your shoulders and awake the next day feeling light as a feather with no cares in the world.

That doesn't generally happen. Instead, you'll notice a gradual shift over time. You'll feel yourself being lighter, more appreciative, and happier. It's call a gratitude practice for a reason...Gratitude, takes practice. Be patient with yourself and with the process.

Start each day with a grateful heart.

Routine

We've already mentioned a few different options for daily journaling. We mentioned journaling in the morning or at night, or both. We also discussed a lunchtime habit. What matters more than when you journal, is that you journal when you can make it part of your daily routine.

Maybe you journal in the morning with a cup of coffee. Maybe your journal at night after you get ready for bed but before you close your eyes. For it to become a habit, you have to incorporate it into your daily life at the same time every day. Make it part of your day.

Materials

What are you going to use to journal? Are you going to use a mobile application? Are you going to use a notebook? There are some truly beautiful notebooks. You can find them leather bound for a rustic look or shiny for the fashionista.

You can find composition books with patterned covers or character covers. You might also want a pen or pencil that makes you smile and feel grateful. And of course, you can begin by printing out this book and using the space provided to document your gratitude.

Quiet Time

The time you spend journaling your gratitude should ideally be uninterrupted time. It should be free from distractions including people, text messages, and phone calls. This time allows you to reflect on the day as well as your thoughts and feelings. And if you're using a gratitude prompt, then the quiet time will help you find your answer. Before we get started, let's take a quick look at where you can find gratitude because sometimes it can be difficult to tap into this powerful feeling.

Where Do You Find Gratitude?

Finding gratitude can feel challenging. On the first day of your practice you may find yourself sitting at your desk just staring at an empty page. The day was lousy, you're exhausted, and maybe the gratitude practice just isn't for you.

Conversely, you may find yourself staring at a blank page on day 28. You've run out of things to be grateful for. You have nothing else to write down. You feel like you've hit all the biggies and now you're thinking about writing down that you're grateful for push-pins and dust bunnies.

Well, it's okay to be grateful for push-pins and dust bunnies. There are no rules. Just like there's nothing too small or too big to be grateful for.

Let's also say that if you take the time to look around you, to reflect on yourself, your life, your day, and your surroundings, you'll never run out of things to be grateful for. So let's start with a list of 25 ideas on where to find gratitude.

1. Music.
2. Animals.
3. Nature.
4. Your body; your health and what your body is capable of.
5. Stories; books, movies, plays and more.
6. Religion

Start each day with a grateful heart.

7. Mediation.
8. Art.
9. Textures.
10. People.
11. Food
12. Experiences
13. Activities
14. Dance.
15. Friends.
16. Family.
17. Personal attributes
18. Quotes.
19. Hobbies.
20. Beliefs
21. Situations or events
22. Material items
23. Conveniences
24. In your home
25. At work.

Think about each of these items individually. When you're struggling to find something to be grateful for, you now have 25 categories to choose from. In fact, once you've worked through the 100 gratitude prompts and tips, you can then start working from this list.

Finally, before we dive into the gratitude journal, please keep in mind that you don't have to write down hundreds of things you're grateful for each day. Strive for somewhere between three and ten. Consider being consistent.

For example, you might decide to write down five things each day that you're grateful for. This consistency simply adds some structure to your gratitude journal and makes it a bit easier to get started.

Your Next Step

The following pages can be printed out as your first gratitude journal. It contains 100 tips, quotes, and gratitude prompts to get you started. You can work through them day by day or skip around. There is no right or wrong way to practice gratitude. The practice itself is where the power resides.

Start each day with a grateful heart.




100
Things I'm
Grateful For



2016

Start each day with a grateful heart.


"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest
appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them."
John F. Kennedy



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Take one minute in the morning to get a good start to your day by finding three small or big things you are grateful for in your life.



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

10 things I'm grateful for today



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Five people who made me smile today
(friends, family or even strangers)



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

The best part of today was...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What I love about my home



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

These are my favorite foods because...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm grateful for my friends because...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

*"Appreciation can change a day, even change a life.
Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary."
Margaret Cousins*



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

*“Every cloud has a silver lining.”
One silver lining today was...*



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm grateful for my vision because today I saw....



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What I love about my face



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I am healthy because...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

A freedom I'm grateful for....



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

A person I'm grateful for



A series of horizontal dotted lines spanning the width of the page, intended for writing a list of people one is grateful for.

Start each day with a grateful heart.

What I love about my job



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I overcame this challenge today...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm grateful for my car (or other transportation) because...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I appreciate my dentist (doctor, teacher, or other service provider)
because...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Why my favorite holiday is



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm grateful for this element of nature because



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm grateful for the smell of....



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

“Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm grateful for computer technology because



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What I love about my body



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm grateful for my childhood because



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

The knowledge I'm most grateful for is....



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Why my favorite color is



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

My favorite type of food is....



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

If you identify something or someone with a negative trait (the cold conference room), switch it in your mind to a positive trait (the conference room with a great view).



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

"Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough."
Oprah Winfrey



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm grateful for breakfast because...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I appreciate the sound of...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

The memory I'm most grateful for is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

In my home, my favorite place is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Outside my home, my favorite place is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

The book that I'm most grateful for is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

When you find yourself in a bad situation ask: What can I learn? When I look back on this, without emotion, what will I be grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

The texture I'm most grateful for is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

10 things that always make me smile



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I love that I'm able to...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm grateful for this season because...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

My mind is a powerful thing. One element of it I'm grateful for is ...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Values I hold most dear and am grateful I have



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Ways I share my gratitude



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm grateful for these skills and abilities...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What bit of advice are you most grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What daily routine are you most grateful for?



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“Acknowledging the good that you already have in

Start each day with a grateful heart.

your life is the foundation for all abundance.”
Eckhart Tolle



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What scent are you grateful for today?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Who in your childhood are you grateful for?



A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for writing answers to the question above.

Start each day with a grateful heart.

Promise to not complain, criticize, or gossip today. Become aware of how your energy changes when you focus on the positive.



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What song are you most grateful for today and why?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What daily chore/task are you grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What tradition(s) are you grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What challenge or obstacle are you most grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.”
Melody Beattie



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What small thing that you use daily are you grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What small thing that happened today are you grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What lifestyle habit are you most grateful for today?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What moment this week are you most grateful for?



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What form of expression are you most grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Things I love about my family



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What friend/family member are you grateful for today?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Sound, and strive to feel, genuinely happy to hear from the people you speak with today either in person or on the phone.



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

“Develop an attitude of gratitude, and give thanks for everything that happens to you, knowing that every step forward is a step toward achieving something bigger and better than your current situation.”

Brian Tracy



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What talent do you have that you are grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What are three things I can be grateful for about myself?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What is one thing I may usually for granted that I can be grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What is one mistake you've made that you're grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What animal or pet are you grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What is something about your parents that you are grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What is something about your spouse that you're grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

A quote that I'm grateful for is....



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

A vacation spot that I'm grateful for is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Someone at my job that I appreciate today is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

A surprise that I'm grateful for is...



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"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like

Start each day with a grateful heart.

wrapping a present and not giving it."
William Arthur Ward



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Today I will live in the moment.



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A joke or funny story that I'm grateful for is....



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

A photograph that I'm most grateful for is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Three things I've learned so far from journaling



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

*“When you are grateful, fear disappears and abundance appears.”
Anthony Robbins*



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

A kind action that I'm grateful for today is...



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Something from the past that I'm grateful for is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I'm looking forward to the future because...



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The convenience I'm most grateful for is...



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The thing (person, situation, or event) that made me stronger is...



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A gift that I'm most grateful for is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

The moment I'm most grateful for today is...



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Don't just keep your gratitude on the inside. Express it. Tell people what you're grateful for. Continue to keep a gratitude journal. Share your thoughts and stay positive.



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

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



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

I am grateful for these things in my surroundings (home/neighborhood/city/etc.)



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

An experience I am grateful for



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What am I able to offer others that I am grateful for?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

Things others in my life have done that I am thankful for



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What I see right now that I can be grateful for



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Who am I grateful to for teaching me something lately?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What physical sensations am I grateful for right now?



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Start each day with a grateful heart.

What can I enjoy right now that I can be grateful for?



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