

Conscious Being

Exercise Six: The Power of Gratitude

Gratitude may be one of the most talked-about spiritual principles there is, and many of us have learned that gratitude is a powerful tool for spiritual awakening and recovery. Many of us make gratitude lists or keep a gratitude journal. This is wonderful. It teaches us to feel grateful, to be more open to positivity. That's very important for those of us working to let go of the emotional habits left over from our core false beliefs. If we're working on unlearning, if we're letting go of our stories of victimization, if we're trying to stop living as if the world is doing something to us, then we can strengthen our gratitude by finding something to be grateful for in every situation, finding whatever light appears in the midst of the darkness. For there is always light.

Releasing Statement

I let go of limiting thoughts about myself and the world.

Affirming Statement

I am grateful for this moment.

Simple Meditation Practice

This module's meditation is a walking meditation. Set a timer for 5-10 minutes (trust whatever feels like the right amount of time for you in this moment). Now walk in silence during your allotted time. The invitation is to simply notice your surroundings. See if there are aspects of your environment you have never seen. Do you see anything you've never noticed before? Do you now have a deeper appreciation for your space? Now, take a bit of time to write out what you noticed.

1. **Gratitude Method:** Write down some things for which you are grateful:

Write down some things that you are struggling with or that are challenging for you:

Discuss the things for which you are grateful with a partner, or re-read to yourself if you are alone. Notice how that feels. Then share (or re-read) the challenges and notice how you feel. Is there a difference?

Now, see if there is something you can be grateful for *about* or *within* those challenges. If you have a hard time identifying anything, ask your partner to help you. If you're on your own, ask a friend or loved one.

Now, rewrite the challenges, including something you can be grateful for *within* that challenge. For example, you might say something like: "Because I lost my job, I will now have the time to focus on what really makes me happy."

2. Compassion Method: If you are doing this practice alone, we invite you to write out your answers to the following questions and read them every morning for a week. If you're in a group, share your answers with a partner:

- What does compassion mean to you?

- In what ways do you have compassion for the choices you have made in your life?

- In what ways do you have compassion for others?

- In what ways are you able to have compassion even when extremely painful or seemingly unjust things have occurred?

- In what ways has a lack of compassion created more suffering in your life?

- What could be possible if you would choose to have more compassion rather than judgment?

3. Becoming the Observer Technique: This can be a very powerful process. Imagine a situation in your life that feels unresolved. Notice the feelings that arise when you think of it. See if you can notice the story you are creating about it. Now, see if you can imagine yourself as the observer of the situation, almost like you are watching it in a movie.

- What do you notice now?

- How did the feelings change?

- In what ways did your experience of the story change?

This is something you can practice throughout your day, both in your meditations and in your daily life. The more you practice “witness consciousness” the more this becomes a way of being in the world. And remember, there is a reason it is called a spiritual *practice*.

