

*21 Days of Gratitude:
Awakening the Heart*



21-Day Gratitude Challenge

Download the Gratitude Series at ColetteLafia.com

21 Days of Gratitude: Awakening the Heart

Introduction

The inspiration for writing a 21-Day Gratitude Challenge blog series came to me in a moment of desperation on October 31, 2015. I'd been sleeping poorly for months, going to work in an angry and frustrated mood, and generally finding it hard to accept my day-to-day life. In a nutshell—I was struggling. In that moment, I just jumped into the gratitude challenge, like I do when I go swimming (otherwise, I would simply run back into the locker room, dress, and go home). I turned it into a blog series not only to inspire my readers, but to help myself during a time when I was spiraling downward.

My birthday is in November, and I certainly didn't want to come to my birthday feeling so out of balance. How was I going to accept what I felt so unhappy about? How was I going to restore peace within myself? How was I going to not drive my husband to the brink?

I picked up Angeles Arrien's book, *Living in Gratitude*, a book I'd started reading in 2012, as well as Brother David Steindl-Rast's book, *Gratefulness, The Heart of Prayer*, which I had been reading on and off for over a decade.

While reading Angeles' book, I was immediately attracted to her idea that, "We can choose to be grateful, or we can choose to be ungrateful—to take our gifts and blessings for granted." As I read those words, it struck me that gratitude is a practice—a very full and deep practice that can be at the center of our everyday lives. It's more than saying "thank you" for the gifts in your life. It's a way of being, as we meet all that arises in our daily lives. Even in a difficult situation, it's possible to be grateful for the opportunity to become more compassionate, forgiving, and accepting of ourselves and others that the situation presents.

When I started my gratitude challenge, I didn't know what I was committing to. I just knew I needed something to help me out of not sleeping well, feeling frustrated, and not accepting my life with any grace. So, for 21 days, I "practiced" gratitude more consciously. I kept a gratitude journal. I practiced the Breath of Thanks. I sought to see my life with grateful eyes and a heart of gratitude. I aspired to be more present in every moment, and put on glasses of gratitude as I lived my day.

The result was almost instantaneous. The food I ate was tastier. I could see the blueness of the sky. I could hear the laughter of the children I read to in the library. I could relax into the comfort and warmth of my bed at night. And I came face to face with my states of ingratitude. I noticed how often I compared myself to others. I noticed when I was criticizing myself. I noticed the storm in my heart.

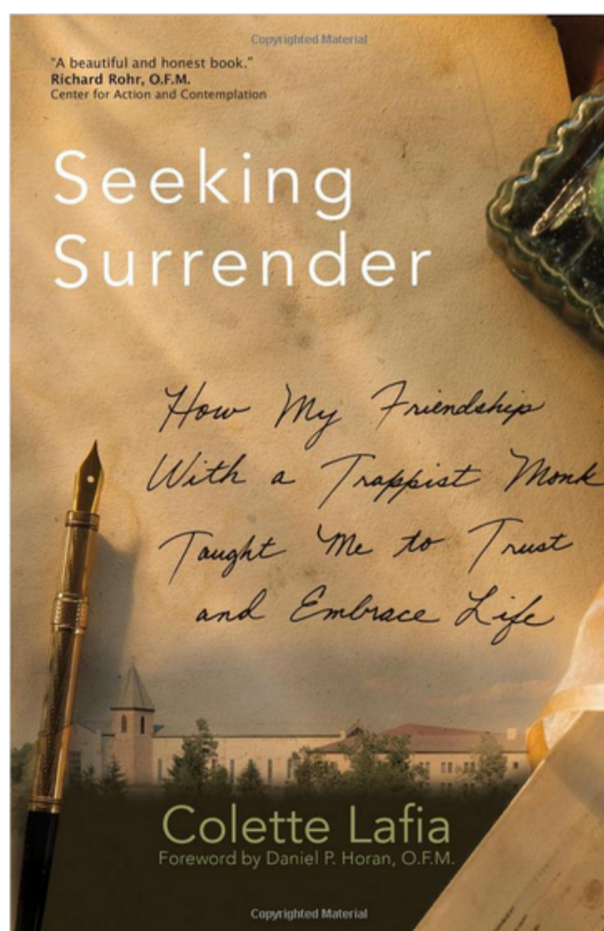
I chose not to dismiss my frustration or anger, but instead accepted my feelings and was grateful for being honest with myself. I was grateful for standing in my truth. I was grateful for my willingness to accept ALL of me. And the more I met my states of ingratitude with acceptance and engaged in gratitude practices, the stronger the energy of gratefulness became in me.

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About Colette

Colette Lafia is a San Francisco-based spiritual director, workshop and retreat facilitator, and adjunct faculty member at Mercy Center Burlingame. She is also a part-time school librarian. Colette is the author of *Seeking Surrender: How a Trappist Monk Taught Me to Trust and Embrace Life*, and *Comfort & Joy: Simple Ways to Care for Ourselves and Others*. She has a passion for helping people connect more deeply with the presence of the sacred in their daily lives and blogs about it at www.colettelafia.com.

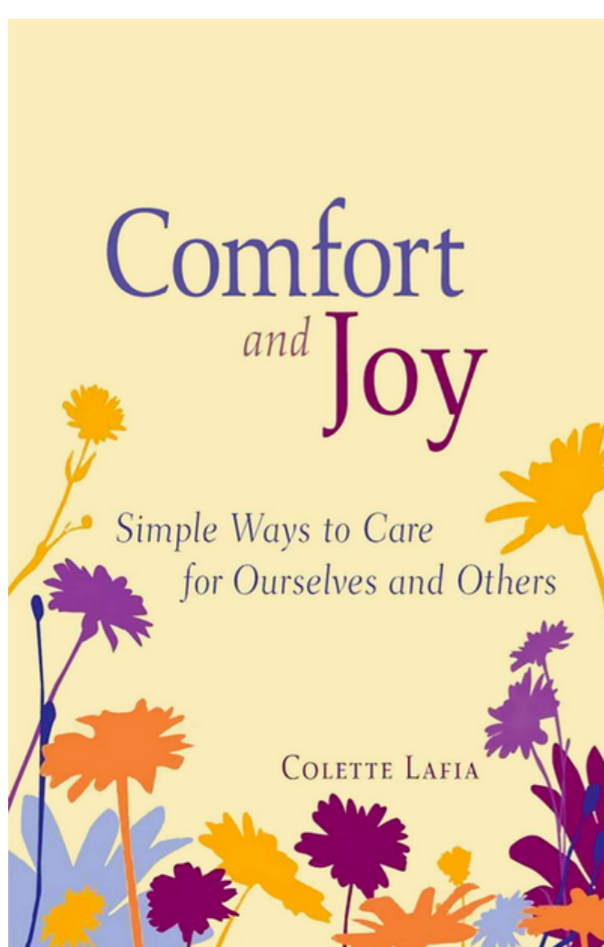


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21 Days of Gratitude: Awakening the Heart



Gratitude

Awakening Gratitude: Day 1

Day 1: Awakening the Heart to Gratitude

The other day, I was having lunch with a good friend, who was struggling with a recent change in her work situation. During our conversation, she leaned toward me and said, “I noticed that once I turned on the switch of gratitude things began to change—maybe not outside, but inside, and that has made all the difference.”

As I feel the need to awaken more gratitude in my heart and in my life, her words have inspired me to take the next 21 days and attempt to create a new gratitude habit. I invite you to follow along with me and to enjoy the gifts of a grateful heart.

“If the only prayer you say in your whole life is “thank you,” that would suffice.”
—Meister Eckhart

As we journey together during these 21 days of gratitude, I encourage you to keep a **gratitude journal**. When I started one today, I felt something in me begin to wake up.

My journal is a small notebook, and I keep it on a side table in my bedroom, next to my chair, where I sit every morning and take time to pray and reflect.

Gratitude Journal for Day 1:

- Pause. Take a few deep breaths and settle into the moment.
- Open your heart in gratitude.
- Write five things you are grateful for today.

I suggest you keep your journal accessible—on your bedside table or coffee table, or in your handbag during the day. You can write in it any time, either using the daily prompt I have provided or simply writing a list of five things you are grateful for that day.

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The Gift of a New Day: Day 2

Day 2: The Gift of a New Day

I woke up this morning feeling tense about all the demands of my job as the librarian at a very busy elementary school. The schedule is packed and the expectations seem unrealistic. How can gratitude help me to see my day more as a gift than a burden?

In *Living in Gratitude*, Angeles Arrien writes, **“While gratitude is both a feeling and an attitude, thankfulness is the demonstrative expression of it, whether extended to ourselves or others.”**

Can we be more conscious about saying *thank you* throughout the day?

For me this looks like...saying *thank you* to the children in the library for following directions and being patient; saying *thank you* to my husband for going grocery shopping after work; saying *thank you* to myself for taking time to swim and care for my body; and saying *thank you* for the Divine love that is always with me.

For today, let's practice thankfulness to ourselves, to others, and to God.

Gratitude Journal for Day 2:

- Take few deep breaths and settle in.
- Allow a feeling of relaxation to come over you.
- In your journal, use the prompt: *Today, I would like to say thank you for, and to say thank you to...*

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Gratitude

Grateful Seeing: Day 3

Day 3: Grateful Seeing

“We each have the ability to shift our awareness to one of **grateful seeing**—noticing first what is working in our lives before dwelling on what we lack or desire but have not yet attained, or on our challenges or burdens,” writes Angeles Arrien in *Living in Gratitude*.

I love this notion of grateful seeing. ***What would that look like in your life? What would that feel like?***

Yesterday, as I engaged in grateful seeing, I felt my heart grow in love for the people around me. I noticed how a child’s smile relaxed me, how the children’s laughter over a silly story encouraged me, and how my husband’s warm hug comforted me.

I encourage you to take this notion of grateful seeing into your daily life, and reflect upon what happens.

In order to grow in grateful seeing, we must honestly look at the obstacles that get in the way of our **experience of gratitude** itself: whether obstacles of comparison, envy, greed, anger, conditioned patterns of thought, or lack of acceptance of self and others. We must acknowledge our feelings and work through these obstacles, while continuing to practice and cultivate gratitude.

Gratitude Journal for Day 3:

- Take few deep breaths and come into the present moment more fully.
- In your journal, use the following prompt: ***In what ways did I practice grateful seeing, today—look first for what is working and what is good in my life?***

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Gratitude

Breath of Thanks: Day 4

Day 4: Breath of Thanks

I am beginning to sense a slight shift happening within me, both in my attitude, and in my heart, as I commit to a more conscious gratitude practice. ***What are you noticing in yourself as you begin to practice grateful living?***

Along with this inner shift as gratitude awakens within me, I am also noticing the resistance that is part of my journey. Learning to meet our resistance is part of opening up to a more surrendered and grateful way of living.

Brother David Steindl-Rast reminds us that, “gratefulness is the inner gesture of giving meaning to our life by receiving life as a gift.” And being more aware of the gift of our breath can greatly encourage us to see our life as a gift. I invite you to engage in the “Breath of Thanks,” which was developed by Fred Luskin.

It goes like this:

1. Two or three times every day when you are not fully occupied, slow down and bring your attention to your breathing.
2. Notice how your breath flows in and out without your having to do anything.
3. Continue breathing this way for about three to five slow, deep breaths.
4. For each of the next five to eight inhalations, say the words thank you silently to remind yourself of the gift of your breath and how lucky you are to be alive.

This practice invites us to embody gratitude, allowing our awareness of the gift of breath in our bodies to awaken our hearts to gratitude.

Gratitude Journal for Day 4:

- Let yourself relax for a few moments.
- Engage in the Breath of Thanks.
- In your journal, respond to the prompt: ***The Breath of Thanks practice made me feel...***

I am finding that thanking myself is very encouraging—so in my gratitude journal, I will write, “I am thankful to myself for having a quiet lunch. I am thankful to myself for being patient and present to those around me. I am thankful to myself for going swimming after a tiring day at work. I am thankful to myself to having faith in my new writing project.”

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Grateful Attitude: Day 5

Day 5: Cultivating a Grateful Attitude

"List your blessings and you will walk through those gates of thanksgiving and into the fields of joy." –Garrison Keillor

Autumn is a time of harvest, a time to recognize and appreciate **what has come to fruition in our lives during the year in both external and internal ways**. Although we tend to look ahead to see what's next, it's valuable to step back and remember our blessings.

In Keillor's quote, he invites us to reflect upon and list our blessings, which allows them to open us up to a **grateful attitude** in our lives.

Cultivating a grateful attitude is a way of being in the world, "that nurtures the heart and helps us to create a life of meaning and purpose," as Arrien tells us in her book, *Living in Gratitude*.

Gratitude Journal for Day 5:

- Pause. Settle into the moment.
- Open your heart in gratitude.
- In your journal, respond to the prompt: *Five blessings in my life are...*

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Gratitude

Choose to be Grateful: Day 6

Day 6: Choose to be Grateful

In *Living in Gratitude*, Arrien reminds us that “**Gratitude** is a feeling that spontaneously emerges from within. However, it is not simply an emotional response: it **is also a choice we make**. We can choose to be grateful, or we can choose to be ungrateful—to take our gifts and blessings for granted.”

You can choose to be grateful by:

- Saying *thank you* in a more conscious, authentic, and sincere way to those around you
- Practicing the *Breath of Thanks*, which was mentioned in Day 4
- Keeping a gratitude journal

Gratitude Journal for Day 6:

- Pause. Settle into the moment.
- Open your heart in gratitude.
- In your journal, reflect upon: *How are you choosing to live in gratitude at this time in your life?*

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Gratitude

The Gratitude Habit: Day 7

Day 7: The Gratitude Habit

The writer Alexis de Tocqueville once describe **gratitude as “a habit of the heart.”** Can gratitude become a habit?

We have so many daily habits, we can't even name all of them, but we know when we are practicing good ones because they make us feel happy, grounded, taken care of, and respected.

How can gratitude become one of our good habits?

Every habit takes attention and intention to get rooted in us. **It starts with our sincere desire to want to be grateful.** We must dwell in gratitude, allowing it to nurture us in the very depth of our hearts.

Ask yourself: *How can I cultivate gratitude as a habit of my heart?*

Gratitude Journal for Day 7:

- Take a moment to arrive in the moment. Relax. Take a few deep breaths.
- In your journal, respond to the prompt: *In what ways am I allowing gratitude to become a habit of my heart? In what ways am I not allowing gratitude to become a habit of my heart?*

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The Grace of Gratitude: Day 8

Day 8: Gratitude as a Grace

I have been pondering the title of Angeles Arrien's book, *Living in Gratitude*, which is the inspiration for these *21 Days of Gratitude*. It struck me that the title of the book uses the word *in* gratitude, and not *with* gratitude. When we live *in* something, we allow ourselves to be immersed and absorbed by it. Can we let the roots of gratitude even deeper in our hearts and our lives?

Angeles reminds us that, "The Latin root of the word *gratitude* is *grata* or *gratia*—a given gift—and from this same root we get our word *grace*, which means a gift freely given that is unearned."

I woke up this morning with familiar habit thoughts of comparison moving through me. Yet I was able to move through them, as I recited my morning prayer: *Dear God, thank you for bringing me to this new day. Thank you the sleep and the rest I received. May I be your love today in all that I do, and all that I say.*

Can we recognize the gift of a new day, and let it be a grace?

Gratitude Journal for Day 8:

- Settle into the moment.
- Open your heart in gratitude.
- In your journal, respond to one or both of these prompts: *Today, I recognize the gift of a new day by...* Or, *I experience the grace of gratitude when I...*

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Gratitude

Making Room for More Gratitude: Day 9

Day 9: Making Room for More Gratitude

As we engage with practicing gratitude in our daily lives, we also begin to notice what creates states of ingratitude in us. It's important to notice the thoughts and feelings that block us from deepening gratitude in our hearts, and learn to let them go, or address them as needed.

I recognize that my weakness is the habit of comparison, which stems from being raised in a family of ten children, and my habit of being self-critical, which leads to becoming discouraged.

So, I notice these thoughts and feelings as they arise, and work with them, continuing to turn in the direction of gratitude.

So, what is it you need to let of in order to provide room for new possibilities, opportunities, and blessings to enter your life.

How can you make more room for gratitude to fill you and energize you?

Gratitude Journal for Day 9:

- Make a cup of tea, and sit quietly for a few moments, sipping your tea and relaxing.
- Quietly reflect on your day.
- In your journal, respond to the prompt: *In order to make more room for gratitude to grow in my life, I will let go of...*

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Gratitude

Inspiring Gratitude: Day 10

Day 10: Inspiring Gratitude

Gratitude is a practice, and when we feel discouraged we turn towards inspiration, asking in prayer for the Spirit to encourage us so we can be aware of the sacredness of gratitude.

Here are a few quotes to keep close to our hearts:

"To be grateful is to recognize the love of God in everything." –Thomas Merton

"Whatever we are waiting for—peace of mind, contentment, grace, the inner awareness of simple abundance—it will surely come to us, but only when we are ready to receive it with an open and grateful heart." – Ellen Vaughn

"Prayer is sitting in the silence until it silences us, choosing gratitude until we are grateful, and praising God until we ourselves are an act of praise." –Richard Rohr

*"It is not happiness that makes us grateful, but gratefulness that makes us happy."
– Gratefulness.org*

*"Gratitude is like a flashlight. If you go out in your yard at night and turn on a flashlight, you suddenly can see what's there. It was always there, but you couldn't see it in the dark."
– Dawna Markova*

"In the past I always thought of gratitude as a spontaneous response to the awareness of gifts received, but now I realize that gratitude can also be lived as a discipline. The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy." – Henry Nouwen

Gratitude Journal for Day 10:

- Open your heart in gratitude.
- In your journal, write down your favorite quote from the ones listed above. After you copy it, ask yourself: *What is this quote saying to me in my life, right now?*

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Together-ness is the Heart of Gratefulness: Day 11

Day 11: Together-ness is the Heart of Gratefulness

In *Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer*, Brother David Steindl-Rast writes, “When we reach our innermost heart, we reach a realm where we are not only intimately at home with ourselves, but intimately united with others, all others.”

When my husband and I were first married, we lived in an apartment with such thin walls that we could hear the neighbors sneeze. We longed for a home of our own, but we couldn’t afford to buy a house at the time. So, we developed a practice that created a sense of home between us.

When one of us was feeling frustrated, we would place a hand on the other’s heart and ask: “Where’s your home?” And then the other would answer, “With you.” This simple practice sustained us through many difficult moments.

As we keep opening ever more deeply to gratitude, we discover a together-ness in the home of our hearts—with God and others—that is sweet and comforting.

Gratitude Journal for Day 11:

- Pause. Settle into the moment.
- Today, you might like to light a candle as you begin your ritual of writing in your journal.
- In your journal, reflect upon: *How the people and situations you are encountering in your daily life awaken gratitude in your heart?*

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Gratitude

Expressing Gratitude: Day 12

Day 12: Expressing Gratitude

As I rode my bike through the park on my way to work today, I noticed the way hundreds of dew drops created a blanket of sparkling light on the grass. I thought, that's what gratitude looks like in the world. It sparkles. It gives us light and beauty.

Can we pause and reflect on all the help, and prayers, and kind words we have offered others in the past week?

Be thankful to yourself for all you are and give and do. In the quiet of your heart, express gratitude to yourself, and receive your own appreciation of yourself.

A fun and creative way to express your gratitude is by making a gratitude collage. Gather magazines or calendar pictures to make a collage of images that speak to your heart about gratitude.

Gratitude Journal for Day 12:

- Take a few deep breaths and settle into the moment.
- Open your heart in gratitude.
- In your journal, write yourself a thank you note: *Dear _____, thank you for _____.*
It made me feel _____. *I appreciate you.*

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Gratitude

The Energy of Gratitude: Day 13

Day 13: The Energy of Gratitude

We all have stubborn places in us; thoughts and feelings that stick to us like gum on the sole of a shoe. Yet the practice of gratitude allows a new energy to stir in us. So for today, I am inviting us to strengthen the **energy of gratitude**.

I am a part-time school librarian. Yesterday, as I sat in front of a group of children—many of whom were wiggling in their seats or had runny noses—about to read them a story, I stopped for a moment and gazed at them. I could see their puppy dog eyes filled with longing, their open smiles, and their bodies pulsing with life like growing plants. Rather than get impatient with them, I decided to pause and appreciate who they are: children bursting with energy!

It made me wonder, could gratitude release such energy in my life—so full and vibrant and unstoppable? I remember that Brother David teaches that almost every situation offers us an opportunity to practice gratitude, and when we do our energy in our bodies, in our minds, and in our hearts can shift, from an anxious feeling to a calm feeling, and from an angry feeling to a more peaceful feeling.

Find immediate ways to practice gratitude throughout your day. Keep the energy of gratitude moving in you and around you in all that you say, think, feel and do today!

Gratitude Journal for Day 13:

- Close your eyes and allow the energy of gratitude to flood over you.
- Open your heart in gratitude.
- In your journal, respond to the following prompt: *The energy of gratitude looks and feels like...*

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Gratitude is Healing: Day 14

Day 14: Gratitude is Healing

Gratitude is naturally healing, so it's important to look at how our gratitude practice can bring healing to ourselves, our families, and our world.

Last night, my husband and I had a long discussion about gratitude and this 21-day series on awakening to gratitude. I appreciated his remark that, in some ways, this series is about grappling with gratitude. We must be honest in our gratitude practice. Otherwise, it will not reach into our innermost being and awaken our hearts.

My husband told me that my expression of frustration around my current work situation, as an overworked elementary school librarian, seemed at odds with my gratitude practice. This gave me an opportunity to reflect on the truth that our frustrations and our gratitude practice actually co-exist. In fact, to be authentic, they must co-exist!

My hope is that as more gratitude awakens in me, it will soften and ease the frustration I am experiencing. *Pause and reflect on where your frustrations are intersecting with your gratitude practice.*

So, for today, let's commit to letting our gratitude practice be a healing force in ourselves, our families, and the world around us.

Gratitude Journal for Day 14:

- Breathe in and breath out for three cycles, allowing yourself to become more present to yourself in the moment.
- In your journal, reflect upon: *How your frustrations, disappointments, and challenges are intersecting with your gratitude practice?*

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Gratitude

Gratitude Commitment: Day 15

Day 15: Gratitude Commitment

Let us take time to strengthen our commitment to our gratitude practice into our daily lives, by pausing and asking ourselves a few powerful questions:

What are you thankful for today?

In what ways are you shifting your perspective from looking at what is not working to developing grateful seeing, looking first for what is working and what is good in your life?

What positive changes are occurring that you can directly attribute to your gratitude practice?

(from Angeles Arrien, *Living in Gratitude*, pg. 218)

Gratitude Journal for Day 15:

- Pause. Settle into the moment.
- Open your heart in gratitude.
- In your journal, reflect upon: *What question from those listed above speaks to you at this time in your life, and how would you answer it?*

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Gratitude

Gratitude Offers Acceptance: Day 16

Day 16: Gratitude Offers Us More Self-Acceptance

Last night, I was filled with so much doubt and tears about many things. I felt lost, and even my desire to be grateful eluded me. With a wad of tissue in one hand and a pen in the other, I sat in my living room chair by the flickering light of a votive candle and poured my heart out in my journal.

As I was writing and sniffing, I recalled a **TED talk** I heard recently from Brother David Stenidl-Rast on gratitude. In it **he invites us to be grateful for the opportunity to be grateful in most situations.**

How do we find gratitude in the harder moments? I believe it is by being grateful that we are having a full experience as a human being, with a range of emotions—with joy and sorrow, happiness and sadness. Gratitude was inviting me to embrace all of myself. I scribbled and scrawled until I touched the root of my tears. Knowing that I couldn't change some of my immediate circumstances or my history, I wondered, *What is the opportunity to be grateful for in this situation?*

My husband heard me walking around the house, and called me back to bed. In the comfort of his arms, I told him how I was feeling—that I had arrived *nowhere* in my life, that the goals I had imagined reaching had eluded me. And I just loved what he said: *nowhere is an interesting place.*

We talked, and I was so grateful for his response: no judgment; no problem solving; just simple acceptance.

Gratitude is an invitation for radical self-acceptance, an invitation to fully meet our feelings and vulnerability. Gratitude offers us a way to hold our lives, and the many complex moments of our lives, with compassion and acceptance. It helps us to truly embrace ourselves, our lives, and those around us.

Gratitude Journal for Day 16:

- Pause. Settle into the moment.
- In your journal, respond to the writing prompt: *What situation in my life is offering me an opportunity to be grateful, and in what ways?*

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Living Gratefully: Day 17

Day 17: Living Gratefully

Looking for the bounty and good in our lives creates “a disposition for gratitude and allows us to see that some of the challenges we face may be blessings in disguise,” writes Angeles Arrien in *Living in Gratitude*.

Is there something in your life that is asking you to see it as a “blessing in disguise?” By doing so, you can live more gratefully.

This can be a leap of faith, allowing us to see our life as a journey that we cannot always understand in the moment.

Sometimes, we cannot understand the notion of “blessings in disguise,” unless we seek to see our lives from a wider perspective, such as through the eyes of the Sacred. An image I like to use is one of *“putting on the glasses of God.”*

To mature our sense of living gratefully requires that we expand our sense of ourselves, our lives, and the Sacred, so that we can open our hearts to see the “blessings in disguise,” in our lives.

Gratitude Journal for Day 17:

- Relax into the present moment.
- In your journal, reflect upon: *What in my life has been a blessing in disguise, and what about it can I be grateful for?*

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Gratitude

Sharing Gratitude: Day 18

Day 18: Sharing Gratitude

I am noticing a softness descending over me, like a warm blanket on a cold night, the more I say thank you in my life: to my husband for making dinner, to a friend who offers an encouraging word, to my sister for comforting my tears, and to God for this “given moment.”

Perhaps in our quiet moments—in prayer, meditation, and journal writing—we are noticing the awakening of a grateful spirit in us, but it is not enough to keep that awareness tucked inside. We must give it fuller expression, and allow the awakening of gratitude in us to be heard in the world around us.

We can show our appreciation and gratefulness to others by simply saying *thank you*, or by patiently waiting for someone who is running late, or by being more content with our lives, or by looking at the sky with awe.

We must share gratitude!

Gratitude Journal for Day 18:

- Take a few deep breaths. Relax and become present.
- In your journal, reflect upon the questions: *In what ways do you express your gratitude? How do others know that you are grateful?*

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Gratitude

Recognizing Generosity: Day 19

Day 19: Recognizing Generosity

When I started this series, I didn't realize I would be touching something that has such depth and resonance. I have found that exploring, discovering, grappling with, and deepening gratitude has offered me a more loving, compassionate, and inspired way to be. I am discovering that gratitude is the heart of the spiritual life.

On a personal note, Angeles Arrien encouraged me to write my first book, *Comfort & Joy*. When the book came out, she sent me a handwritten note, which I still keep positioned prominently on my bookshelf.

One of the practices that Angeles always encouraged was thanking people for their generosity by sending notes, letters, and gifts of gratitude to those who have provided blessings in our life. I am truly inspired by this suggestion.

Here are a few of the ways you can show your gratitude:

- Send an e-card through Gratefulness.org.
- When writing an email, add a short note expressing your gratitude to the person.
- Make a Thank You call.
- Give someone a Thank You gift.
- Become more generous with giving and sharing gratitude. Say thank you more & more.
- Let's keep the wheel of gratitude turning, by recognizing the generosity of others, and allowing ourselves to give from what we have received.

Gratitude Journal for Day 19:

- Settle into the moment, and open your heart in gratitude.
- In your journal, use the prompt: *I am grateful to _____, for _____.* Write yourself a list like this of all the people who have been a blessing in your life this past week, month, or year.

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Every Moment, a Given Moment: Day 20

Day 20: Appreciating The Gift of Every Moment

My husband called me earlier today to share the sad news that a colleague's husband died suddenly last night. When something like this happens to people we know, we share in their sadness. It also helps us to wake up.

We become a little more aware that life is a gift, and that "Every moment is a given moment," as Br. David Steindl-Rast reminds us in this beautiful video: **A Good Day**.

The other day someone was talking about her life circumstances to me, and nonchalantly said, "Oh, gratitude, we know all that, but..." That phrase has been bothering me for days, because what I want to say to myself is: *No, do not become complacent. Instead, become inspired to live from a grateful heart.*

Let us remember the wise words shared in the article, "The ABCs of Gratitude," from Gratefulness.org:

Grateful Living is an active way of approaching life moment-by-moment that can result in greater ease, peace, compassion, and joy.

Grateful Living is supported by daily practices, habits of mind, and behaviors that are learnable and can be translated and applied to many aspects of our lives.

Gratitude Journal for Day 20:

- Pause. Take three breaths.
- In your journal, reflect upon: *What are the daily practices that keep gratitude alive in your daily life, the ones that form the ABCs of gratitude for you?*

21 Days of Gratitude: Awakening the Heart



Gratitude

Thank You: Day 21

Day 21: Thank You!

As we arrive at the final day of this blog series, *21 Days of Gratitude: Awakening the Heart*, I want to express my gratitude to you for sharing this journey with me. **Thank you!** I hope and pray that this series on gratitude has touched you in some way, and that it has helped your heart to awaken even more.

Gratitude is such a deep practice. It offers us the opportunity to see our lives as a gift. As Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk tells us, “Gratefulness is the inner gesture of giving meaning to our life by *receiving* life as a gift.

How do we cultivate gratitude, making it a new habit and embracing the joy it offers us? We cultivate gratitude by awakening the heart. And, as Angeles Arrien says, “Through conscious and sustained practice over a period of time, we can discover again how gratitude and all its related qualities—thankfulness, appreciation, compassion, generosity, grace, and so many other positive states—can become integrated and embodied in our lives.”

Thank you for being part of my journey, and let us enlarge and expand the circle of gratitude together...

Gratitude Journal for Day 21:

- Settle into the moment, and open your heart in gratitude.
- In your journal, respond to the prompt: *In what ways can I expand the circle of gratitude—including the qualities of thankfulness, appreciation, compassion, generosity, and grace—to all I come in contact with on a daily basis?*

21 Days of Gratitude: *Awakening the Heart*

Closing Quotes and Resources

Here are a few quotes and resources for growing in gratitude:

"The greatest gift one can give is thanksgiving. In giving gifts, we give what we can spare, but in giving thanks we give ourselves." – Br. David Steindl-Rast

*"If the only prayer you say in your whole life is "Thank You," that would suffice."
— Meister Eckhart*

*"To be grateful is to recognize the love of God in everything."
— Thomas Merton*

Resources:

- Angeles Arrien's book, *Living in Gratitude*
- An inspiring web site called *Gratefulness.org*

21 Days of Gratitude: Awakening the Heart

21 Days of Gratitude Journaling Prompts

Day 1 Gratitude Prompt: *Write five things you are grateful for today.*

Day 2 Gratitude Prompt: *Today, I would like to say thank you for, and to say thank you to...*

Day 3 Gratitude Prompt: *In what ways did I practice grateful seeing, today— look first for what is working and what is good in my life?*

Day 4 Gratitude Prompt: *The Breath of Thanks practice makes me feel...* (The Breath of Thanks is taking five deep breaths and reciting the word “thank you” on each inhalation)

Day 5 Gratitude Prompt: *Five blessings in my life are....*

Day 6 Gratitude Prompt: *At this time in my life, I am choosing to live in gratitude by...*

Day 7 Gratitude Prompts: *In what ways am I allowing gratitude to become a habit of my heart? In what ways am I not allowing gratitude to become a habit of my heart?*

Day 8 Gratitude Prompts: *Today, I recognize the gift of a new day by... I experience the grace of gratitude when I...*

Day 9 Gratitude Prompt: *In order to make more room for gratitude to grow in my life, I will let go of...*

Day 10 Gratitude Prompt: *In your journal, write down a gratitude quote you find inspiring. Then ask yourself: What is this quote saying to me in my life, right now?*

Day 11 Gratitude Prompt: *How are the people and situations I am encountering in my daily life awakening gratitude in my heart?*

Day 12 Gratitude Prompt: *In your journal, write yourself a thank you note. Dear _____, thank you for_____. It made me feel_____. I appreciate you.*

Day 13 Gratitude Prompt: *In my life, the energy of gratitude looks and feels like...*

Day 14 Gratitude Prompt: *How are my frustrations, disappointments, and challenges intersecting with my gratitude practice?*

Day 15 Gratitude Prompt: *What positive changes in my thoughts, attitudes or actions are occurring that I can directly attribute to my gratitude practice?*

21 Days of Gratitude: Awakening the Heart

21 Days of Gratitude Journaling Prompts Continued....

Day 16 Gratitude Prompt: *What situation in my life is offering me an opportunity to be grateful, and in what ways?*

Day 17 Gratitude Prompt: *What in my life has been a blessing in disguise, and what about it can I be grateful for?*

Day 18 Gratitude Prompt: *In what ways do I express my gratitude to others?*

Day 19 Gratitude Prompt: *I am grateful to _____, for _____.* Using this prompt, create a list of all the people who have been a blessing in your life this past week, month, or year.

Day 20 Gratitude Prompt: *What daily practices are keeping gratitude more alive in my life right now?*

Day 21 Gratitude Prompt: *In what ways can I expand the circle of gratitude—including the qualities of thankfulness, appreciation, compassion, generosity, and grace—to all I come in contact with on a daily basis?*