

Gratitude Practice

When I first started coaching, there were layers in the way of my being with clients. Layer by layer I peeled away the protection I'd developed over the years to reveal more of my heart, and to be more present.

In those early days I turned to the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh. In particular, his brilliant work on anger which I highly recommend. As the protection fell away, I began to experience overwhelming love and gratitude for the world around me.

This early influence led me to create the following Gratitude Practice, which begins with the stepping stones of mindfulness. You can practice on your own or invite friends and family to join.

From start to finish, the exercise can take 10 minutes, 30 minutes or more, the choice is yours.

PS. I discovered that very small children are sometimes better students than we are. The key is to allow them to move their bodies in whatever way speaks to them during the exercise.

Breathe

Take deep breaths in and out. Consider silently counting them out at first to support you to settle into the practice.

Travel Inwards

Close your eyes. As you breathe in, follow your breath inward, deeper and deeper each time.

Mindfully Explore

Mindfully explore your body. Begin wherever your attention settles, and visit each part that beckons you. Explore, and simply sit with any sensations you encounter.

Bring Calm

As you encounter each sensation, bring calm to meet it, release tightness and tension, allow peace and compassion to wrap their arms around anything troublesome. Go slowly and mindfully.

Notice Unrest

Notice pain and emotion as it arises. Allow each to emerge without fixing, resisting, avoiding or subduing. Notice anger that arises, allow it its equal place at your table beside your pain, loneliness, joy, fear etc.

Soothe

Tenderly soothe your pain and each of your emotions. Give each the gift of your presence. Slow down, meeting each with tender, loving care.

Generate Joy

Bring your thoughts to this exact moment. Notice when your mind is travelling to yesterday or drifting toward two hours from now. Bring yourself back to this exact moment and when you do generate joy. It may support you to marvel at the mystical, magical body that you travel in or revel in the genius of your aliveness. You'll notice gratitude and joy emerging naturally here.

Share Gratitude

Open your eyes, bring yourself to the present moment and express aloud what you're grateful for. If you're participating in a group, invite each member of the group to share their gratitude.

Exercise Alternatives

This practice can be modified to be more active if sitting or standing still is confronting. Incorporate a beach walk, a stroll in the forest, even a swim in a lake. Use your creativity to make this exercise your own.

PS. Small children are naturally creative, you might follow their lead here and experience the joy of full self expression that children so naturally bring to life.

Wishing you a world at peace, with love and light, Tracey.