

All that I have in this moment

There is so much we can be grateful for: those things that bring us joy and happiness and some freedom from fear, anxiety and longing; the relationships we have; the things that we have achieved in life, such as getting through the hardest times in parenting and times of conflict.

In this practice we will develop an attitude of gratitude and of being more content. And when we grow these positive emotions, we also develop our inner strength, motivation and an open mind. These can really protect us from stress.

So, begin by taking a moment to look around you, seeing clearly with your eyes what is in front of you. Take it all in and be thankful for the simple fact that you can see the world with these eyes of yours, and with mindfulness you can see the world with fresh eyes.

Now close your eyes fully or just a little, so that you begin to turn this grateful attention inwards and towards your breath. Taking three deep calming breaths in through your nostrils and out through your pursed lips, slowing your out-breath down.

Take this moment to appreciate your life-giving breath - the air that you breathe in each moment giving you life - feeling your soothing breath flowing in and out of your body, your body that is home to a life - your life. Take a moment to appreciate your body and all the organs in your body keeping you alive and well in this moment. Your body that does so much for you. Feeling your heart beating, pulsing in this moment, and paying gratitude for this vital organ that pumps blood around your body but also which can fill and open with love, joy and other positive emotions when you are at your happiest.

Now begin to open your awareness to your life right now. Scan through your life and observe all the different parts of it. Begin to take note of the things that are there in your life - all the gifts that it is actually filled with already: your health, a roof over your head, clean running water, fresh food, and of course family and friends that love you.

See all the gifts and blessings that your life is filled with right now - all those many things that we should spend time seeing, but quite often we take for granted. Can you begin to grow a sense of gratitude, thankfulness here now for all those things?

Practice relaxing and enjoying exactly where you are right now with these gifts. Take note of the physical feelings of gratitude; how they feel in your body. Really sense the feelings inside yourself when you are grateful, so that your body becomes used to this - a peacefulness, warmth, a happiness that comes from being grateful.

Reflect now on what you're truly grateful for.

Paying a little more attention to the nurturing relationships you have in your life now: maybe new ones or older ones, relationships with your child or children, your parents, friends, a pet perhaps - those people who help you in ways that you are thankful for.

Allow yourself to sink into those feelings of gratitude, checking in to see how it makes you feel in body, and also in mind. Perhaps a different kind of energy is felt. Do you feel lighter, quieter, more free perhaps?

Bring to mind your child's other parent and reflect on the qualities they contribute to your life and your child's life. Even where there is conflict or hurt, just bring to mind something that you and your child are grateful for.

When you notice yourself thinking of things that might cause frustration or longing here, for example, needing more money, or wanting a bigger house, or more support with housework - whatever it is that you find yourself looking for - just pause and notice without judging how that makes you feel in your body and in your mind. Is there a tightening there, some tension creeping in?

See how this wanting and longing, can cause tension, and how it might lead to you comparing yourself with others and having feelings of lack and not being good enough.

Then change your perspective. Shift your attention to the positive aspects of your relationship with your child's other parent - those that are there already - try to see what they do, and not what they don't do for a moment, remembering no one is perfect, but if we see more clearly the positive things they do, however small, a shift in thinking can be felt.

What do they bring to the family? Perhaps they make you or your child laugh; maybe it's being thoughtful; perhaps they cook well, or they are good at DIY; maybe they're good at bedtime stories, or they work as hard as they can to provide. See if you can pick just a few things out and focus on those.

Reflect on how often you acknowledge when they are doing something well. Do you tell them that?

How might you show appreciation to them? Can you imagine showing them now how grateful you are? What would that look like?

And how does that feel in your body and mind to do that? Can you see how that might make them feel - how would they receive this gratitude? Maybe it would show in their face with a beaming smile; maybe they'd offer some sign of affection back towards you; maybe they show gratitude towards something that you do.

Seeing the glass half full and celebrating what we do have in our life right now can change our perspective and responses. It allows us to be more present in our lives and not to miss the little things that make up so many moments of our life.

When we no longer take things for granted, we become grateful for everything we have in our life and everything that we are.

And know that this non-grasping or striving attitude doesn't mean we shouldn't dream of how we would like our lives to go, or make changes in our lives, but rather, that we shouldn't count too much on external things, such as material stuff and other people's actions to make us content.

Being happy and content comes from inside us, when we fully accept and are truly grateful for all that we have right now in this precious moment.

Allow this attitude of gratitude to brighten your day.

When you are ready, gently end your practice and blink your eyes back open.

See you next time.