

November 2020: Gratitude  
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When I was a child, my mom used to come into my room in the mornings to wake me up. She would open my blinds and say "Thank you for the beautiful sunshine." My Aunt Ruth used to take walks with me. On the walk, she would point out all of the beautiful things in nature. She would make me stop and listen to the sounds of nature. I did not realize at the time the gift my mom and my aunt were giving to me. Not only did they give me good childhood memories, but they taught me the skill of gratitude. This is a skill I hope to pass on to my own children.

As humans, we tend to give more importance to negative experiences than to positive or neutral experiences. This is called the negativity bias. I am absolutely guilty of this. I believe that it takes a conscious effort to avoid getting caught up in the negative things around us, and to practice gratitude.

One day when I was scrolling through Pinterest to find information about gratitude, I found two questions that had a huge impact on me.

*What if you woke tomorrow and were only surrounded by the things you expressed gratitude for daily?*

*What if you woke tomorrow and were only surrounded by the things that you complained about daily?*

Oftentimes, we realize how grateful we are for something or someone when we lose them. When we have an injury or experience physical ailments, we realize how much we take our physical health for granted. A few years ago, I drove a twenty year old car. Because of the frustrations and challenges I faced while driving the twenty year old car, I now take a moment every day when I get into my car to appreciate the automatic locks, heated seats, and the other luxuries of a new car.

We are facing challenging times in our world right now. Quarantine, working from home, and online learning have taken a toll on all of us and our relationships. Lately have you told the people in your life how important they are to you? Take a moment to think about what you appreciate about them and make sure to tell them.

We are surrounded by a lot of negativity and pain in our world right now, but if we look around there is also so much beauty. We get to decide if we want to put our energy into the negativity, or take time to practice gratitude and be a part of the beautiful.