

teenie yogini

Cultivating an Attitude of Gratitude: Easy exercises for bringing joy into your life...

Centering in the Moment - Five Breaths

Sit quietly and start to focus on your breath, turning your focus inward. Become aware of the breath moving in and out of your nostrils. Feel the gentle movement of your body as it responds to the wave of the breath. Follow the breath as it moves through the body and as you exhale, feel the subtle effects of the breath on the body.



Count five breaths in this way.

(My thanks to William Hunt of Oak Park Yoga for introducing me to the transformative Five Breaths practice.)

The Inner Smile

(adapted from Beautiful, Bountiful, Blissful by Gurmukh)

Sit quietly, follow your breath and turn your focus inward. Imagine, at the very center of your being, that your body is smiling. Allow that "inner smile" to spread to every cell of your body, filling you with a sense of contentment. Allow the smile to spread to your face and to become an "outer smile."

Rest in this feeling of contentment as you go through your day.

Gratitude List/Gratitude Journal

Give yourself a quiet moment to settle into thinking about all the things in your life that you are grateful for. You can also do this daily in a journal. They need not be big things. The opportunity to take each breath is something we seldom think about as significant. But without each breath we would cease to live.

Keep this list or journal somewhere close by so that you can refer to it regularly and update it as you think of more things to be grateful for.

teenie yogini

While you're making your list, also think about the aspects of yourself that you appreciate. We don't often give ourselves positive reinforcement. In fact we more often than not indulge in mental self-abuse through constant negative thoughts about our bodies, abilities, talents and actions. Find something about yourself that you admire - one skill or virtue that you are grateful you have. Focus on that when the negative self-talk sets in and see what it does for your self image.

The Gratitude Meditation

(inspired by Goswami Kriyananda)

Sit quietly and close your eyes. Pay attention to the fact that you are breathing. Recognize that each breath brings life into your body and be grateful for this opportunity to breathe. Without the breath, there is no life.

Bring into your mind's eye an image that stimulates a feeling of gratitude for you. Allow this feeling of gratitude to spread through your body, feeling it in every part of your body - even in your fingers and toes. Let the feeling settle at your heart, recognizing that gratitude is not far removed from joy.

If you can think of someone who could use some joy in their lives, picture them in your mind's eye. Imagine that you are sending this feeling of gratitude and joy from your heart to theirs. See them become joyful as they receive your gift.

Then take your attention back to your own experience. Rest momentarily in this feeling of gratitude. As you open your eyes, recognize that you can keep this feeling with you or recall it at any time you choose.

Gratitude Stone

(from the movie "The Secret")

Find a stone that feels good to your touch. Put it in your pocket. Each time you see it or touch it, let it be a reminder to periodically think of the aspects of life that you are grateful for.

The movie *The Secret* is about the Law of Attraction. Like attracts like. If we are grateful we attract into our lives more opportunities to be grateful. Yoga teaches that our thoughts are the precursors to form. We create what we think about. So why not think about all the things that are good in your life instead of focusing on the problems?
