



By Daniel Rendelman

31-Day Gratitude Challenge

Gratitude Challenge One

Keeping a journal gives you a written stream of thanksgiving. Each evening, starting today, you should journal three to five areas for which you are thankful.

- Write about things that went well and on events that didn't turn out as expected. Place in your diary how you felt when you recalled the day.
- Use a favorite pen—or several—to make it personal and yours.
- Remember to express how you feel.
- Keep the journal on your bed near your pillow so you don't forget to use it.
- Use the guided journal provided in this book to get you started this month.

Gratitude Challenge Two

Today, your goal is to help others be thankful by paying compliments. This is reverse gratitude and it works every time. Intentionally compliment as many people as possible. Be genuine and sincere. Look the person in the eye and tell them how special they are to you or how beautiful they look. Compliment kids by talking about their skills. Find something positive in everyone. Encourage the employee at the gas station who is having a horrible day or the teacher who might be struggling. When you show gratitude by pointing out others' uniqueness, they will then thank you for being vocal. This is the cycle of gratitude in action. Be prepared to be thanked all day as you compliment throughout your day. Those you'll speak to will be blessed and you'll be encouraged. What could be better?

Gratitude Challenge Three

Another way to show gratitude is to offer your time. We only have twenty-four hours in each day. Today is a day to give some of your time away. Do it in some of the following ways:

- Listen to a friend.
- Volunteer at church.
- Say “yes” to a business presentation you’ve been avoiding.
- Show you are thankful for a relative by organizing a get-together.
- Set some of your personal time apart to give it away.

Gratitude is made loud and clear when you share quality and quantity moments. Say, “I am thankful” by being selfless with your schedule.

Gratitude Challenge Four

Today’s challenge will require you to be crafty. Make something called a “gratitude jar.” To do this, simply cut up slips of paper and choose a cup or jar you can fill with those slips. Write one thing you are thankful for on each slip of paper and place it in the jar. The next time you are feeling down or frustrated, pick a slip out of the jar and be reminded of something for which you should be thankful. Keep the jar in a visible place so that when you look at it, it’s full of blessings and reminders of being surrounded by many reasons to feel good about your life.

Gratitude Challenge Five

Just say it. Say, “I’m thankful.” Or better yet, answer, “I’m thankful.” Use this phrase to answer the small talk question of “how are you doing?” when you are asked. Without thinking, we usually respond, “fine,” and politely ask about the other person. What a waste of breath and words.

Reply differently today. Say something declaring your thankfulness. This will probably catch people off-guard, so be ready to share something specific. Here’s how your day could go...

“How are you doing?” Bob asks.

“Man, I’m grateful and thankful,” you respond.

“Really?” Bob asked. “What are you so happy about today?”

That’s how you can change small talk into a meaningful conversation.

Gratitude Challenge Six

Prayer or silent meditation is a practice which brings peace and comfort. When you take a few minutes to be still, it gives your mind and body a hard reset. Imagine unplugging an electrical device and restarting it to get it to work and you can understand the effectiveness of being still for a few minutes.

Your challenge today is to do just that.

Set ten minutes aside to be calm. Sit comfortably, focus on your breathing, be quiet, and listen. Place your fingers on your wrist and feel your pulse rush through your body. In this moment, what can you feel and sense appreciation for? Think about the sensation of your heartbeat and be thankful. Don't allow sounds or rogue thoughts to distract you. Pray and ask for gratitude.

Then, see what happens.

You might find your mind is filled with reasons to be thankful. You might find nothing at all. Both are okay. A quiet heart is often a thankful heart.

Gratitude Challenge Seven

Pay it forward. You've probably heard of this idea before. Basically, do something kind to someone anonymously. Pick something you would like done to you, like having your order paid for at a restaurant. Pay it forward. Or, backwards. Pay for the order behind you at a drive-thru window. Whatever you choose, do it in a way where you won't receive any credit or thanks. Trust that the person receiving the gift will be grateful and one day will repeat the favor. Unexpected gifts are the best.

Gratitude Challenge Eight

For today's challenge, you need to find a small item like a rock, a coin, or a trinket. Make sure it's tiny enough to fit into your front pants pocket. Take this item, hold it in your hands, and consider all the reasons to be thankful.

Ask yourself a few questions...

- Who are the people in your life?
- What are some deeply treasured memories?
- What struggles are you currently facing?
- When was the last time you felt despair or relief?
- How has gratitude changed your world?

Now, place the item in your pocket. Keep it there to remind you throughout the day

of thankfulness. Each time your hand rubs against it or you happen to notice it, simply take a quick moment and be graciously grateful. This easy reminder has the power to turn ordinary moments into times of thanksgiving.

Gratitude Challenge Nine

Just as being calm and quiet is good for the soul, so is exercise. Far too often, we prove the scientific theory of how an object at rest tends to stay at rest. How? Well, we move from sitting in front of a computer all day at work to sitting in front of the television at night. A bit of movement (dare I say the “exercise” word?) can make a difference in your life. Daily exercise will make you healthy and daily gratitude will make you happy.

A simple brisk walk down the street can get your heart pumping. Doctors have proven walking at least twenty minutes a day can improve your immune system and have tremendous health benefits. Walking is also good for your soul if you use it to your advantage. Take a simple walk outside and look around for objects of gratitude.

Be thankful for the wind, the grass, the trees, the sky, the concrete, the cars, the birds, the electricity in the power lines, the water, the safe drivers on your street, the shoes on your feet, etc. Exercise takes you out of your comfort(able) zone and places you in a different arena, where you can still be thankful. If you are a gym rat or already active, then add gratitude to your routine. Turn your workout session into a thankfulness session.

Gratitude Challenge Ten

The alphabet is one of the first things a young child learns in school. Letters and their order are important to move forward with reading and speaking any language. Like primary school, today’s challenge is basic. Simply write out things or people you are thankful for in order of the alphabet. Start with the letter “A” and end with the letter “Z.” This is much easier than it seems. Sounding your letters of gratitude is actually fun. Write, “I’m thankful for airplanes, baseball, cats, dreams, energy, flowers, grasshoppers, heights, ice, etc.”

Gratitude Challenge Eleven

Yesterday, you made an alphabetical list of things you are grateful for in your life. How did that exercise go for you? Was it a difficult task or was it easy to complete? Today’s challenge is to make a similar listing. Instead of writing about your life, you are to write about yourself. Make another list from A to Z regarding yourself. List things you are grateful for like, “age, beauty, charisma, determination, errors, fear, goodness, health, kindness, etc.” Being thankful is personal and it’s as easy as A, B, C.

Gratitude Challenge Twelve

Take it social today. Post several times on social media about something or someone that makes you thankful. Tag friends who mean something to you. Praise a family member who could use extra encouragement. Try to go all out with your posts. Do them often and make them fun.

Here are a few things you can be thankful for online...

- a challenge you have overcome
- traditions you enjoy
- the feel of your bed at night
- your favorite smell
- something someone gave you
- your best friend
- music you love
- your job
- education
- a book or movie you've enjoyed recently
- a place you've visited
- a core value you have

Going social with gratitude makes the day better and spreads your happiness over an entire network of friends. If you don't want to be so personal, find some quotes, memes, or pictures on this subject and post them. Be socially interactive with thanksgiving.

Gratitude Challenge Thirteen

Your dare is to be active with your gratitude. Use your wallet or pocketbook to prove your thankfulness. Today is the day to be extravagant. Look for an opportunity today to bless someone financially. Go all out. Give until it hurts.

- Don't tip just twenty percent; instead, tip one hundred percent of the cost of the meal.
- Send a large check to a loved one who is in need.
- Use money from savings to give it to a charity.
- Visit a local boutique and go overboard for a purchase for someone less fortunate.
- Pledge a donation to an organization.

Most importantly, when you donate from your finances you must release the gift with

thankfulness. If you are on a tight budget, give what you can. Be thankful you have the money to give. Feel the pain of letting go and be appreciative you can release the money to someone needy.

Gratitude Challenge Fourteen

Look in the mirror and say “thank you” to the reflection. If you have a struggle with self-worth, this activity might be difficult. Thanking your reflection is a good time to point out the nuances of your appearance, like those bushy eyebrows or sweet dimples. Thank your reflection for always being there for you. Thank your face for giving your image to the world. Then, do something strange. Say, “I love you” to the mirror. Do it. Say, “I love you and I accept you” to your reflection. We often glance in a mirror and complain about what we see. Or, we use the mirror to fix our hair into a new style. This time use the mirror to be grateful. Don’t change anything. Simply thank your reflection.

Gratitude Challenge Fifteen

We’ve seen how a meal is a wonderful time to be thankful. What about all those people in the world who don’t have food to be thankful for today? Your gratitude exercise is to personally feel their pain today. Skip a meal. Or two. Or three. Fast and be thankful. Let your growling stomach remind you of how blessed you are to have food easily accessible. Of course, if you are under medical care you need to consult a doctor before an all-day fast; however, you can skip something that will remind you to say, “thank you.” You are so blessed.

Gratitude Challenge Sixteen

It is easy to be thankful when you are connected with other people. We naturally say, “thank you” when love is shown through gift giving, physical closeness, acts of kindness, quality time, or words of affirmation. Today’s challenge is five-fold. You need to be thankful in five different ways if possible...

1. Send an email or text message with words of praise.
2. Look for a way to connect with a co-worker or neighbor by giving a small gift of appreciation.
3. Take time to reconnect with a friend or loved one.
4. When appropriate, a hug can heal wounds and express care. So, put your arms around someone special and let them feel your care.
5. Be kind all day and show the universe you are thankful

This five-fold challenge may be one of the hardest to implement in a day. Be focused to get it done. By the time you are finished, you will be glad you stepped out to connect in these ways.

Gratitude Challenge Seventeen

Write a thank you letter to yourself. Yes. Do it. This is an odd idea, but it will make a difference in your life. Thanking yourself in writing releases a swell of positivity. Thank yourself for the wonderful events you have been a part of in the past. Live in the NOW and think of what is near, oblivious, and wishful. Say “thank you” for the struggles you’ve faced. Thank yourself for the mistakes you’ve made. Thank yourself for all that is you. Be real with your comments. Point out that you have unlimited greatness inside. Tell yourself you are one of a kind. Express gratitude for the lessons you’ve learned and how you’ve grown as a person. Then, place the note in your sock drawer or somewhere around the house where you can read it in the future. Leave it and then forget it. Open it in the future and remind yourself of your appreciation awakening.

Gratitude Challenge Eighteen

Author David Platt suggests if you have running water, shelter over your head, clothes to wear, food to eat, and some means of transportation, then you are in the top fifteen percent of the world’s population for wealth. In fact, it is well accepted that more than one billion people live on less than one dollar per day. With these facts in mind, shouldn’t we all be more thankful? Today’s challenge is to feel thankfulness. Pause throughout your day and be thankful. Perhaps set a reminder to stop once an hour and feel thankfulness for even the little things. Live in the NOW. Remember how good you have it every time you go to spend a buck, eat hot food, get dressed, use water, or travel somewhere. Perspective is important when it comes to being thankful.

Gratitude Challenge Nineteen

This exercise ties with the first challenge, when you were supposed to start journaling your thankfulness. Your goal is to read the past eighteen journal entries. Be reminded of how blessed you are and take nothing for granted. Look over your journal and say “thank you” for all you have already recognized. The more thankful you are the more you will attract what you desire into your life. Let today be a day of reflection.

Gratitude Challenge Twenty

Happiness is a sure sign of true gratitude. When you are appreciative, it is easier to be happy. This challenge is easy. Find something that elicits true happiness and do it. Then, be grateful as you are happy. Relish the moment and enjoy the experience. If you like sports, go see a ball game. If you enjoy gardening, get out and revel in it. Do some self-care and be thankful you can be happy.

Gratitude Challenge Twenty-One

Your quest is to complete a thanksgiving scavenger hunt of photos. Use your phone or a camera to snap as many shots that elicit the emotion of gratitude. Take the picture of anything and anyone you appreciate. As you stop for the photography it will bring to mind gratefulness. A photo scavenger hunt will help you with your overall awareness. It creates a photographic diary of your gratitude. Make it a goal to collect at least twenty-one pictures today. You'll be glad you did.

Gratitude Challenge Twenty-Two

Share your gratitude with someone. Literally, give away something today that you would normally keep for yourself. Whether it's a chocolate bar or your personal time during a quick lunch break – share. When you share, you should share about gratitude. Talk about the lessons you have learned from this book. Discuss how these thankfulness exercises have made a difference in your life. Express your thanks for the people who have made impact. Inspire the other person to be thankful. As you encourage someone else, you will also be encouraged yourself.

Gratitude Challenge Twenty-Three

Be vocal with your feelings today. Let the emotions of thankfulness fill your mind and body as you say aloud the following statements.

Answer these prompts honestly:

- I am so happy and grateful for two things I taste...
- I am filled with joy that my prayer for _____ has been answered.
- I'm grateful and smiling for these two friends and two family members...
- I realize how blessed I am, so I am thankful for these three things in my home...
- I will say "it is good" about these five things about myself
- I have had an appreciation awakening, so I am thankful for these two events...

Gratitude Challenge Twenty-Four

Show appreciation by giving from your abundance. Go through your cabinets, drawers, pantry, or closet and find items you can donate. Look for food, household items, or clothing to give to others. Contribute these items to a local shelter or thrift store. Feel appreciation when you give the items away and maybe say a prayer of thanks when you drop them off. Be grateful to Source for having such abundance. Hope that others will be blessed with your giving.

Gratitude Challenge Twenty-Five

Oprah Winfrey said, “The single greatest thing you can do to change your life today would be to start being grateful for what you have right now.” That’s a powerful statement on appreciation. Today’s exercise is to find a quote like this about thanksgiving and use it. Write it out and post it somewhere to remind you to be thankful. Share it on social media with a post of what you are thankful for. Use those wise words to get people thinking. Flip through this book for some ideas or do an internet search for gratitude quotes.

Gratitude Challenge Twenty-Six

Make a dream board with your desires and goals. Include pictures of the places you want to visit, the sights you want to see, and the people you’d like to meet if money wasn’t an issue. This is better than a bucket list because it is a visual for you to glance at regularly. In the middle of the dream board, write the words, “I’m so happy and grateful now that...” Then, place your pictures around this important phrase. You will be thanking in advance and pretty soon you will be acting as if these things have already occurred. The results will happen naturally. Your dream board will soon become a reality board.

Gratitude Challenge Twenty-Seven

Today’s challenge will get you in touch with your inner child, the young kid still living within. Write a letter to your former self.

- Thank yourself for making the decisions and choices which have gotten you to this place in life.
- Celebrate the good times and stretch yourself to be thankful for the hard things that have happened.
- Give your younger self one piece of advice you wish you would have known way back when.
- Express appreciation for how the younger you protected the older you as well.
- Don’t stress over what to write – enjoy the experiment of writing to your younger self and let the thoughts flow.

Start with, “Dear Younger Me, thank you for...” and then don’t lift the pen from the paper until you are finished.

Gratitude Challenge Twenty-Eight

See what you've been missing. Take time to go unplugged. Take the battery out of your cell phone and cut off the wi-fi. Unplug your television. Take off the smartwatch. Literally, disconnect from everything technologically-based for a while and enjoy life. Be mindful of life in the now. Sit with your thoughts. Look around and consider what you don't see because you are often glued to a screen. Notice the sights and sounds of your house when it's not so noisy. The Old Testament says, "Be still and know that I am God." Connecting with Source is often as easy as disconnecting with everything and everyone else. If you find benefit from this exercise, consider making it a part of your normal week. You'll be amazed at the difference being still brings.

Gratitude Challenge Twenty-Nine

How much is your life worth? If you were to list the top ten most valuable belongings you own, how much would they total? Now, think upon your top ten memories. How much are they worth to you? Or, consider your top ten relationships. Are they priceless? Your body itself is full of worth, as your healthy organs and strong body parts are beyond compare. Your value is full of memories, relationships, belongings, and so much more. You are literally worth millions. Be thankful for what makes you you. Do this today each time you see a mirror. When you glance in the rear view of your vehicle or the mirror in your bathroom, stop and be grateful for you. You are one of a kind amazing and special.

Gratitude Challenge Thirty

Most of us enjoy three meals a day, if you count the granola bar you scarfed down while rushing out the house in the morning as one. Why not make your meals into a specific time for thankfulness?

For millennia, people have said "grace" or given a blessing before enjoying their food. Today's challenge is to go one step farther. Yes, it's nice to say a blessing before dinner. How about sharing how blessed you are during the meal? Have a time of thanks with a friend. Or, do something special for your family members. While eating, each person could share something or talk about someone they are grateful for and why. Say nice things about each person at the table. Begin and end with a quick prayer or moment of thankful silence. If you don't have a family you can eat with, no problem. Simply find someone and make the most of this unique opportunity. Turn chow time into a time of saying thanks. Meals are wonderful opportunities to stop and be grateful.

Gratitude Challenge Thirty-One

Well, you've made it through a month of challenges. Whether you feel differently or not, you can trust the science that your life is better, thanks to thanksgiving. For today's final exercise, your challenge is to repeat this entire series. Start over today on day one. Revisit your journal and all the activities. Keep this process going and you will continue to experience the difference an appreciation awakening makes. Today isn't day thirty-one, it's actually day one.

So, return to your journal and make it a special writing. Live in the NOW – the NEAR, the OBLIVIOUS, and the WISHFUL with your writing and this challenge.



By Daniel Rendelman

31-Day Gratitude Challenge