



# Gratitude

Dr. Amy Backos



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This book and workshop are offered as an educational tool to inspire you to reflect, create, grow and change. The class is not therapy and participating does not constitute a therapeutic relationship. The assignments are offered as inspiration to increase authenticity in your relationship with yourself, and achieve your value-based goals.  
Enjoy the process!

Want more? Email me!  
Have any questions/concerns? Email me!  
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Love the class? Tell a friend!!

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2022

# WELCOME

Ready for the ultimate change in perspective? The time has come for you to prioritize gratitude as a lens from which you view each day.

Welcome to this amazing community of people who are building authenticity and making lasting changes in their lives using creativity and thoughtful engagement.

You will be learning tools to relax your mind, settle your body and rejuvenate your senses. If you are willing to set aside 20 minutes a day, you will be amazed at what you will have accomplished at the end of the month. You will gratitude and create new ways to interact with yourself and the people around you..

The Gratitude Workshop utilizes modern, creative and evidence-based strategies from psychology and creativity science to help you renew your zest for life. These tools allow you relate to yourself in positive ways and move you towards your values and dreams with excitement.

Enjoy the process of self-discovery with curiosity, acceptance, and joy!



Amy Backos, PhD, ATR-BC



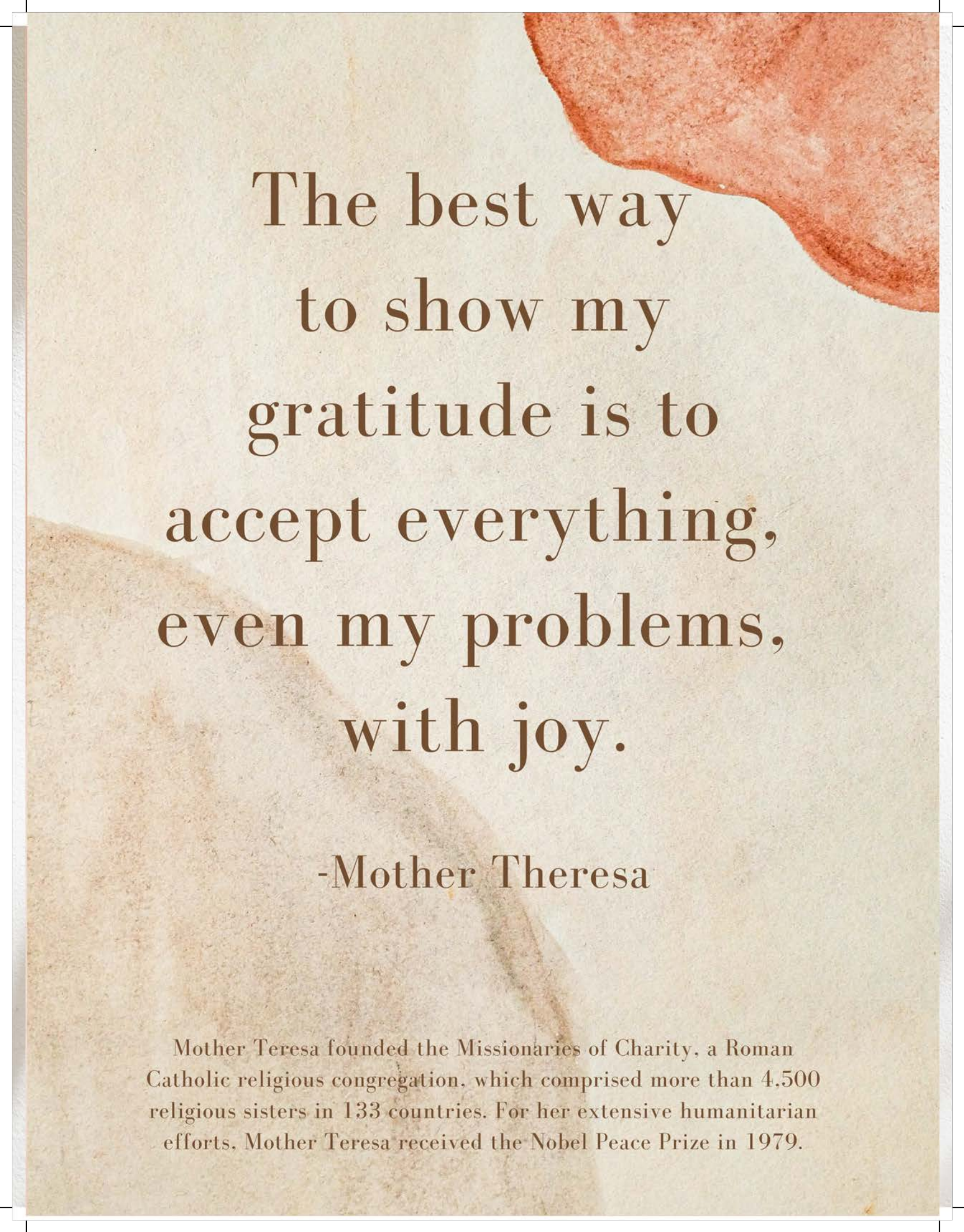


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The best way  
to show my  
gratitude is to  
accept everything,  
even my problems,  
with joy.

-Mother Theresa

Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious congregation, which comprised more than 4,500 religious sisters in 133 countries. For her extensive humanitarian efforts, Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.





# BEGINNING

Joy is the simplest form of  
gratitude.

- Karl Barth

[WWW.ARTTHERAPYCENTERSF.COM](http://WWW.ARTTHERAPYCENTERSF.COM)



# Before class starts

1

## Plan your mode of writing

Print this workbook and find a lovely binder to keep it all together, or have it bound at an office store. If you prefer to skip printing, get a blank journal for the writing and art exercises.

2

## Schedule the Class

Use your calendar or the planner at the end of this book to mark the time of live classes, or the time you will watch the recordings the next day.

3

## Schedule Inspired Actions

Schedule time for inspired action! Use your calendar to invest 20 minutes each day on yourself for the next month. For maximum impact, schedule 7 days a week.

4

## Find an Accountability Partner

Tell someone about your commitment to the class who can help you be accountable to your daily 20 minute commitment.

5

## Get ready to create!

Gather some tools for drawing - crayons, colored pencils, markers, or pens, etc. It is unnecessary for you to have anything fancy - just pick ones you like!



# Weekly Outline

1

## **Week 1: Look for Perspective**

Orientation and taking perspective on your life.

**Inspired action** (complete before class 2)

- Review pages 1-18.
- Complete week 1 writing and art.

2

## **Week 2: Find Gratitude**

Where are you most invested in your life? What are you wanting? What do you already have?

**Inspired action** (complete before class 3)

- Complete week 2 writing and art.

3

## **Week 3: Create a Grateful Heart**

Visualizing the feeling of gratitude and thinking the thoughts to support your grateful heart.

**Inspired action** (complete before class 4)

- Complete week 3 writing and art.

4

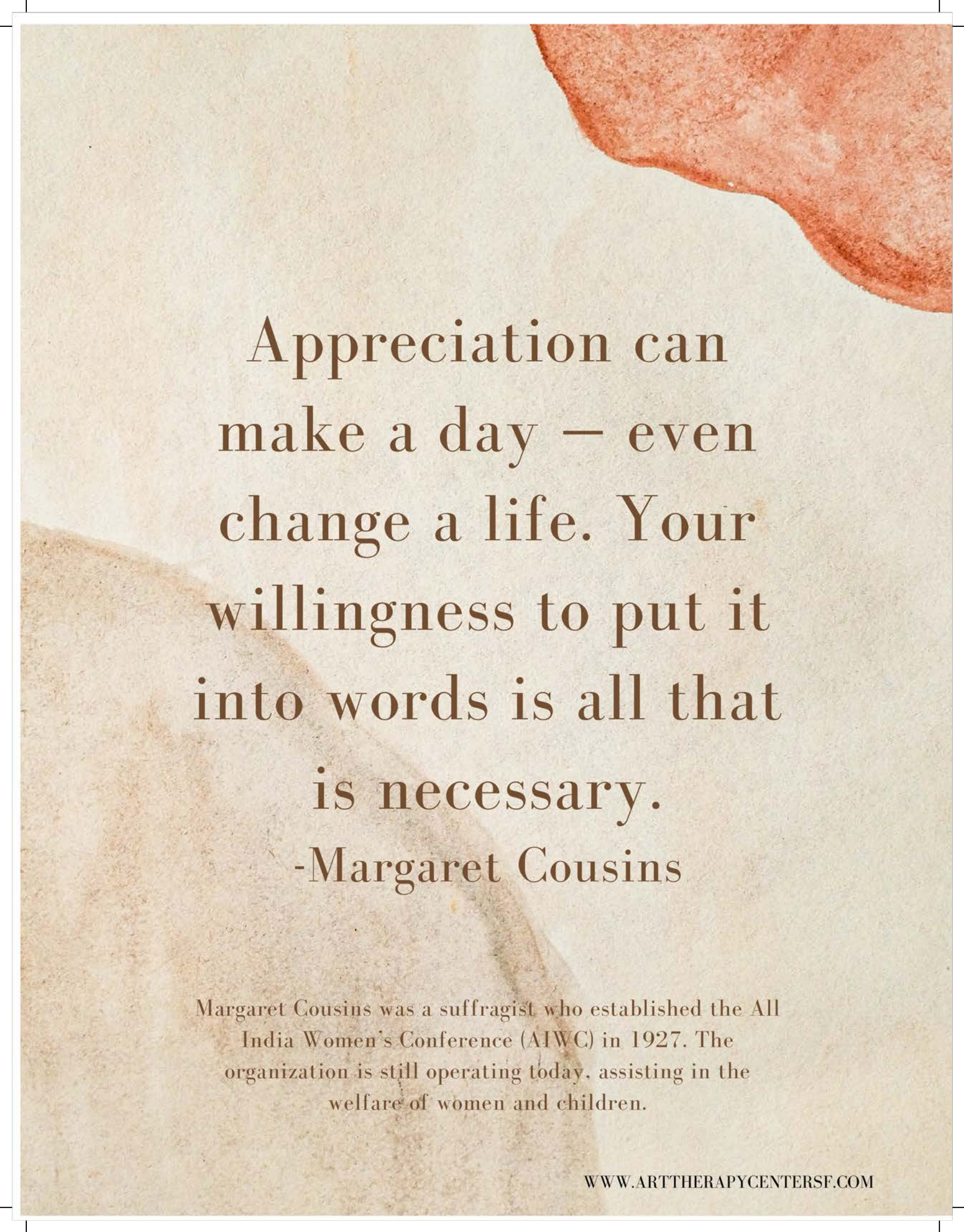
## **Week 4: Practice Gratitude**

Setting your intention and making committed action to practice gratitude.

**Inspired action** (complete after class 4)

- Create your plan for further action.





Appreciation can  
make a day — even  
change a life. Your  
willingness to put it  
into words is all that  
is necessary.

-Margaret Cousins

Margaret Cousins was a suffragist who established the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) in 1927. The organization is still operating today, assisting in the welfare of women and children.



# How to Keep a Commitment

If you have had difficulty with change in the past, don't worry! This time you will succeed using the best psychology strategies! You will learn and use all of these tricks for success this month.

If you have taken a class with me before, you know some of these tips. However, make sure you are calibrated to success by checking to make sure you are still using these strategies.

- **Write it down!** Research shows when you write down your goal, you are 70% likely to succeed! That's right! Simply writing down your goals gives you 70% of what you need for success. Using this workbook and your calendar will give you the leverage you need for consistency and change!
- **Discipline before motivation!** We often wait until we "feel" inspired to take action. Motivation is a feeling and discipline is an action. Take action through a consistent schedule and you will soon feel the motivation to continue.
- **Slow and Steady!** Making small daily progress is more likely to lead to big success! Research shows people making small incremental movement towards goals ultimately surpass people attempting to tackle multiple goals at once or trying to do too much.
- **Changing Habits!** Research shows pairing a new habit with an old one is the recipe for success. Pair your 20 minute a day for this class with another well established habit. For example, brushing your teeth in the morning, eating your breakfast or lunch, washing your face at night. Schedule 20 minutes before or after one of these times or pick another regular habit and schedule 20 minutes around that.



# More about Commitments

- **Pleasure!** There are decades of research demonstrating you can increase a new behavior with a reward! All you have to do is pair a new behavior with something pleasurable. Add something you enjoy to your 20 minutes and you are significantly more likely to succeed! For example, you can fix a cup of hot chocolate or tea to drink while you write and make art (I encourage you to choose a non-alcoholic beverage). Deciding you don't need a reward, is the opposite of self-compassion! Schedule your simple pleasures!
- **Location! Location! Location!** Research demonstrates if you practice in the same location, your mind will be ready for learn just by going to that location! Pick a comfortable spot and work there each day.
- **1% more!** All you need for this workshop is 20 minutes a day. This is about 1% of your day! You have already made an important commitment to complete this workshop...all it requires for success is 1% of your day for the next month.
- **Be decisive!** Make your commitment and stick to it! Keep rest and rejuvenation as your priority for one month. Practicing indecision reinforces that habit, prevents us from making progress, and increases stress. Stick to your commitment!
- **A word of caution!** Reading and knowing these strategies is not enough for success. Actual practice is required! Avoid letting your mind fool you into thinking you can skip these steps. The next page is where you make your commitment. Tempted to skip this step? Go back and reread the research above about success.

# Your Personal Commitment

I \_\_\_\_\_  
(Your name)

*commit to 20 minutes each day this month*

*&*

*I will focus on being grateful.*

*I will complete my 20 minutes a day at this time:*

\_\_\_\_\_

*I will complete my 20 minutes a day in this location:*

\_\_\_\_\_

*I will complete my 20 minutes a day with this additional pleasure:*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Your signature* \_\_\_\_\_ *date*



# Commitments

## **Grateful Actions**

We make time for gratitude. We create an internal environment of gratitude and share with others. Each week we create a healthy environment by attending to our mental and physical health, nutrition, rest, friendships, education, and fun.

## **Commitment**

We commit to a life-long process of learning, cultivating gratitude, and learning self-compassion. We seek new actions to show kindness to ourself and others. We look for and manifest joy in each day.

## **Self Compassion**

We speak kindly to ourselves. We patiently redirect ourselves to speak with love and compassion. We are compassionate about our pace as we change, rest, work, and reflect.

## **Kind Thoughts**

We learn to relate to our thoughts in new ways. We see thoughts for what they are - just thoughts. In this way, we free up time and psychological energy for things we want to bring into our lives.

## **Authentic Presence**

We show up for ourselves and others with self compassion and love. Our kindness and joyful example are gifts to others in our family and community. We manifest new opportunities to elevate ourselves and others.

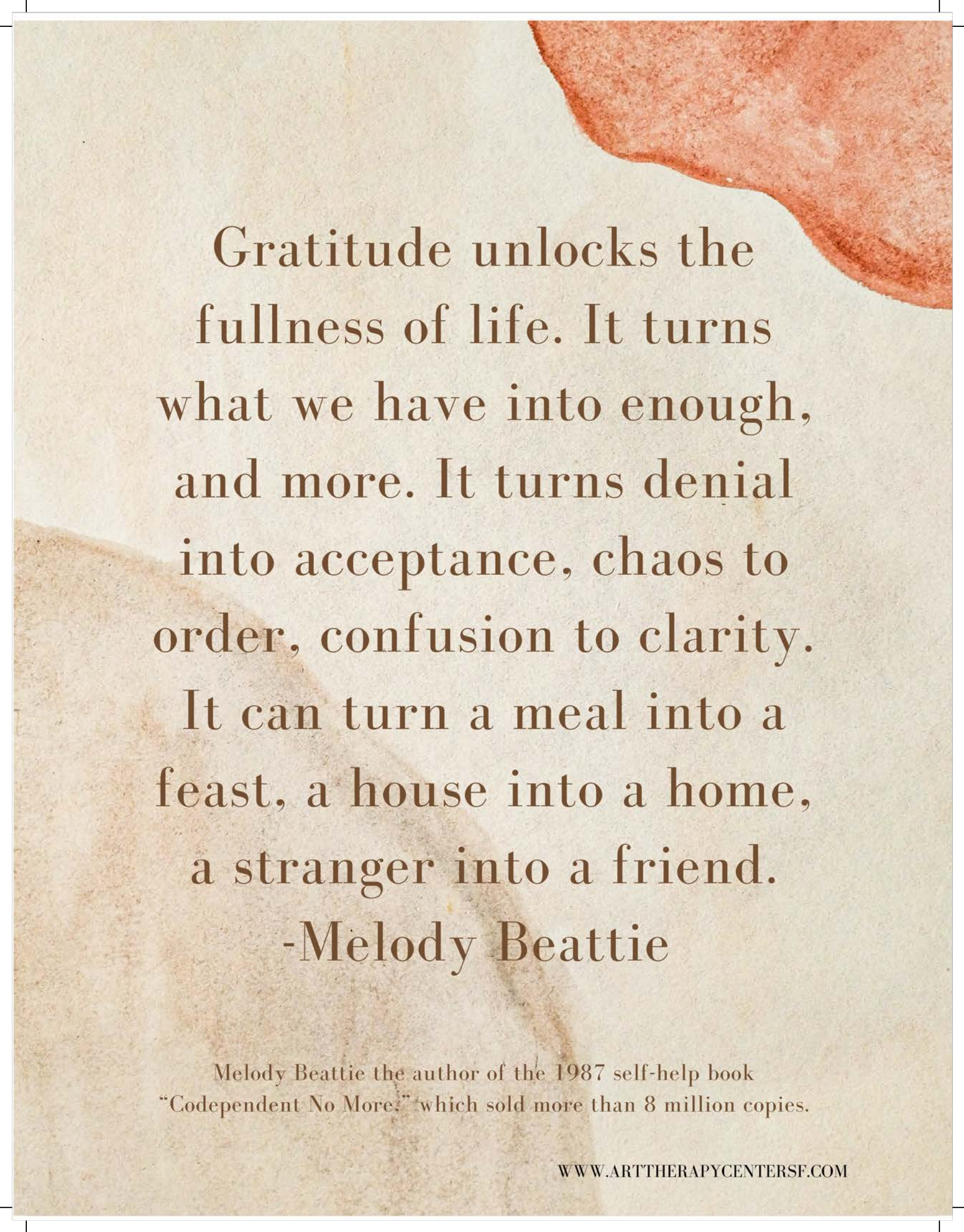




# Instructions

We are all more blind  
to what we have than  
to what we have not.  
-Audre Lorde





Gratitude unlocks the  
fullness of life. It turns  
what we have into enough,  
and more. It turns denial  
into acceptance, chaos to  
order, confusion to clarity.  
It can turn a meal into a  
feast, a house into a home,  
a stranger into a friend.

-Melody Beattie

Melody Beattie the author of the 1987 self-help book  
“Codependent No More,” which sold more than 8 million copies.



# Committed Actions

Now that you have identified to the time and place, the additional pleasure, and made your commitment, it is time to get started!

You have just made a life changing commitment to yourself to prioritize 1% of your day to rest, reset and rejuvenate.

Each week, you will have a lesson and then work on that topic for the whole week. You have journaling and art prompts to complete each week and 20 minutes a day is plenty of time. Once you complete the worksheets and art each week, you can use any remaining 20 minutes as you wish - writing and making art, reading, silent contemplation, and written reflection about how to put your manifestation into action.

Here is a sample schedule you can use each day - use your timer for maximum focus.

1 minute breath and relax, get comfortable, smile

18 minutes write / make art

1 minute breath and relax, stretch, smile

It is important that you stick to your 20 minute schedule each day! However, no need to try and catch up if you miss a day - just return to 20 minutes a day. Whatever you do to enhance your self-compassion, kindness, and joy will be great!



# Instructions - Write

It is essential for you to reflect on your thoughts and feelings about yourself. Why is this important? As you grow in your relationship with yourself, you begin to know what you like and what brings you joy. This certainly increases your happiness and gives you direction for your goals and purpose. A compassionate attitude towards yourself uplifts your spirit, makes room for joy, and allows you to move forward with what you want to manifest. Each week of the "Manifesting Change" workshop includes practice for 20 minutes each day where you will write and make art.

## **Writing helps you know yourself.**

Writing offers an efficient way to explore your thoughts - we write to "know" ourselves and to learn more about our thoughts and feelings. We tend to think the same thoughts every day for years. The writing will allow you to unpack your thoughts and decide if you want to keep or change your thoughts.

Negative and critical thoughts towards yourself makes everything more difficult, limits happiness and joy, and likely stops you from manifesting your glorious vision. Observe these thoughts without judgement and work on your thoughts to be more positive. We pick up negative self talk from childhood, society, and how we interpret uncomfortable experiences. Because our brains tend to naturally focus on the negative, we engage in negative thoughts a lot! You may find you feel a little sad, angry or surprised at the negative thoughts you discover this month. When uncomfortable thoughts and feelings arise, you have the chance to practice kind thoughts with yourself.

Try telling yourself something gentle like this:

**Hello old thought. I see you are here again. I am learning to relate differently to you. I am not trying to get rid of you. I am learning to respond with curiosity and ease when you are here with me.**

You might want to write that sentence (or create your own) on a note card to hang by your bed, on your mirror, or in your car. Text it to yourself or make it your screen saver.

# Instructions - Art

Art Therapy is a creative process to understand ourselves, express feelings, clarify thoughts, promote flow, and feel great. In fact, creative expression is a human need!

The use of Art Therapy dates back to the early 1900's. Furthermore, art for storytelling, expression, and healing is as old as human history!

The art process helps you solidify feelings and allows your brain to deeply explore why some thoughts seem to have so much power and stop us from manifesting what we want. The creative process incorporates more parts of your brain than writing can do alone. You can use what you learn in this class about your creative process anytime you want to understand your feelings or manifest a different result.

**Art allows us to know our preverbal self.**

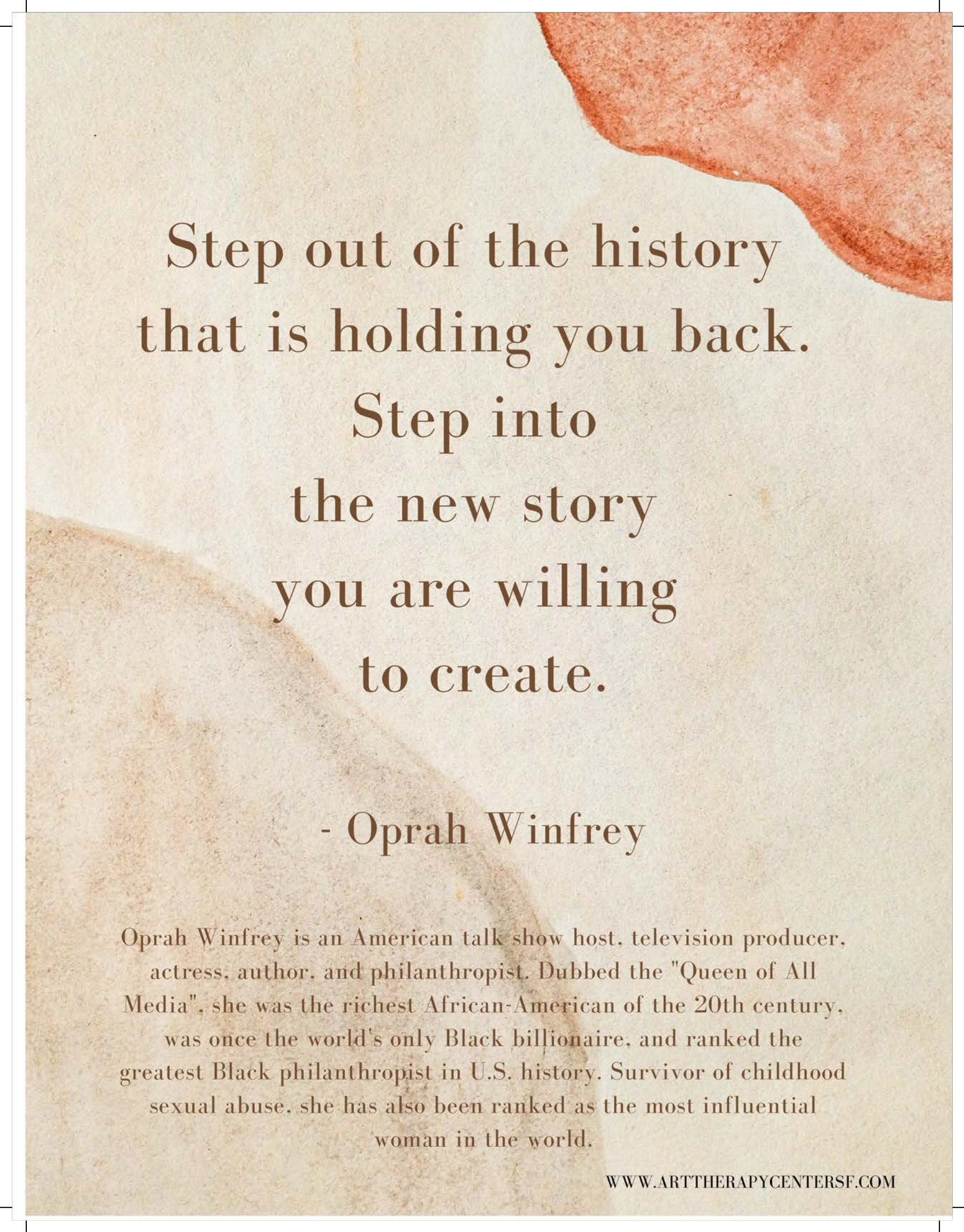
You can spend as much or as little time on the art as you wish - however, it is important to engage in a creative expression each week. Avoid thinking too long about what to create and avoid judgment. Be spontaneous and have fun!

When you are done with each drawing, take a moment to reflect (without judgement) on the PROCESS of creating. It's important to suspend judgement about what your art looks like. Whatever you create will be great for understanding yourself and manifesting self compassion! If you are tempted to skip the art, please reconsider so you get the most impact from this workshop.

Remember to schedule 20 minutes each day to complete these inspired actions. You are committed to one month of manifesting change. Give yourself the gift of completing your commitment each day to get the most value from this class!

If you want to work with an Art Therapist, reach out to the Art Therapy Center of San Francisco. Always look for a Registered and Board Certified Art Therapist (ATR-BC). Registered and board certified art therapists are both trained artists and counseling professionals who can help you express yourself to the fullest using visual art and creative thinking.





Step out of the history  
that is holding you back.  
Step into  
the new story  
you are willing  
to create.

- Oprah Winfrey

Oprah Winfrey is an American talk show host, television producer, actress, author, and philanthropist. Dubbed the "Queen of All Media", she was the richest African-American of the 20th century, was once the world's only Black billionaire, and ranked the greatest Black philanthropist in U.S. history. Survivor of childhood sexual abuse, she has also been ranked as the most influential woman in the world.



# Summary

Get ready to change your perspective with gratitude! Start small, only 20 minutes a day. Be easy on yourself if you discover uncomfortable feelings, or have thoughts with a lot of strong emotion. This is normal when working on gratitude for what we have learned from the difficulties in our life. Avoid judging yourself. Acknowledge the thought and call it by its name - an unkind thought, an unhelpful thought, or an old negative story. Even if you have piles of evidence that a thought might be true, you are learning to relate to thoughts differently. They are only thoughts and you are not your thoughts. You are only aware of them.

Research, and our own experience, shows when we push away or distract ourselves from unwanted thoughts and memories, they will definitely come back, and even feel worse the next time. Take a deep breath, notice the thoughts and feel the feelings. Then move on. No need to mull it over or ask why you keep having the thought. Just "be" with it for a moment and then move forward. Thoughts lead to feelings and research demonstrates a feeling will last about 90 seconds if we avoid pushing them away or clinging to them. If you are really stuck on a memory, be compassionate with yourself, take time to write about how you can take care of yourself, and consider working with an art therapist.

Remember, research confirms that making a small commitment and sticking to it leads to success, while taking on too much leads to burn out, frustration in lack of progress and ultimately giving up. You can succeed here by being consistent with just 20 minutes a day. Avoid trying to complete all the tasks in a day or two. Focus on small, daily actions.

## TO SUCCEED

- Work only 20 minutes a day.
- Practice self-compassion - gently redirect yourself when you notice unkind thoughts or uncomfortable feelings.
- Work everyday at the same time and place.
- Pair your time with another habit (eg., right after your brush your teeth).
- Pair your time with a simple pleasure (hot tea, flowers, a chocolate, etc.).
- If you skip a day, get right back on track with 20 minutes a day. Do not work 40 minutes to try and "make up" for a missed day. You are right on time and there is no hurry. Avoid judgement. Just move forward.

**20 minutes a day can change your life!**





# Week 1 Perspective

Gratitude is riches.  
Complaint is poverty.

-Doris Day



# Perspective

Here are the areas you will cover in week 1.

Spend 20 minutes a day, take your time, and savor them over the week.

1

## Perspective

Reflect on what you are hoping to get out of this workshop. You know best where you want to change your perspective and where gratitude can help.

2

What do you not want that you don't have?

What are you appreciative of that you no longer have in your life? What do you appreciate that you never had?

3

What do you have that you do want?

It's time to look at what you have right now that you like and want. What do you appreciate in your life right now? What would you like to keep in your life?

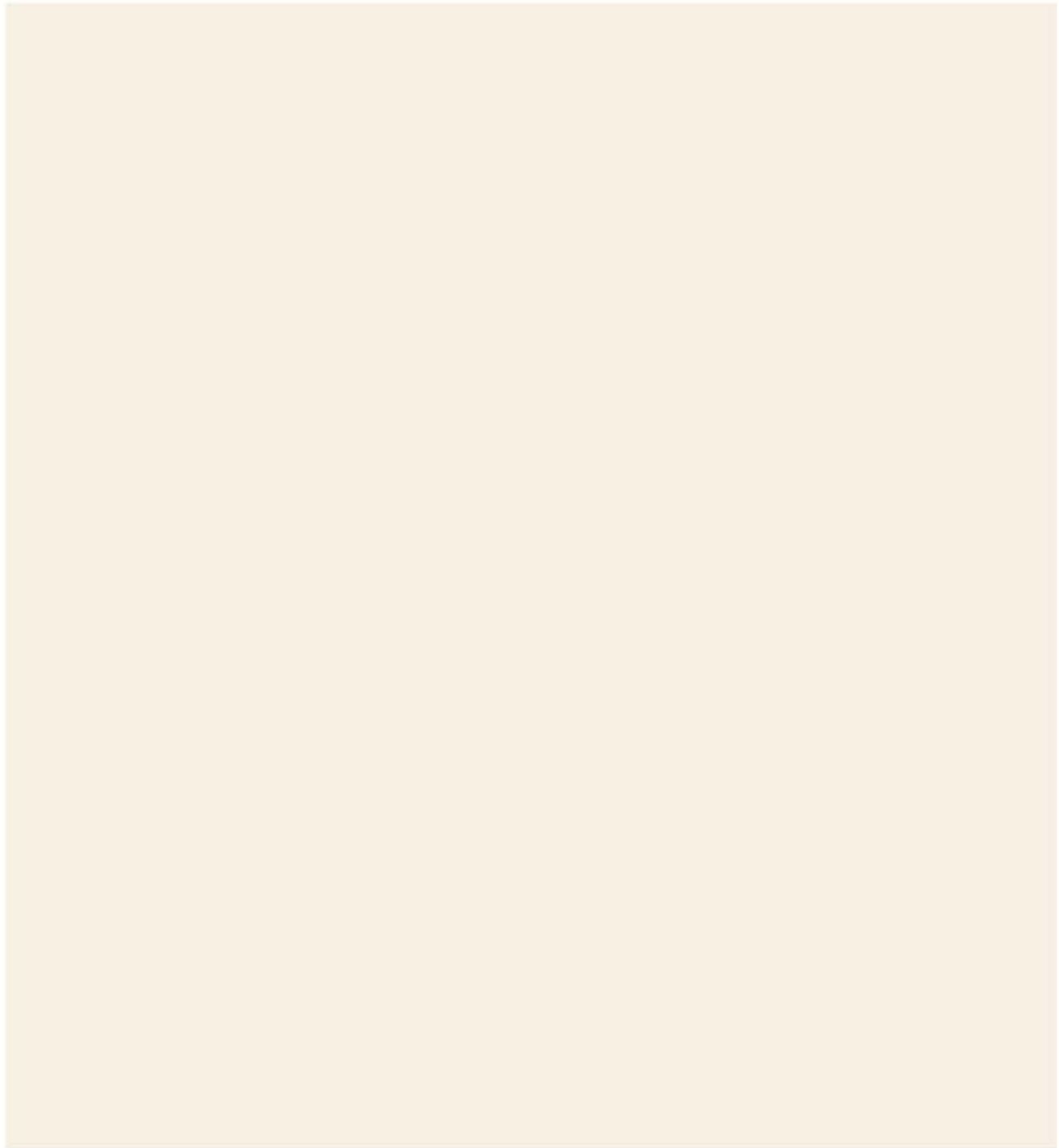
4

## Creative Expression and Reflection

Creativity hones in on emotions and helps you connect to your feelings, thoughts and wishes for relaxation. Enjoy this process and see what emerges for you. Reflect on the week and note what you have learned.

# INTENTIONS

What are you hoping to get out of this class? What are your goals for gratitude? Why did you sign up for a class called Gratitude? What areas of life are you celebrating? What areas of life are you challenged by these days? What do you imagine gratitude could do for you in both of these areas?





# What do you not want that you don't have?

This is a thoughtful question that requires you to look for things which are absent in your life. Reflect on what problems you see in the world or had in your past. Consider situations or experiences that you don't have and you are glad for it. You might consider some of the following areas: health, human rights, family, safety, shelter, food, resources, etc. Identify problems you either no longer have, or never had. Write nine of them below. For example: "I don't have a chronic health problem " or "I don't have a problem with safe housing or physical safety."

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

# What do you have that you do want?

This exercise will help you identify areas of your life that are valuable to you. Look at your previous list about things you don't want. Flip the list to around to generate a list of what you do value and appreciate. For example: "I don't have a chronic health condition" now becomes, "I have good health and strong bones." A previous answer of "I don't have a problem with safe housing or physical safety" becomes "I have a safe home and am physically safe." Write nine qualities or situations you do have that you appreciate.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

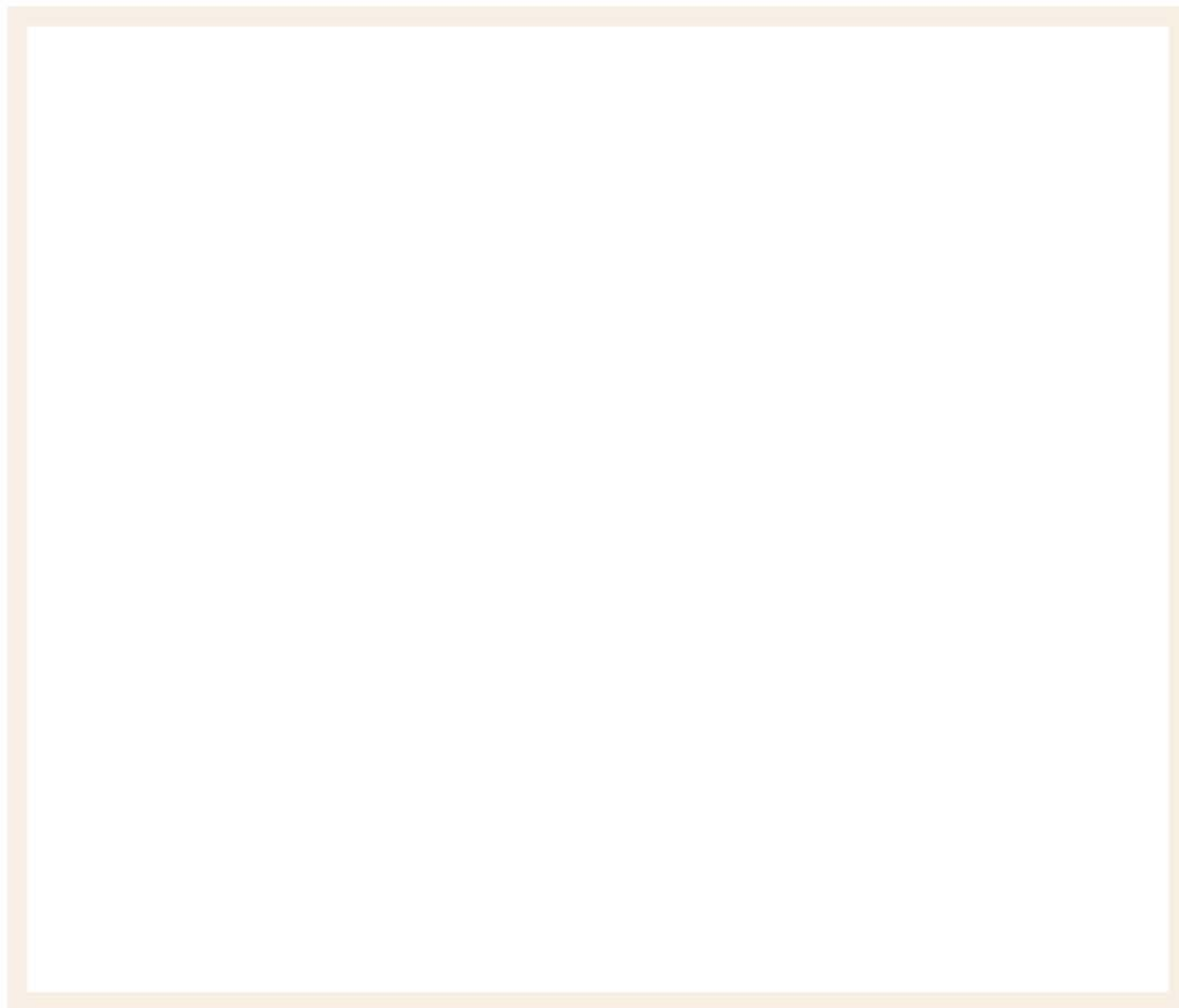
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9



# Visual Expression

Take a few moments to show what gratitude looks like using lines, shapes and colors. It could range from just one line to a fully fleshed-out, abstract or representational picture. Avoid thinking too long about it and just be spontaneous. This will help you connect to your thoughts to your feelings. Enjoy the process of creating and don't worry about the finished product. You can work in the space below or on separate paper. Take as much time as you need. However you do it will be great!



Title:

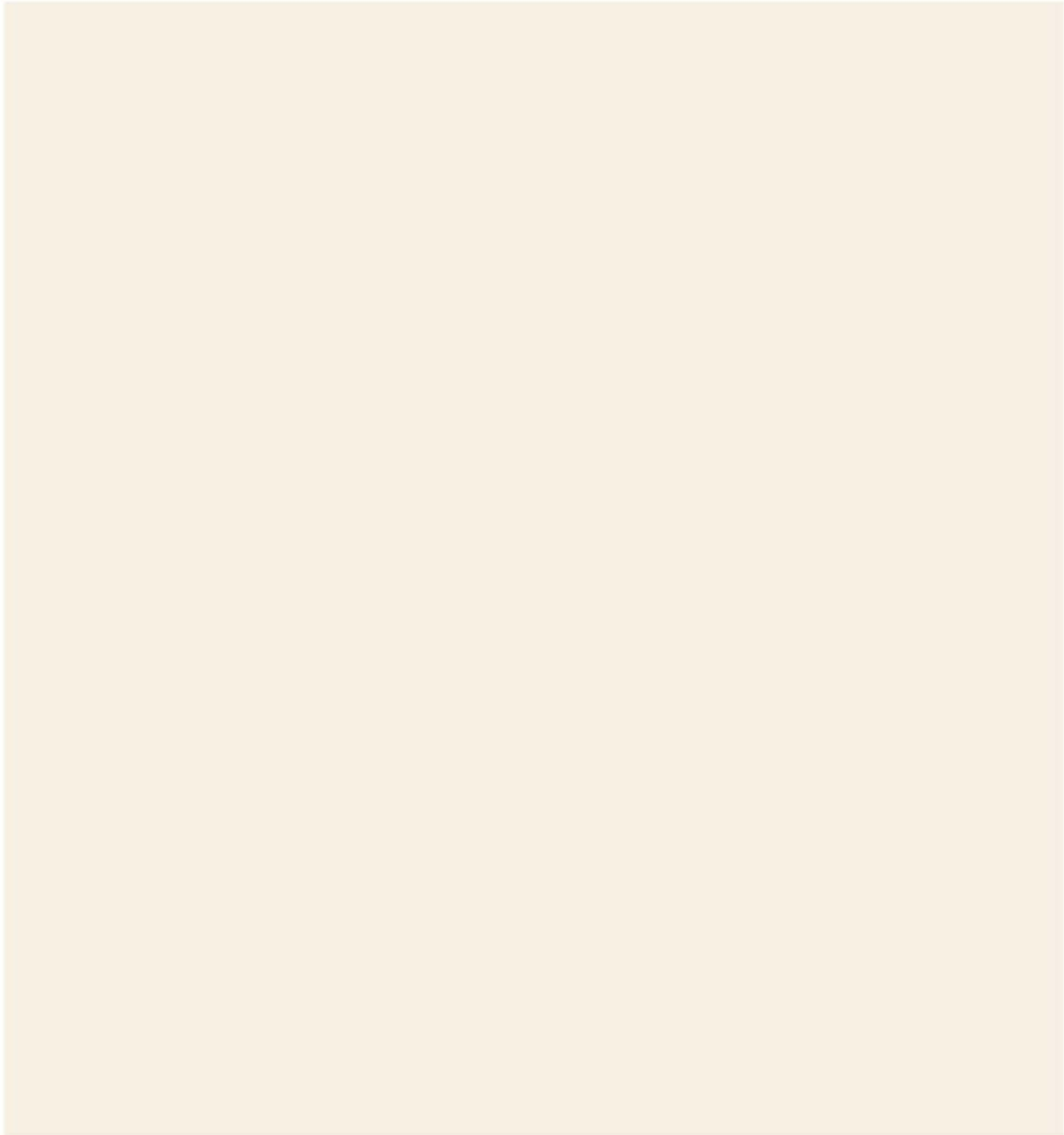
Three words or phrases to describe your art.

- 
- 
- 

How do you feel?

# REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learned about gratitude this week. Notice your reaction to generating a list of things you don't want that you don't have. What was that exercise like for you? What did you learn? What did you learn from making the second list of what you do want? Appreciate your strengths and celebrate your insights this week. Avoid judging yourself for what you did or did not do this week. How did you feel paying such close attention to your life and what you have created? How did you feel practicing new ways of thinking about gratitude?









# Week 2

# Find Gratitude

Cherish forever what makes  
you unique, 'cuz you're really  
a yawn if it goes.  
-Bette Midler



# Find Gratitude

Here are the areas you will cover this week.  
Spend 20 minutes a day, take your time, and savor them over the week.

1

## A Note of Gratitude

What happens when you write an old fashioned letter and pop it in the mail to tell someone you appreciate them? (Hint: it is about you and not the person getting the card.)

2

## Cultivating a Moment of Gratitude

Gratitude takes willingness, time and practice. You can begin to shift into more relaxed states by using the power of your voice to build gratitude.

3

## The Outside-In of Gratitude

Gratitude is enhanced by focusing on the outside factors which helped contribute to what you have.

4

## Creative Expression and Reflection

Creativity hones in on emotions and helps you unpack feelings about gratitude. Enjoy this process and see what emerges for you. Reflect on the week and note what you have learned.

# Who deserves a Proper Thank You?

Before you go any further, rank your current level of happiness on a scale of 0 - 10.

(0 = completely miserable, 5 = half happy, half unhappy, 10 = completely happy)

Write your answer here \_\_\_\_.

Be completely honest about how you feel right now (not how you want or wish to feel).

Who in your life deserves your gratitude? Perhaps it is someone who never got a proper thank you for a job well done. Perhaps it is a loved one whose care and kindness deserves recognition and appreciation. Maybe it is someone who loves you, even on your worst days. Perhaps it is your neighbor, coworker, your child's teacher, a friend, or relative.

1. Make a list of people who deserve a proper thank you.
2. Pick one person and write them a letter or card. Avoid text or email for this exercise.
3. Hand deliver or mail your letter to the person who deserves to be thanked.
4. Using the same scale as above, rate your current level of happiness after you wrote and sent your letter.

Write your answer here \_\_\_\_.

Avoid expecting anything in return - the happiness comes from sending the letter. This is about increasing your gratitude and sharing it with others. A response is unnecessary. If you do get a happy reply or reaction - savor it!

Like how that felt? Send a letter or card to all the people on your list. Research says this exercise increases happiness!



# Cultivating a Moment of Gratitude

Breathing is the quickest and easiest way to bring about a calm body and a feeling of gratitude. Read the paragraph below, (inspired from meditations by Thich That Hanh). Record yourself reading it on your phone. Go slow and leave pauses - 6 seconds for the inhale and 8 seconds for the exhale. Then get comfortable, close your eyes or soften your gaze and play it back to yourself. Listen to the recording at least once a day for the rest of the month. You could play it when you wake up each morning and when you lay down to go to sleep.

If you are inspired, you might want to share it with a loved one. Avoid listening while driving. Once you have practiced it for the month you will be able to do it anytime you need without having to listen. Your own voice is powerful and listening to it will have a tremendous positive impact on your ability to call up gratitude in even the most stressful of situations.

Breathing in, I know that I am breathing in.

Breathing out, I know that I am breathing out.

Breathe in 1. Breathe out 1.

Breathe in 2. Breathe out 2.

Breathe in 3. Breathe out 3.

Breathe in 4. Breathe out 4.

Breathe in 5. Breathe out 5.

Breathe in 6. Breathe out 6.

Breathe in 7. Breathe out 7.

Breathe in 8. Breathe out 8.

Breathe in 9. Breathe out 9.

Breathe in 10. Breathe out 10.

I am grateful for all that I have.

I am thankful for all the people who support me.

I am appreciative of all that is.

Breathing in, I know I am breathing in.

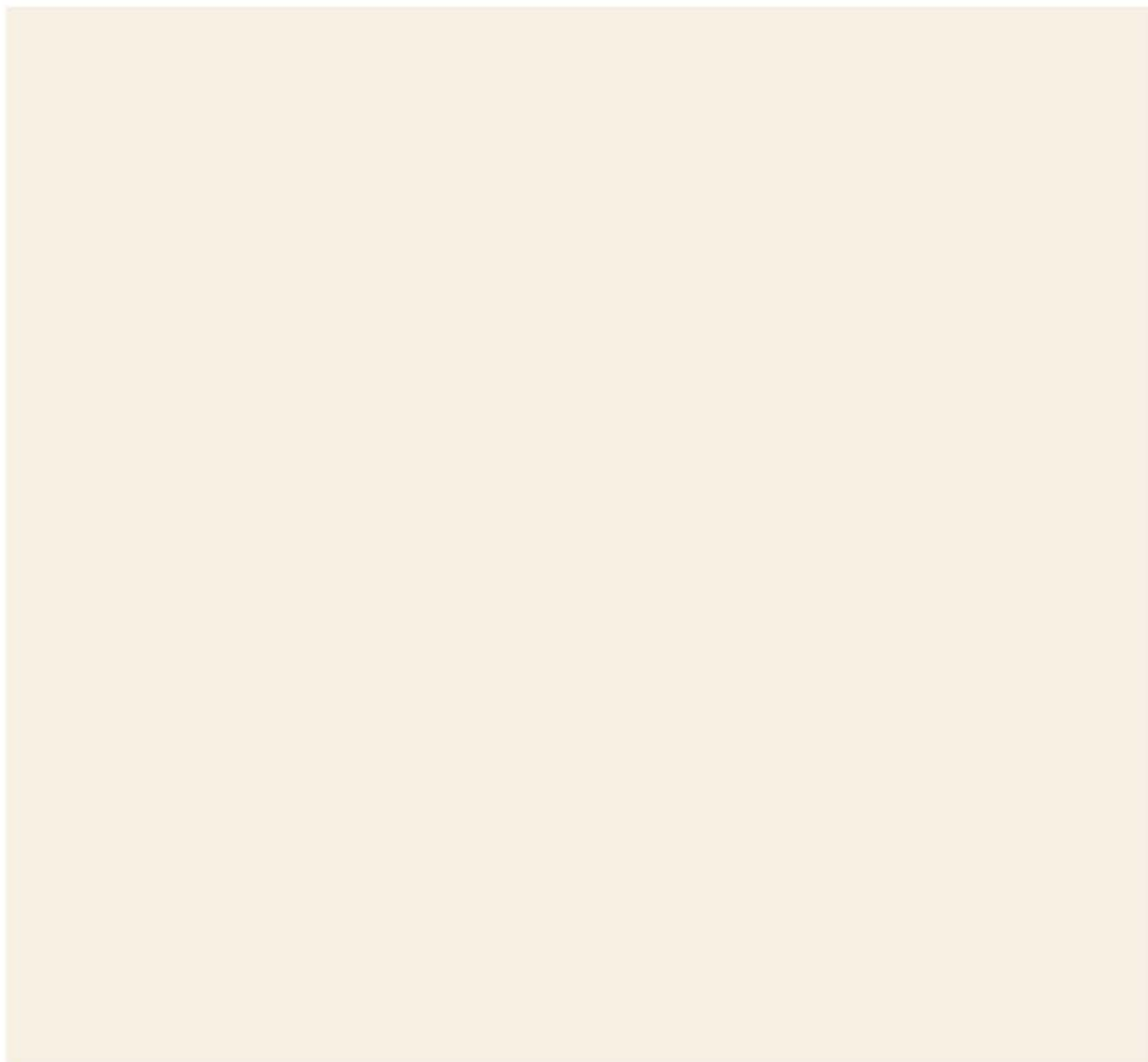
Breathing out, I know that I am breathing out.

# The Outside-In of Gratitude

Gratitude can be enhanced in this fun two part exercise. First you will acknowledge something is good. Second, you will recognize the parts outside of you that played a part.

1. Focus on something that is good in your life (past or present) and describe it in words.
2. Make a list of all people, places, and things which contributed to it.

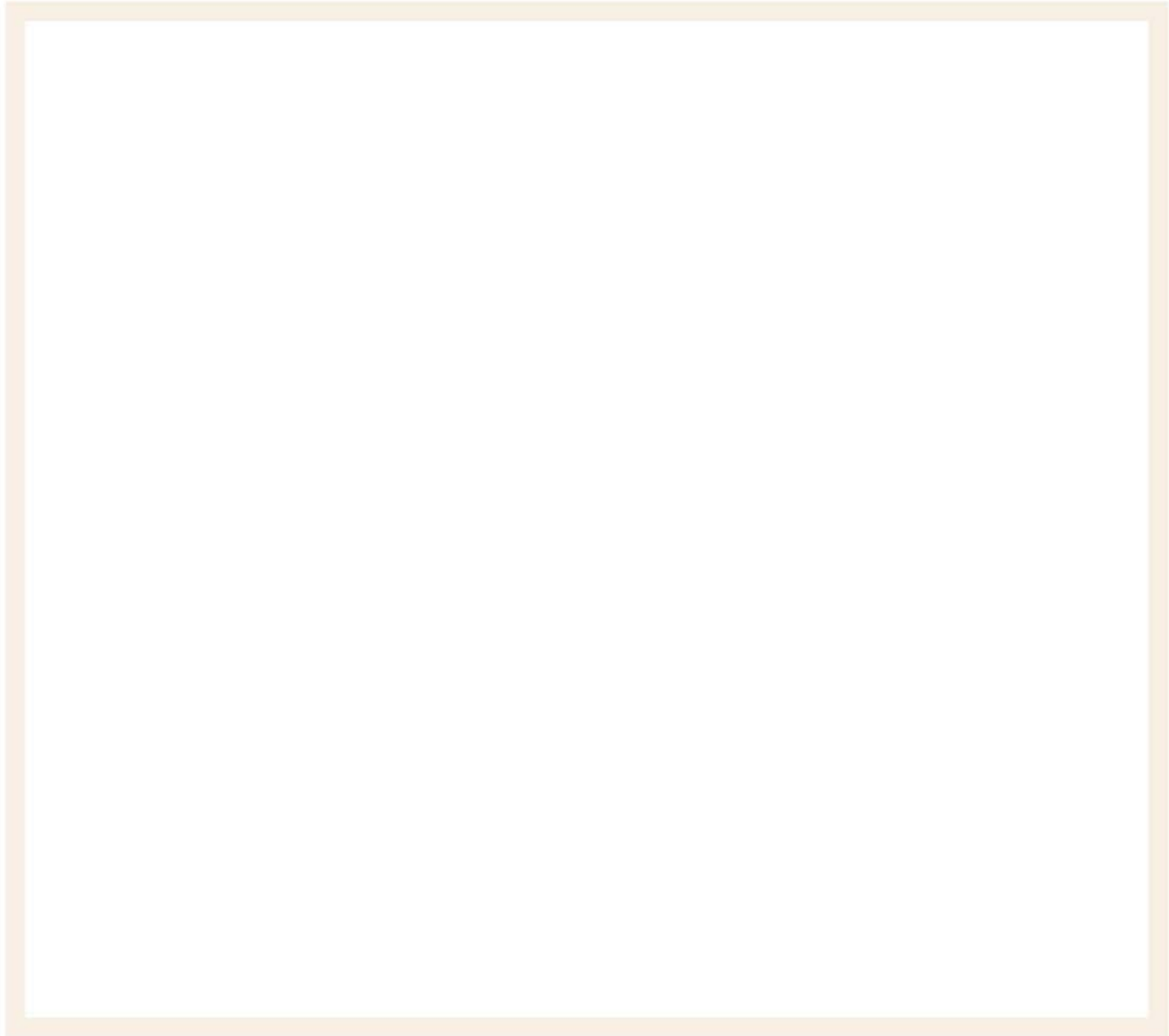
For example, if you are grateful for your education, make a list of the aspects outside of you which played a role in you getting your education. This might include: friends and family, teachers, the people who educated your teachers, your textbooks, the land on which your school sat, the school leaders and the behind-the-scenes people, the financial aid office, your higher power, the coffee shop you frequented before class, etc. When you are done, notice how you feel cultivating all that gratitude. Note any areas where you felt frustration or resentment and how gratitude softened these feelings. Share this exercise with someone today. Repeat often with other areas of your life.





# Visual Expression

Create an image of yourself and your mind filled with gratitude. Use lines, shapes and colors. You might enjoy a magazine collage for this exercise - cut out images from magazines, print images you find online, or create a digital collage. It could range from just one image to a fully fleshed-out, abstract or representational picture. Avoid thinking too long about it and just be spontaneous. Enjoy the process of creating and don't worry about the finished product. However you do it will be great!



Title:

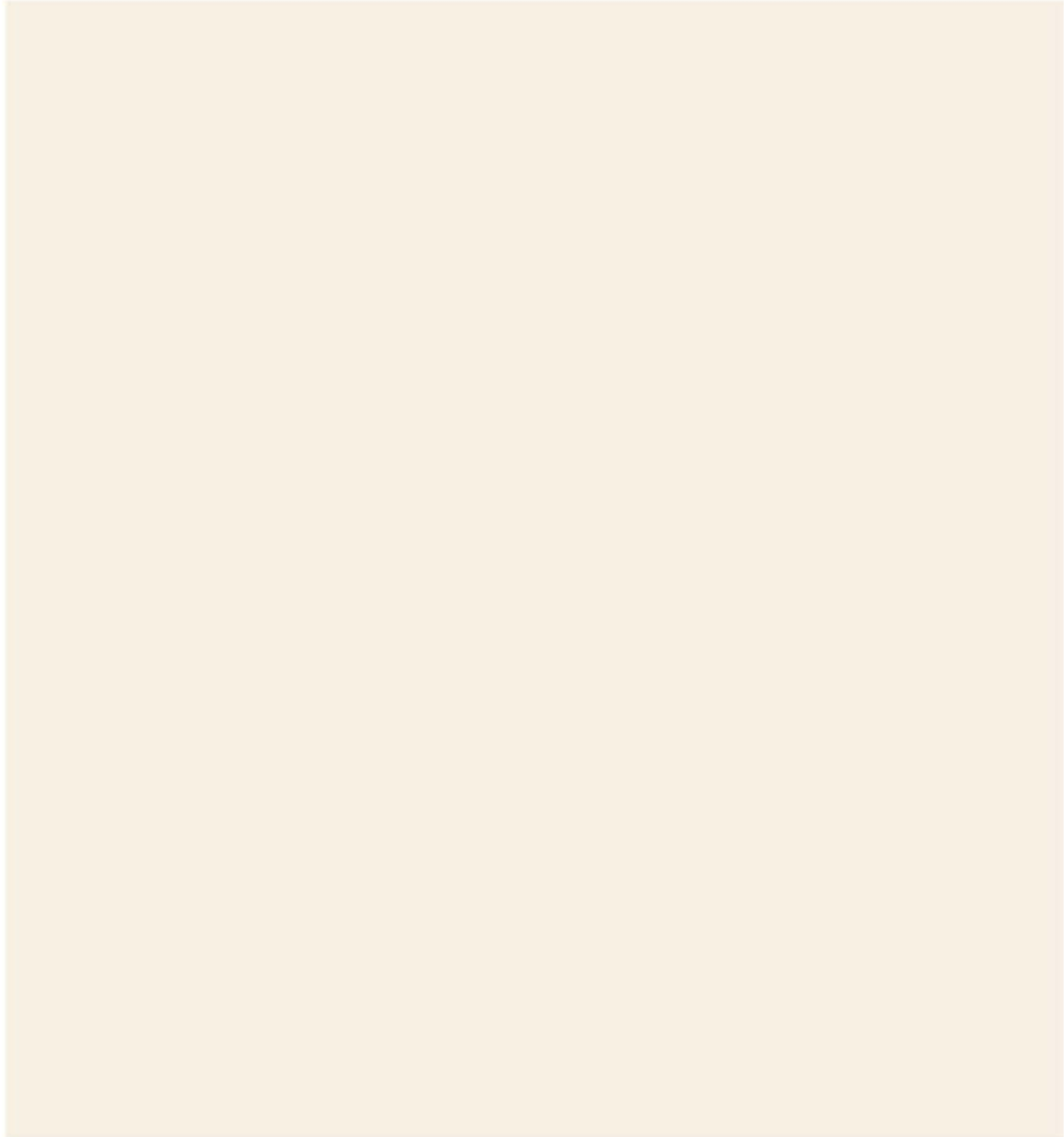
Three words or phrases to describe your art.

- 
- 
- 

How do you feel?

# REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learned about gratitude and how it connects you to others. Gratitude is considered to be a pro-social emotion (it helps us connect to other people). Who did you feel closer to this week? Notice your thoughts, feelings and actions in alignment with gratitude. Avoid judging yourself for what you did or did not do this week. How did you feel paying such close attention to gratitude and looking outside you to increase your gratitude? Did any pleasure or discomfort arise this week as you focused on your gratitude?









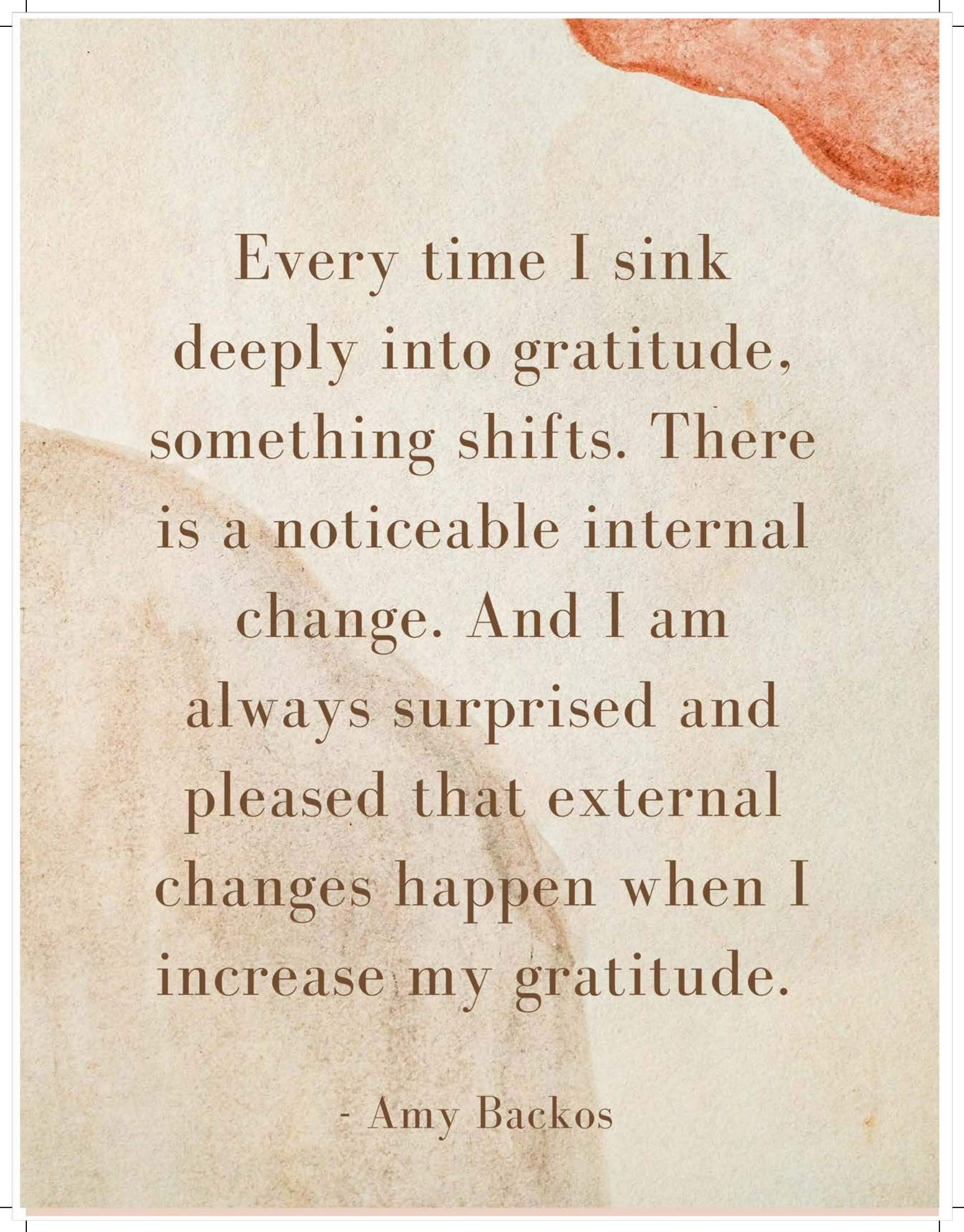
# Week 3

# Create a Grateful Heart

If everything was perfect, you  
would never learn and you  
would never grow.

-Beyonce





Every time I sink  
deeply into gratitude,  
something shifts. There  
is a noticeable internal  
change. And I am  
always surprised and  
pleased that external  
changes happen when I  
increase my gratitude.

- Amy Backos



# Create a Grateful Heart

Here are the areas you will cover this week.

Spend 20 minutes a day, take your time, and savor them over the week.

1

**What are you willing to let go of?**

Are you ready to let go of judgements about your past, your circumstances, your family, your work, your living situation? It's time.

2

**Let's Talk About Gratitude.**

Silent gratitude is a meditation. Gratitude in conversation and action brings it to life.

3

**Reflection on your Gratitude**

What was it like to talk with a friend about gratitude? Reflecting in your conversation can increase your gratitude.

4

**Creative Expression and Reflection**

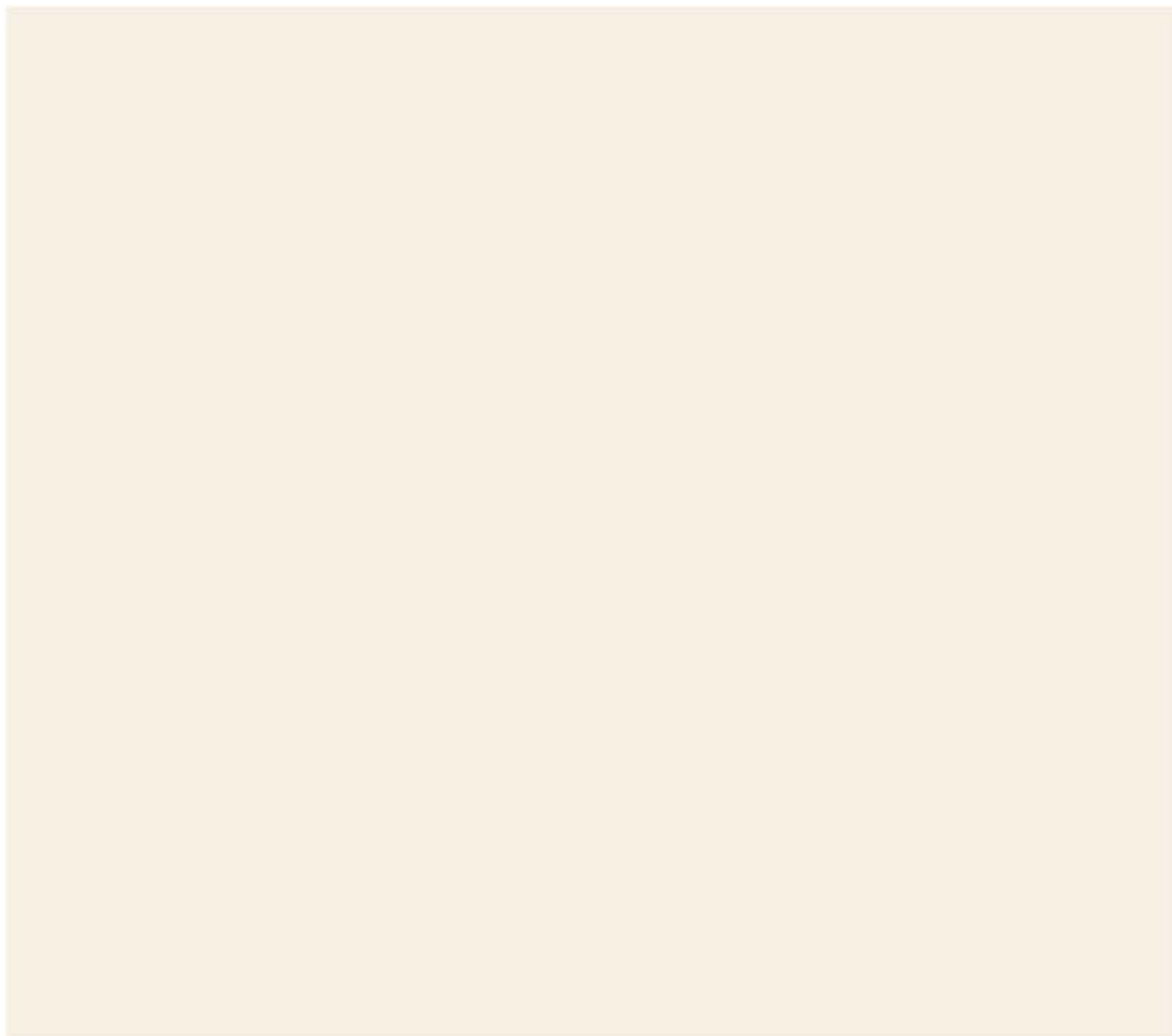
Creativity hones in on emotions and helps you solidify how you can bring gratitude into your everyday life. Enjoy this process and see what emerges for you. Reflect on the week and note what you have learned.



# What are you willing to let go of?

It is time make the decision that your gratitude is greater and more important than any resentments you may hold. Think of a SMALL challenge. For example, you may feel frustration about someone who slacks at work, makes negative comments on social media, or stole your parking spot. Ask yourself, what is the point of my frustration, raised blood pressure, and resentment? Does it help me move towards gratitude and what is important to me? Or does my resentment get in the way of my peace of mind? Does getting frustrated, angry, or holding a grudge give you the impression that you are "doing something" about it? How does your resentment help you or the situation? Is it worth it? Write about how you can prioritize your gratitude - a few observations of gratitude can quickly lessen the intensity of a situation. In this exercise, avoid ruminating about the situation or imaging what you might like to say. Notice how you feel finding gratitude in the situation.

(If you have anger, fear or resentment from abuse or trauma, please seek therapy to move through it and heal. Healing is possible and you are worth it.)



# Let's Talk About Gratitude

Time to bring gratitude to the people in your life! Remember, gratitude is a pro-social emotion...it connects us to others. In this powerful exercise, you will ask friends/family to reflect on what they imagine you are grateful for in your life. This gives you perspective on your gratitude. Another person helps us see our abundance and feel our gratitude. Print out 2 copies of this page for each conversation.

1. Identify two to three friends/family you can chat with about gratitude.
  2. Ask them the questions below and really listen to the answers - write your notes after you are done listening.
  3. Give a response to your friend about how you felt listening to them.
  4. Show them gratitude.
  5. Offer to do the exercise with them and they can ask you the questions.
- (Having trouble connecting with others? Reach out to a therapist. You always have options.)

What do you imagine I am grateful for in my life?

What value do you think these gratitudes bring to my life?

How did you come to recognize what I am grateful for? (or What made you pick those things you think I am grateful for?)



# Reflection on Gratitude

Take a few minutes to reflect on your conversation on gratitude with your friend/family. If there were parts that felt especially good or increased your gratitude, savor those moments for a few minutes with your eyes closed.

Remember, gratitude helps us connect deeply to others. Human connection allows us to survive and it also makes us happier. The more you savor the happy moments, the more you increase your gratitude. The reverse holds true as well. The more you focus on gratitude, the happier you will be.

Answer the questions below to reflect on your gratitude conversation with friends/family.

What did you learn from the gratitude chat with your friends/family? What do you appreciate?

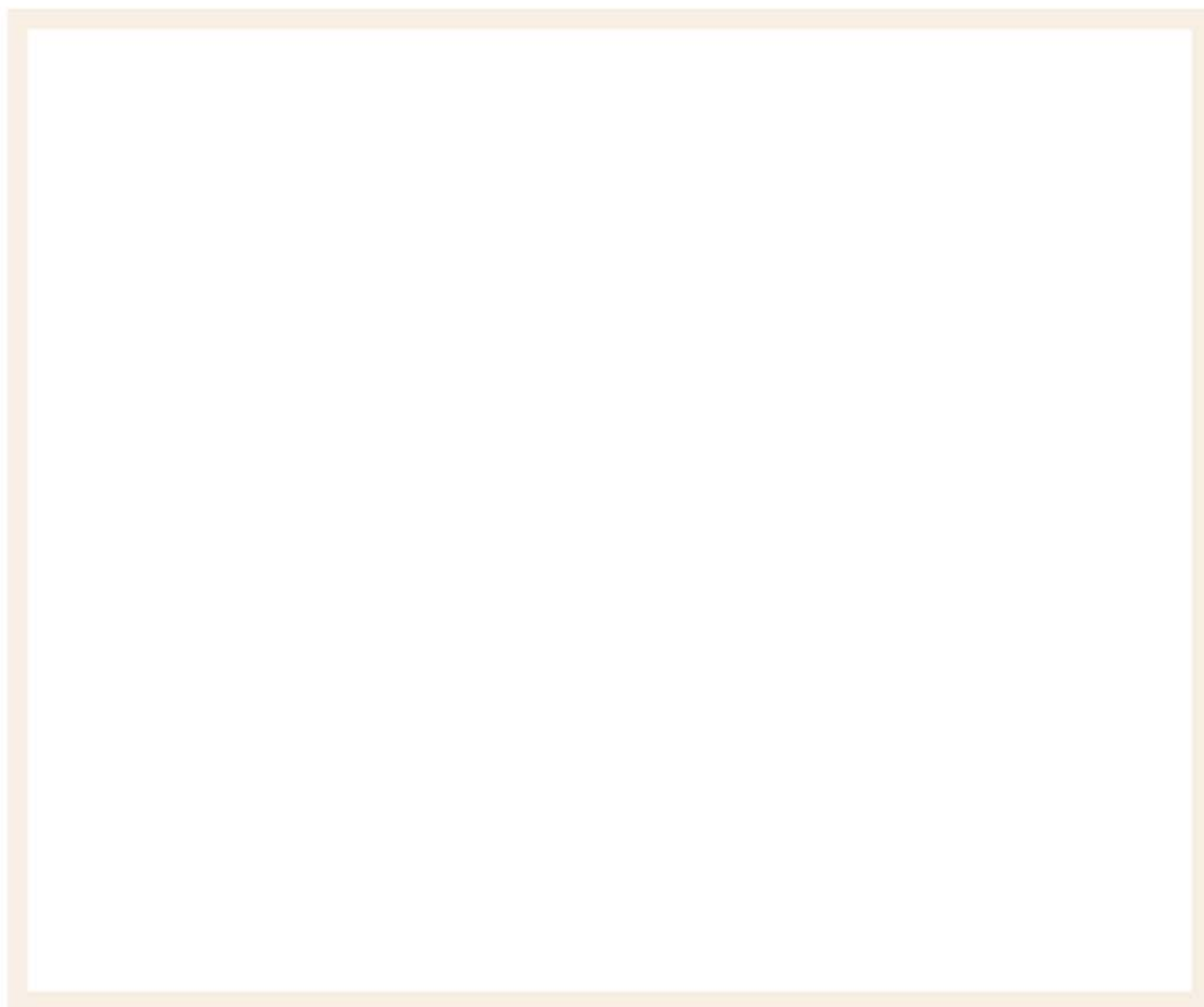
How did the experience connect you to each person?

How can you take this experience into other areas of your life? Might you do the exercise again, create your own way to share gratitude, or begin to appreciate something new?

# Visual Expression

Take a few moments to reflect on what it was like to have a conversation about gratitude. Use lines, shapes and colors to show the feeling of gratitude. You might even consider creating an image of you feeling an abundance of gratitude. It could range from just one line to a fully fleshed-out, abstract or representational picture. Avoid thinking too long and be spontaneous. This visual expression will help you connect to your pre-verbal and physical aspects of gratitude.

Enjoy the process and don't worry about the finished product. However you do it will be great!



Title:

Three words or phrases to describe your art.

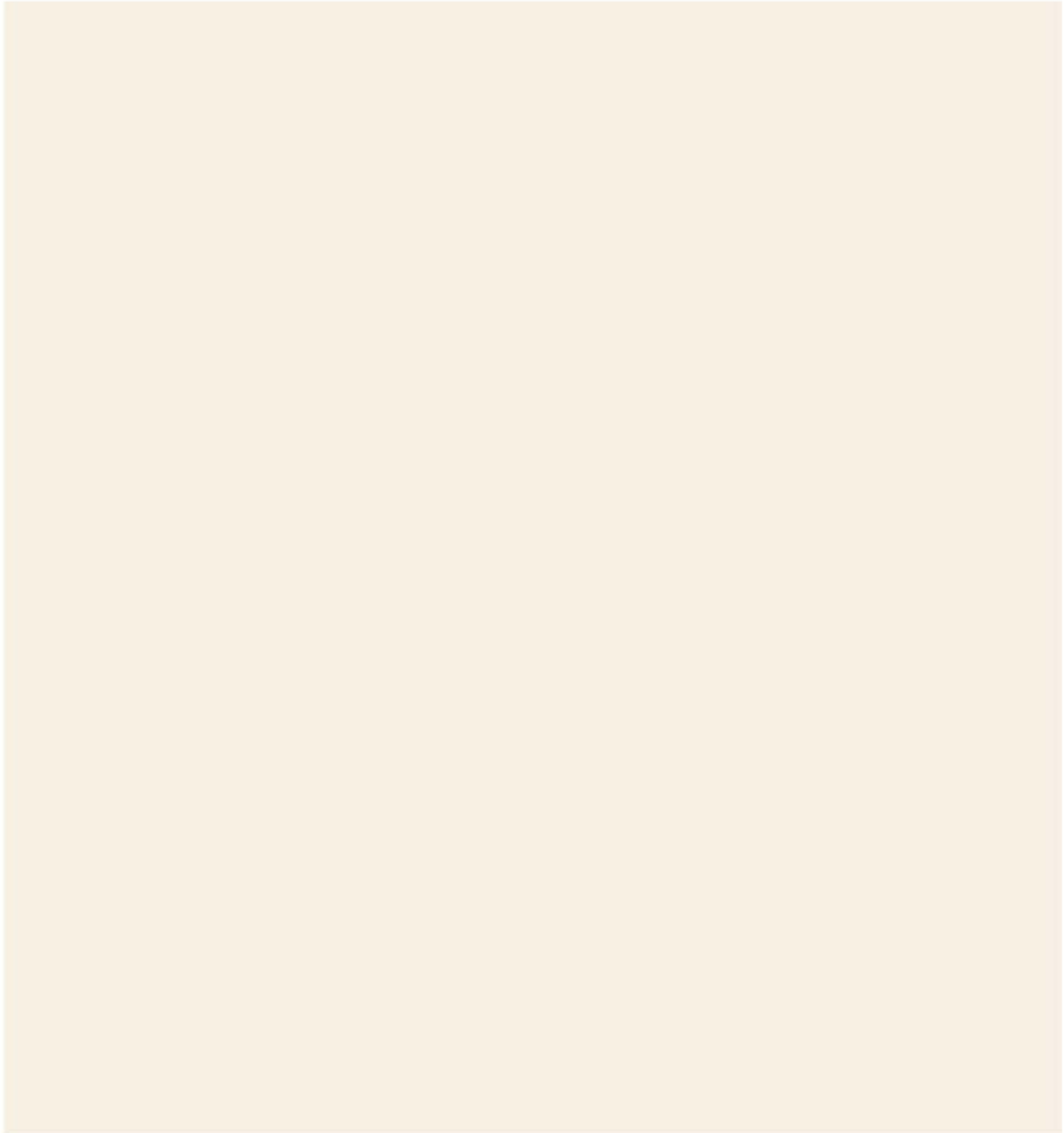
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How do you feel?



# REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learned from this week connecting with others in gratitude. Notice your thoughts, feelings and actions in alignment with gratitude. What can you implement today to focus on gratitude? How did you feel paying such close attention to gratitude with a friend? Are you starting to see that shifting to a grateful heart is possible for you?









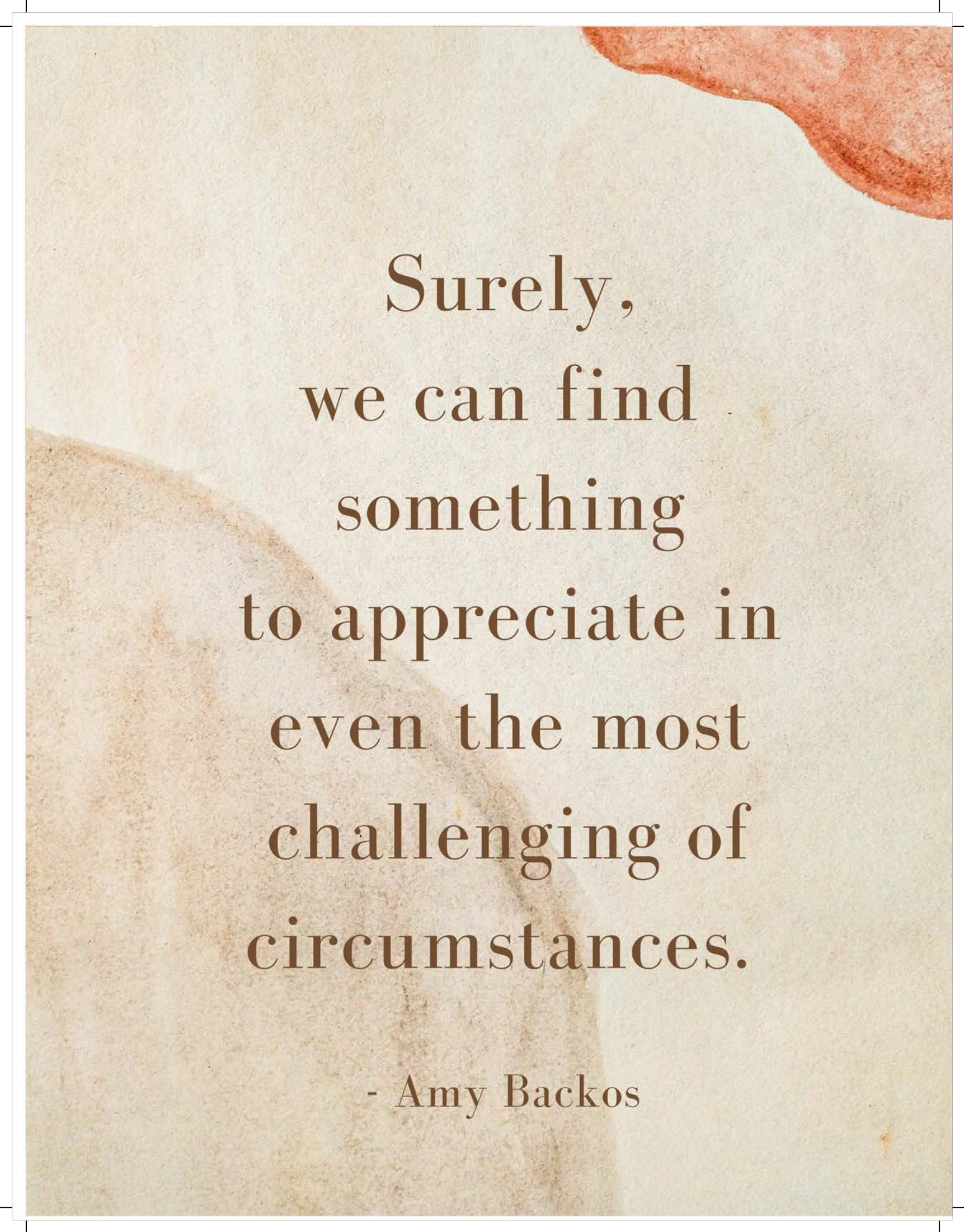
# Week 4

# Practice Gratitude

As we express our gratitude,  
we must never forget that the  
highest appreciation is not to  
utter words, but to live by  
them

- John F. Kennedy





Surely,  
we can find  
something  
to appreciate in  
even the most  
challenging of  
circumstances.

- Amy Backos



# Practice Gratitude

Here are the areas you will cover this week.  
Spend 20 minutes a day, take your time, and savor them over the week.

1

## It's up to you...

Identify one change you can make to prioritize your gratitude. Identify thoughts to help you follow through with the change.

2

## Expanding your Reach

Happiness spreads three degrees - how can you share your gratitude in a wider circle?

3

## Looking Ahead

Cultivating gratitude and letting go of negative thoughts makes space for new good things.

4

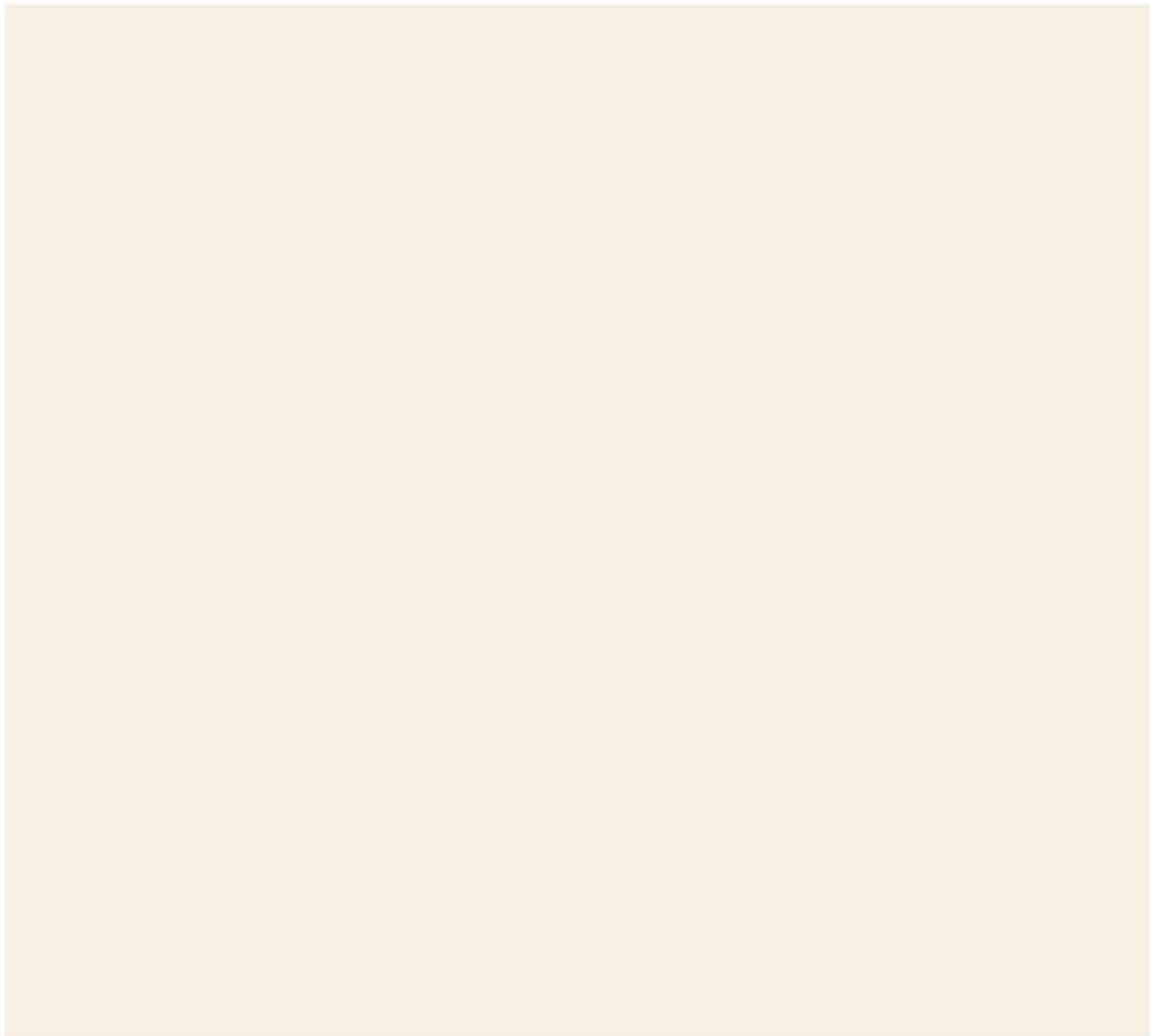
## Creative Expression and Reflection

Creativity hones in on emotions and helps you connect your dreams to your reality. Enjoy this process and see what emerges for you. Reflect on the week and note what you have learned.

# It's Up to You

Where would you like to have more peace and ease in your life? This exercise asks you to reflect on what can you do to bring more gratitude into areas where you would like more ease. For example, if you want a happier experience at work, home, in love or with friends, you can add gratitude.

1. Write down 7- 8 ideas of how you can increase gratitude in one area of your life. You might commit to thanking three people each day, giving one complement each day to people who help you, or keep a list of all that you are grateful for pinned to your wall. 2. Decide on which activity from your list you will start with plan to do it everyday for at lease one week. 3. Write it on your calendar so you remember. After a week, consider adding one more gratitude expression from your list. Can you make it all the way through your list? Avoid worrying about what others will think. Being grateful for others is almost always welcome, even if others might be surprised at your positive appreciation.



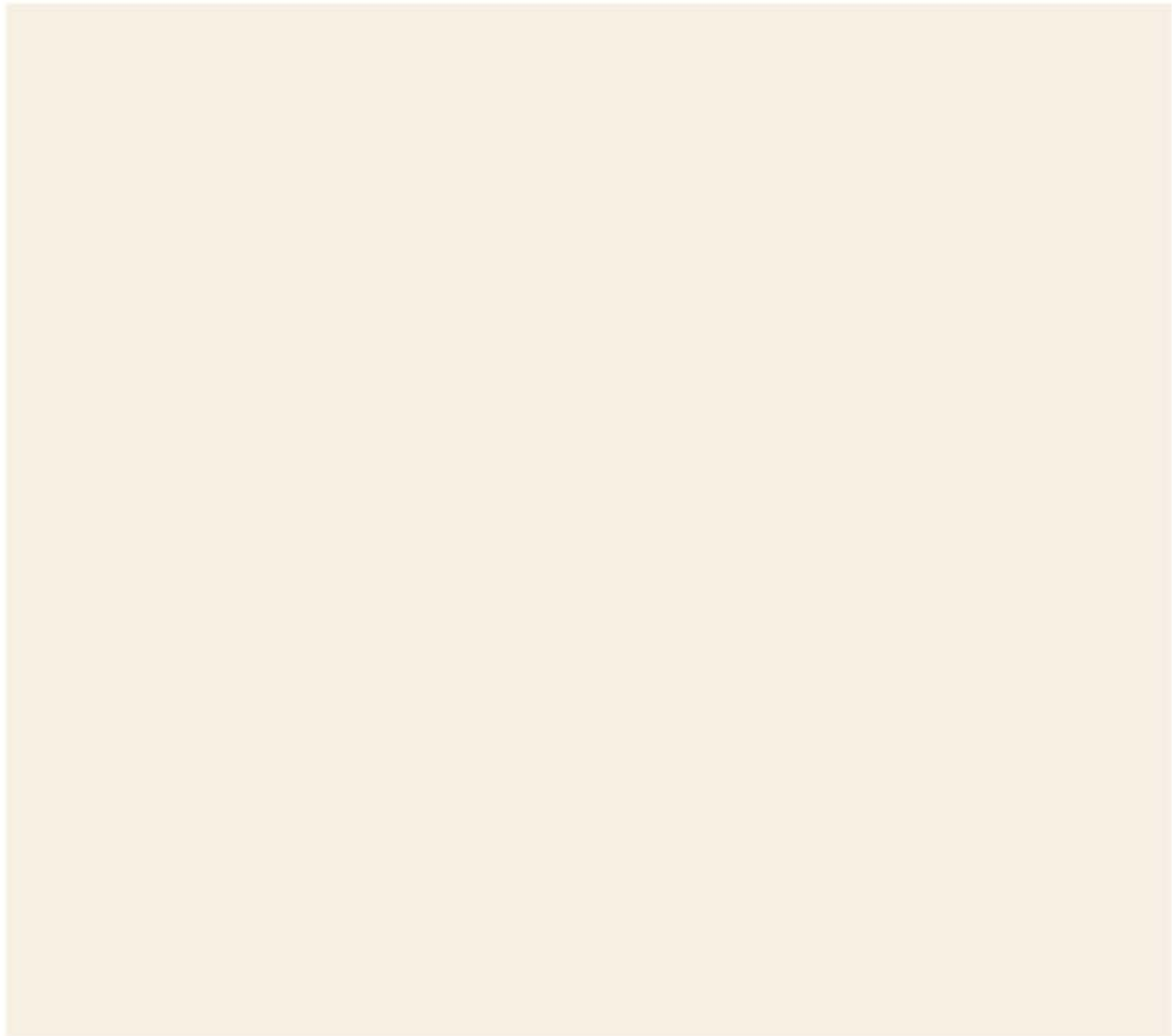


# Expanding Your Reach

You have seen how powerfully gratitude increases your happiness. And you have discovered how it connects you to others. Now it is time to expand your reach - sharing gratitude with people you don't know personally, but who help you. This is especially powerful if you are feeling stressed. Being grateful for people when you are stressed will lower your negative emotions and help you feel better. Frustrated that you waited so long for a table at the restaurant? Try gratitude. Agitated or fearful at the airport when you have to walk through the security checkpoints? Try gratitude.

Make a list of 4 situations where you can cultivate a feeling and express gratitude to someone you do not know. For example - at a restaurant, in line to pick up your child from school, at the grocery store, in line at the drugstore, at a family event, at work, in a cafe, etc. Plan in advance how you want to feel (grateful and happy for example) and how you will show your gratitude. You might simply want to reflect on gratitude to relax yourself. You can also make eye contact and smile, make positive small talk, ask about their day, give a complement, etc.

How did it feel to share gratitude in each situation? Did you feel more calm? How did that help?



# Looking Ahead

How will you continue to include gratitude in your day? The more you practice, the better you feel! Imagine if you woke up tomorrow and everything was different. The only things remaining in your life are the things for which you were grateful for today. How would your life be different? What would remain and what would be gone?

What unhelpful habits would be eliminated? For example, would you quit complaining, quit eating junk food, stop rolling your eyes, spend less time watching TV? What new habits would remain? For example, would you stop taking your health for granted and go exercise? Would you have mended a strained relationship with friends/family?

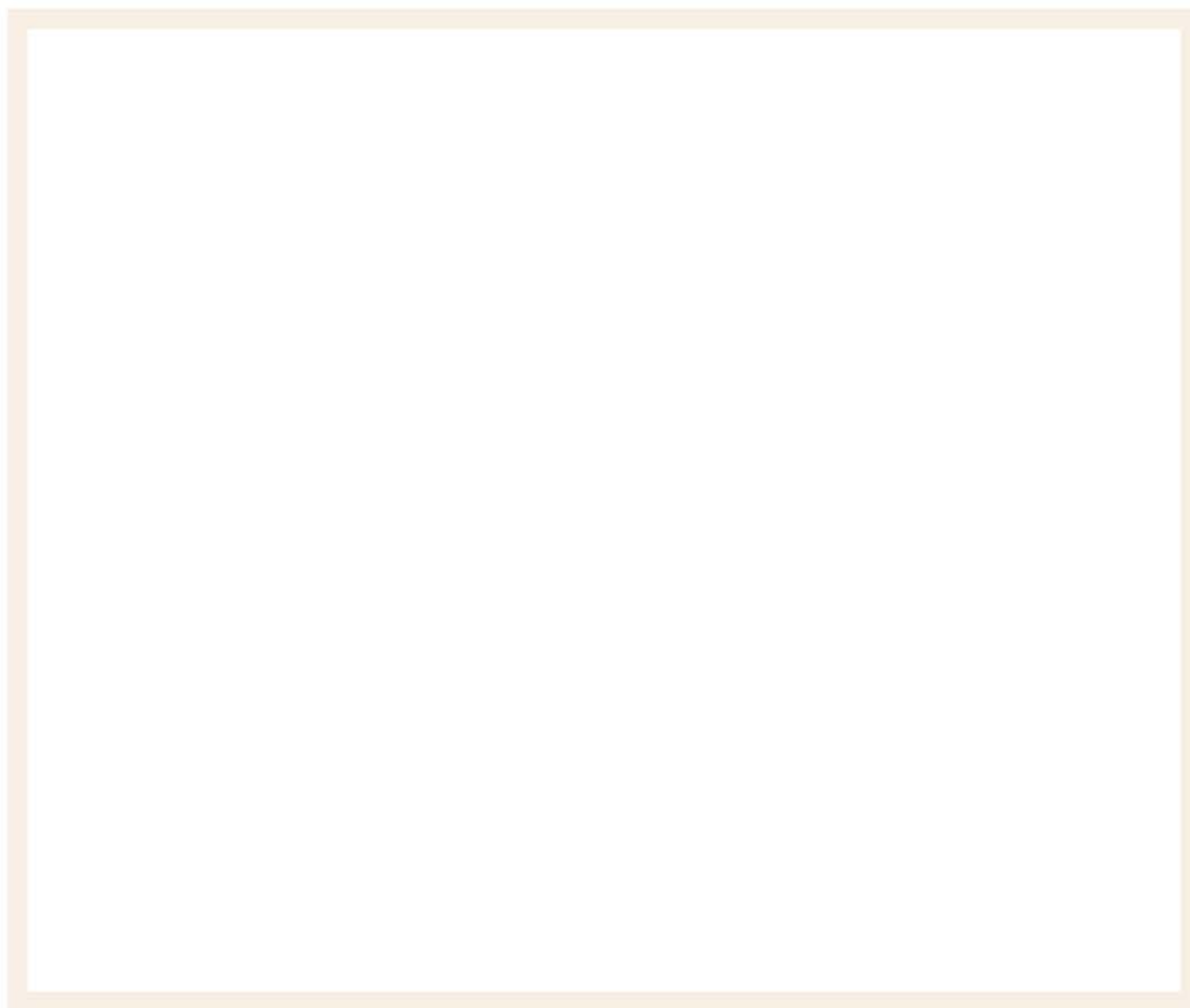
Spend several minutes reflecting on this.

Write what would change because of one day of gratitude. Lastly, write how you will act on these new found appreciations for what you have.



# Visual Expression

Take a few moments to show some aspect of how gratitude has changed your attitude towards stress management and connection to others. Use lines, shapes and colors to show your feelings. This may range from just one line to a fully fleshed-out, abstract or representational picture. Avoid thinking too long about it and be spontaneous. This will help you connect to your value of gratitude to your actions. Enjoy the process of creating and don't worry about the finished product. However you do it will be great!



Title:

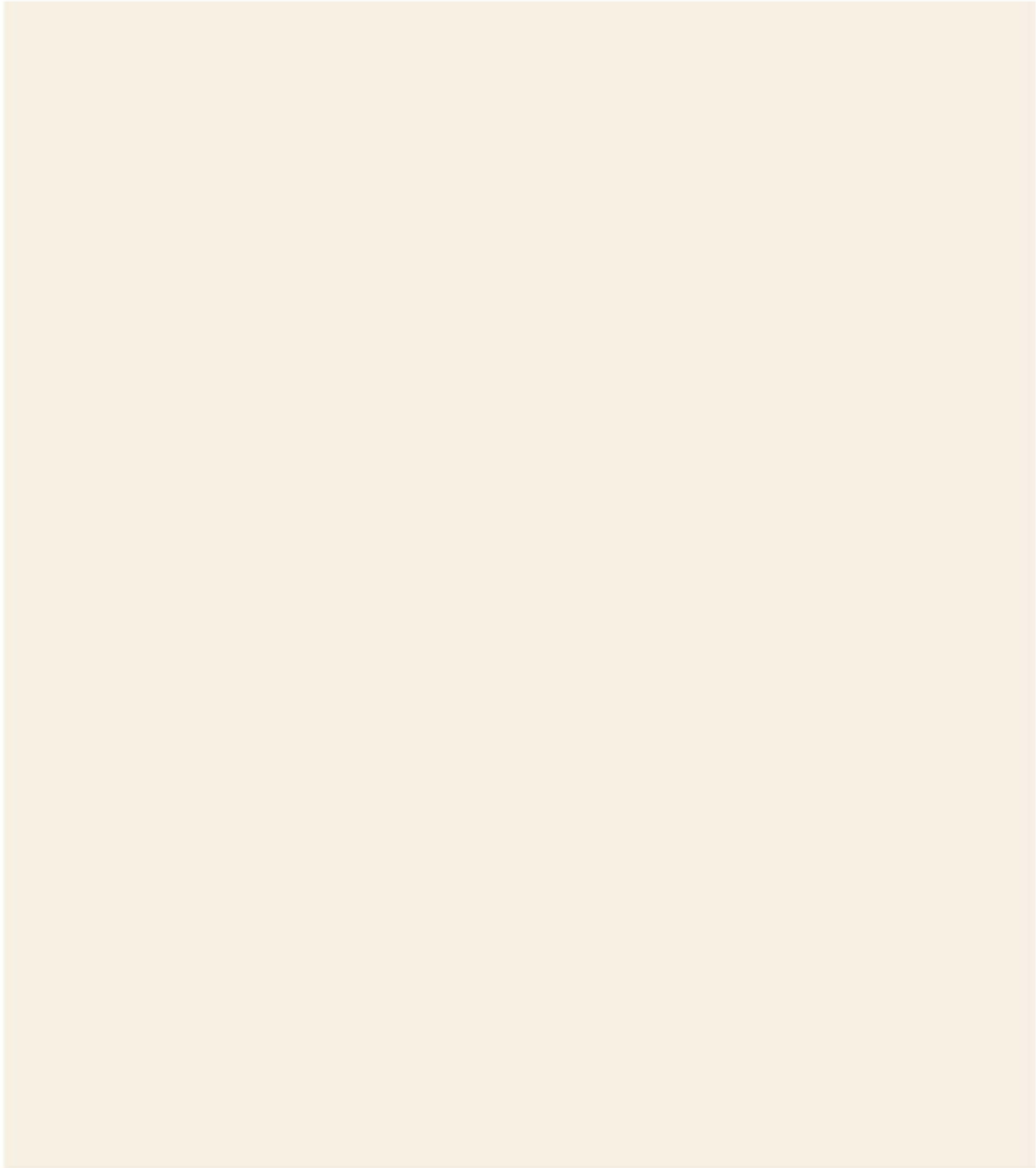
Three words or phrases to describe your art.

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How do you feel?

# REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learned about gratitude this month. What was most helpful in increasing your gratitude. Which exercises made you feel satisfied or happy? How will you continue? What do you know about yourself now? Notice your thoughts, feelings and actions in alignment with gratitude. How has your perspective changed? How are you changed by this work?









# What is next?

A grateful heart makes life so  
much more enjoyable...for us  
and for those around us.

- Amy Backos



# CELEBRATE!

You have completed a month of gratitude! Congratulations on all your progress! What new thoughts will you keep? What new actions will you take with you into the world? I am delighted you joined this community of women who are living more compassionately and making the world a better place.

Gratitude and your living your values is part of creating a better world. Imagine if everyone practiced gratitude...the world would be a happier place indeed!

If you are excited about continuing this work, reach out to The Art Therapy Center of San Francisco for more workshops. Consider the Modern Creative Woman Membership, the Women's Search for Meaning signature packages, or individual psychotherapy and mentoring.

It was my pleasure to share the evidence-based information which helps people all around the world. I look forward to hearing from you about what you learned in this workshop. I hope to see you in future workshops and you can reach out to set up a 20 minute consultation to see how you can continue living a life of joy and meaning. It is my wish that you continue to engage in the process of self-discovery with curiosity and compassion!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy' with a stylized, flowing flourish at the end.

Amy Backos, PhD, ATR-BC  
Licensed Psychologist & Board Certified Art Therapist



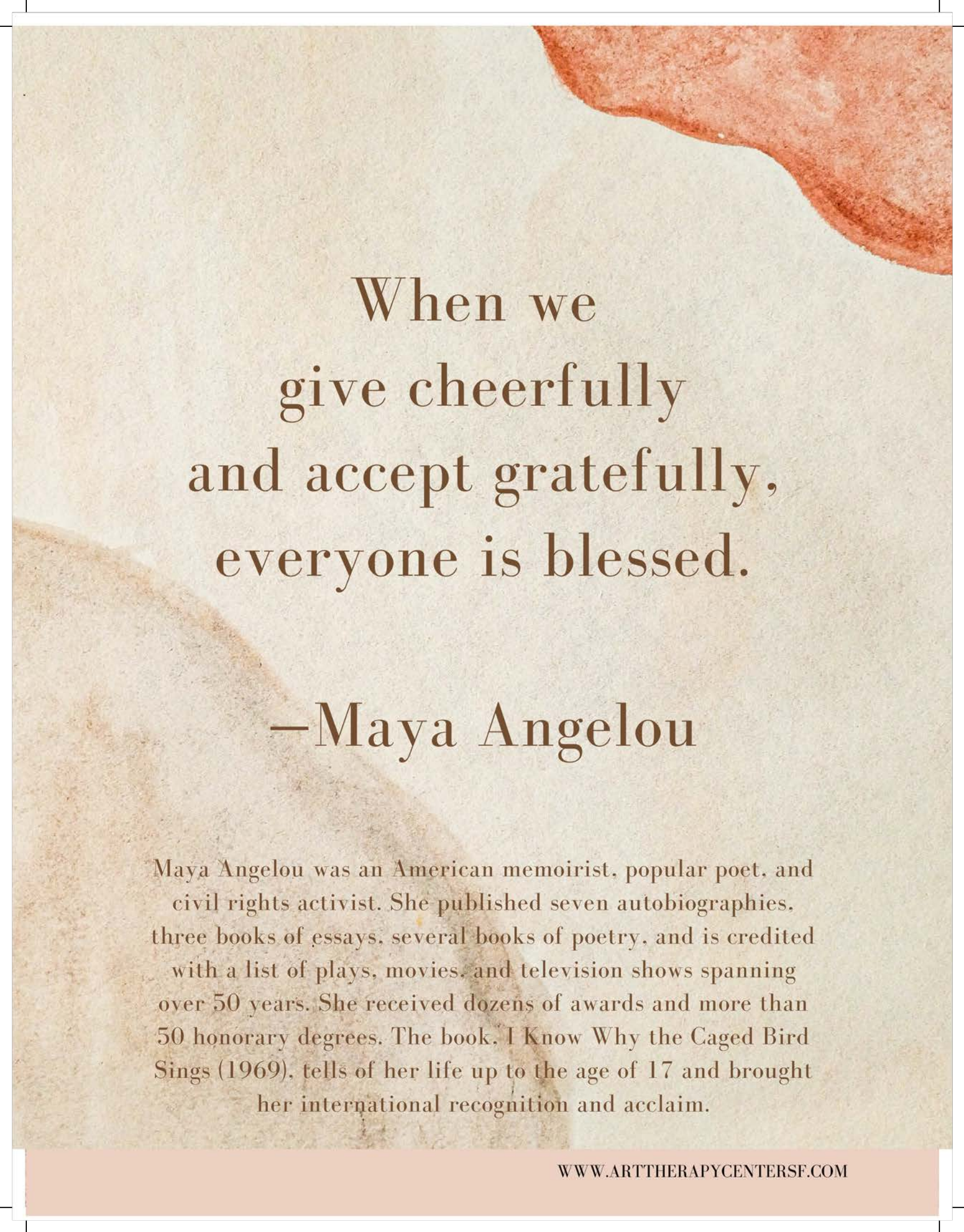


# RESOURCES

Gratitude is a key ingredient for  
peace in ourself, our homes, and  
our communities.

-Amy Backos





When we  
give cheerfully  
and accept gratefully,  
everyone is blessed.

—Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou was an American memoirist, popular poet, and civil rights activist. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, several books of poetry, and is credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows spanning over 50 years. She received dozens of awards and more than 50 honorary degrees. The book, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), tells of her life up to the age of 17 and brought her international recognition and acclaim.



# RESOURCES

01

## Art Therapy Center of San Francisco

Center for creative expression, psychological wellness, positive psychology and value-based living. Email for complementary 20 minute consultation. Amy@amybackos.com

02

## Instagram: @dramybackos

Join me each Friday at noon PST while I gently guide you to strategies to live a meaningful and joyful life.

03

## Gratitude by Oliver Sacks

This reflective and book about coming to terms with his own life as death approaches, prominent psychiatrist, writer and philosopher, Oliver Sacks shares his deep understanding of living a life of gratitude.

04

## Book: ACT Art Therapy

By: Amy Backos

A book about how to live a value-based life using mindfulness, creativity, and connecting to your highest self.



# MY WEEK

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