



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are you NOT grateful for? What do you hate? Verbalize these things rather than trying to pretend they don't exist.
- How have you seen the impact of choosing gratitude in the past?
- When you hear the word "grateful" in this season, what comes to mind?
- What have you admired in others in seeing their approach to gratitude?



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EXPLORING GRATITUDE

RESOURCES & REFLECTIVE GUIDES

Suffering and grief can strip us of the ability to be grateful.

What is there to be grateful for when life hurts so much? What does it look like to be grateful in the midst of suffering and grief and lament?

It's not a denial of reality or toxic positivity. Rather, it is a radical acceptance of the hard, painful realities, allowing the emotions to flow through (not get stuck).

When you allow the hard emotions to pass through, you open up space in your heart for grace and gratitude.

Giving grace to self in the grief and lament process includes staying present in your emotions, slowing down to live in the moment.

"GIVING THANKS FOR ONE THOUSAND THINGS
IS ULTIMATELY AN INVITATION TO
SLOW TIME DOWN
WITH WEIGHT OF FULL ATTENTION.
IN THIS SPACE OF TIME AND SPHERE,
I AM ATTENTIVE, AWARE, ACCEPTING THE
WHOLE OF THE MOMENT,
WEIGHING IT DOWN WITH ME ALL HERE."

-ANN VOSKAMP
"One Thousand Gifts"

InheritanceOfHope.org



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Why receive gratitude in the midst of grief?
- By accepting what is NOT, how can you accept what IS?
- What are the barriers keeping you from being grateful?
- What else could you add to this list of how practicing gratitude can help?
- "I only deepen the wound of the world when I neglect to give thanks...Rejecting joy to stand in solidarity with the suffering doesn't rescue the suffering." (Ann Voskamp, "One Thousand Gifts").
 - How do you seek solidarity with those who are hurting (your family members, friends, etc).
 - How can embracing grief AND gratitude honor the experience you are facing?

THE GAINS OF GRATITUDE

How practicing gratitude helps:



Healthy for your brain
(increases serotonin
and dopamine)



Increases resilience



Learn to appreciate even
the "smallest of things"-
shifts your perspective.



Gratitude and grief are
not mutually exclusive.
We can learn to co-exist
with both without
diminishing one over the
other.

What else would you add to this list?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What emotions are you feeling right now?
- How much space is each emotion taking up in your heart or your head space? What would each emotion look like? (Size, color, shape, etc.)
- Visualize "surrender". What does that word mean to you right now? What do you picture?

PRACTICING BEING PRESENT

For some people it can feel incredibly difficult and vulnerable to be fully present with their emotions. That is okay. There can be a lot to grieve, and it can be overwhelming if you try to feel it all at once.

Take a moment to practice being present.

1. Let yourself feel and allow any and all emotions. How are you feeling in this exact moment? Write down everything you feel, maybe even try drawing how you feel. Create space to be mindful of each feeling you feel.
2. Imagine your emotions flowing through your body.
 - Exercise: Consider lying on your bed/the ground and visualizing the feelings/numbness traveling a path through your body and flowing out through your toes/fingers. Maybe they swirl a little in your mid-section, or maybe they shoot out like arrows. Visualize in a way that makes sense to you.)
3. Practice mindfulness by paying attention to your surroundings.
 - 5 things you can SEE around you
 - 4 things you can TOUCH around you
 - 3 things you can HEAR around you
 - 2 things you can SMELL around you
 - 1 thing you can TASTE around you

When you allow yourself to feel and grieve, for the feelings to flow through, it can open you up to receive gratitude.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What is especially hard about the "I have to" right now? What feelings do you feel?
- What are things that give you joy right now even in the hard?
- Putting the glasses over the box doesn't take away the rain, but it does help you focus on something different!

KIDS/TEENS ACTIVITY: I GET TO...

On the stormiest of days, there can still be rainbows. But sometimes it takes looking at the sky in a different way to actually see the rainbow.

When life is hard and it feels like you're in a storm, sometimes trying to look for that rainbow is especially hard.

Practicing the shift of your perspective (how you are viewing the hard thing) can sometimes help...like putting on a pair of "perspective glasses".

Try this activity: When you finish filling out each part, cut out the glasses and put them over the "rain rectangle".



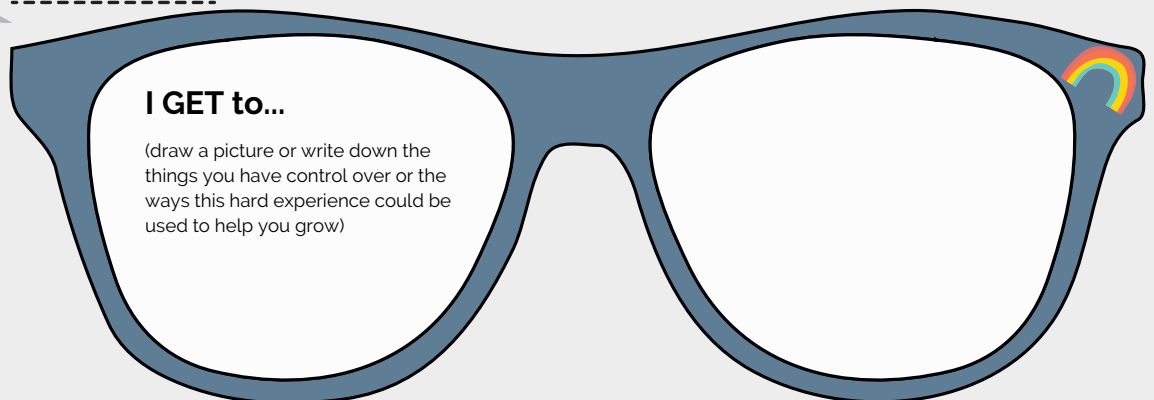
I HAVE to...

(draw a picture or write down the things you don't enjoy doing)



I GET to...

(draw a picture or write down the things you have control over or the ways this hard experience could be used to help you grow)





REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What else would you add to this list that helps YOU practice gratitude?
- What have you admired in others in their approach to gratitude?
- How have you seen gratitude be important in your coping in the past?
- When you hear the word "grateful", what comes to mind in this season you are currently in?



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PRACTICING GRATITUDE

There are seasons when gratitude doesn't come easy and it takes work to find the things you are grateful for. Need a jumpstart on some ideas of how you can find the grateful moments?

Create a gratitude journal (3 things a day you are thankful for).

Invite a safe person (friend, therapist) into your grief/gratitude.

Make a list of people you are thankful for—pursue those people.

Give space to enjoy yourself, laugh, and give a break from the heaviness

Set alarms throughout the day to remind you to breathe deeply and intentionally list gratitudes.

Be attuned to just one moment at a time—be present. Give grace for the moment.



Sometimes gratitude takes hard work.

But it is there and worth finding.

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