



Gratitude Reflection Amid COVID-19

As every day brings with it new questions, worries and fears about the COVID-19 pandemic, we are thrust into a context of stress and uncertainty. Amidst this backdrop, it can be hard to see the positive things; intentionally taking stock of that for which we are grateful can be incredibly beneficial. Research has long shown that through gratitude, we are able to better focus on that which brings us joy, to reduce stress, and to reframe our outlook on negative events.

For those living with heightened anxiety and/or depression during this time, a regular gratitude practice may better help us focus *on what is*, rather than what is lost or what the future may hold. In short, gratitude is a mindfulness practice that, when built as a habit, helps us experience positive emotions alongside negative emotions and therefore, helps us to cope better.

Gratitude also allows us to appreciate the goodwill, generosity, and grace of others. For example, in France they have saluted healthcare workers via the hashtag [#WeApplaud](#). There are numerous [acts of kindness, compassion, and goodness](#) taking place globally, if we stop to recognize them.

Regardless of how hopeless things seem or how bad the news gets, remember to be grateful for our lives, our health so long as we have it, our loved ones, and the people on whose labor and goodwill we depend each day. Remember the little things such as a great cup of coffee, the coming of spring, and a compliment from a stranger. Observe the "[silver linings](#)" in our new situations.

To do so, we might try to "start each day with a grateful heart," begin a daily gratitude journal, have a moment of appreciation prior to each meal, challenge ourselves with the [3 good things practice](#), or find inspiration on reframing our narrative in the poem shared here.

Thank you for all you do in this time of collective struggle to care for your fellow citizens. #WeApplaud.

COVID-19: Compassion in Action

Lockdown

*They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary*



*All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in
a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.*

— Brother Richard