

WEEK FIVE

BODY OF GRATITUDE

CONNECTING TO YOUR BODY

Are you ready, my friend? This is a big week in our Deepening Gratitude journey. **Take a deep breath and prepare to show some love for your body!**

But first, ask yourself: What are my beliefs about my body? What kind of emotional energy do I project toward my body?

Imagine yourself in a relationship with your body. What words would you use to describe that relationship? How do you talk about your body to yourself? **Would you want to be in a relationship with someone who feels about you the way you feel about your body?**

The truth is that many of us are deeply challenged by this relationship. **We carry a sense of anxiety or unworthiness within us** when it comes to our appearance, our health, our desirability. Further, the messages bombarding us from the outside world do very little to nurture or heal those emotional wounds we've been sustaining since pre-adolescence.

It is hard to feel gratitude in the face of embarrassment, shame, dislike, disgust, disappointment, pain, or frustration. Some might even say it is impossible. But, I am here to tell you otherwise.

We can change the course of our relationship with our body, by strengthening our gratitude muscles AND setting some profound healing in motion.

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I am not going to gloss over the fact that the process might get a little uncomfortable, and that's OK. **The discomfort is actually part of the process.** Remember that gratitude is a practice that we are seeking to strengthen, **and to get stronger, we need some resistance.**

That said, if you have any physical or psychological traumas related to your body that you are working through, take this practice lightly and lovingly. Most importantly, check in with a therapist and trust your own instincts if you are concerned about any of these exercises. **Only do what feels right for you.**

No matter what, you may find that this is a good week to seek out some extra support in the form of a friend or a safe space within a supportive community. Share with them any struggles that might come up and **then use the opportunity to practice gratitude** by thanking them for listening and supporting you.

Stay strong, beautiful soul! You are doing amazing work!
Remember to keep tracking your gratitude practices from previous weeks and when you are ready, take a deep breath, turn the page, and open your heart and mind for some reflective journaling.

Next Steps: Complete Worksheet 27 on the next page in your own time and when you're ready, listen to this week's Food For Thought mini podcast episode, if you haven't already.



WORKSHEET 27

REFLECTION: GETTING TO THE SOURCE

Without thinking too deeply about it, allow yourself exactly two minutes to write down all the words and emotions that come to mind when you think about your body.

What stands out to you when you look at your list? How many words in your list are positive? How does your body *physically feel* in response to these words?

Which of these perceptions of your body were learned and who taught them to you?

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WKSHT 27, CONT.

In your opinion, what is the purpose of your body? What role is it meant to play in your life?

Answer the same question above from the perspective of your body. Speak from your body's needs, wants, and desires. How are the answers the same/different?

What is one thing you could change about the way you treat your body that would make your body feel more loved? How would that improve your day to day life?

Next Steps: After this potentially intense exploration, treat yourself to some self-care. Choose an activity that soothes both the soul and your body. Then, come back tomorrow for the 'Connecting to the Wise Body' meditation and reflections on Worksheet 28.



WORKSHEET 28

GUIDED MEDITATION:CONNECTING TO THE WISE BODY

INSTRUCTIONS: To complete this exercise, you will need about 20 minutes of quiet, uninterrupted time for yourself. When you are ready, begin by noting your mental and emotional state before listening to the guided meditation in the space provided below. Then, listen to the **'Connecting to the Wise Body' Meditation** found through the link in your **Week Five Email**.

Afterward, without rushing, give yourself a few minutes to check in with your body and then continue with your reflections.



GUIDED MEDITATION: CONNECTING TO THE WISE BODY

BEFORE I FELT...

AFTER I FELT...



TIME OF DAY

REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS

Next Steps: There's no rush to move on! Enjoy any relaxation, insights, or peace you might have found through this mediation. When you do eventually feel ready, watch this week's 'Going Deeper' video.

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MID-WEEK MINI CHALLENGE

HOW TO

This week's Mini Challenge is an act of gratitude and self-love. Find some time in the next couple of days to set aside at least 45 minutes for this challenge. You will also need a few special supplies:

- A loofah or soft bath cloth
- Silky bath wash or soap*
- Shampoo and Conditioner
- A soft, clean towel
- A rich, moisturizing lotion*
- A mirror
- Soft music or candles* (optional)

** Scented products are recommended for heightening the sensory experience, but are certainly not necessary.*

Your task is to create an environment in which you will mindfully wash and honor each part of your body. It is not necessary that you draw a bath; a hot shower works just as well.

If you like, set up your space by lighting a candle or two, and turn on some soft music in the background. As you prepare your bath or shower, **set the intention of honoring your body with this practice of gratitude.**

Focus on the movement of your body and notice how willingly it follows your mental direction - 'Move over here', 'Set the towel down', 'Strike the match and light the candle.' Notice every sensation you are receiving through your senses and the position of your body as it moves through space.

When the water is ready, allow your body to slowly connect with the water. Feel the sensation of the water against your skin and take a moment to offer thanks for your ability to experience this sensation.

As you acclimate to the hot water, begin washing your body starting with your toes. Develop a rich lather and massage your body as you wash. **Attend to each and every part of your body with great care.**

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As you cleanse each body part, **consider the lifetime of experience this body part has accumulated.** How many miles have the soles of your feet walked? How many times has your knee bent in your lifetime? How many words have your hands and fingers written or typed?

As you spend time with each body part, offer it thanks for its unfailing service to you. Seek to offer acceptance and appreciation even to the parts you struggle with.

When you are done washing, dry yourself with equal care using a lovely, soft, clean towel. Continue the care and attention by applying a rich lotion to your entire body. **Massage it mindfully, allowing yourself to experience the full sensation of the massage. Perform this service to soothe your body and as a sign of great love.**

When you have completed the cleansing, drying, and nourishing ritual, finish the exercise by sitting in front of a mirror, looking yourself in the eyes, and reading the following text out loud: When you are done, sit quietly in front of the mirror and take a few deep breaths. The ritual is then complete.

Dear Body,

I see you. I acknowledge and honor the fact that my experience of life is only possible through you.

Thank you, dear body, for the countless delights I have experienced through you. Thank you for eyes to see the faces of those I love. Thank you for ears to hear their voices, the sound of the wind, of music, of silence.

Thank you for every mile I have walked, for the experience of every hand I have ever held. Thank you for growing, learning, adapting, and striving every day to serve my needs and desires.

Thank you for working to transform every morsel of food I have eaten into nourishment and for fighting battles within me for my health, even without my knowledge or direction. Thank you for the reminders to rest and heal.

Thank you for your extraordinary wisdom, for speaking in your subtle and nuanced language of intuition. Thank you for your protection and for persevering in the face of my own failings and oversights. Thank you for loving me.

Most of all, dear body, thank you for being enough exactly as you are.

Next Steps: Try to remain mindful of your body as you go about the rest of your day. Then, come back tomorrow and begin work on the next exercise found in Worksheet 29.



WORKSHEET 29

REFLECTION: LISTENING TO THE BODY

INSTRUCTIONS: This exercise is designed to amplify your body's voice as you move through your daily routine. Over the next day or two, observe any situations in which your body and your mind have different desires or urges.

That means, first, slowing down enough to check in with your body. Ask it what it needs in any given moment. Typically, the mind's desire automatically wins out and we don't even offer the body a chance to weigh in. Your task with this exercise, however, is to defer to your body. If your body says it needs more rest, you unquestioningly give it what it needs. If it needs movement, get up and move around.

You are likely to experience some resistance to this task as you try to implement it. The mind is extremely clever and will offer many logical reasons why you can't defer to your body at any given moment. For the sake of this exercise, and your gratitude practice, defer to your body anyway. Taking action for the sole benefit of your body's experience is a powerful way of expressing gratitude to a hugely neglected part of ourselves.

MY MIND WANTED:

MY BODY WANTED:

REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS

MY BODY'S MESSAGE TO ME WAS:

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WKSHT 29, CONT.

MY MIND WANTED:

Grey rectangular box for writing 'MY MIND WANTED'.

MY BODY WANTED:

Grey rectangular box for writing 'MY BODY WANTED'.

REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS

Large grey rectangular box for writing reflections and insights.

MY BODY'S MESSAGE TO ME WAS:

Large grey rectangular box for writing 'MY BODY'S MESSAGE TO ME WAS'.

MY MIND WANTED:

Grey rectangular box for writing 'MY MIND WANTED'.

MY BODY WANTED:

Grey rectangular box for writing 'MY BODY WANTED'.

REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS

Large grey rectangular box for writing reflections and insights.

MY BODY'S MESSAGE TO ME WAS:

Large grey rectangular box for writing 'MY BODY'S MESSAGE TO ME WAS'.

Next Steps: Come back at the end of the week and listen to the 'Release and Re-Center' meditation that goes along with Worksheet 30.



WORKSHEET 30

GUIDED MEDITATION: RELEASE AND RE-CENTER

INSTRUCTIONS: To complete this exercise, you will need about 20 minutes of quiet, uninterrupted time for yourself. When you are ready, begin by noting your mental and emotional state before listening to the guided meditation in the space provided below. Then, listen to the **'Release and Re-Center' Meditation** found through the link in your **Week Five Email**.

Afterward, without rushing, give yourself a few minutes to check in with your body and then continue with your reflections.

GUIDED MEDITATION: RELEASE AND RE-CENTER

BEFORE I FELT...

AFTER I FELT...



TIME OF DAY

REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS

Next Steps: Sometime before the start of the next week, find a quiet place and complete Worksheet 31 on the next page.



WORKSHEET 31

END OF THE WEEK REFLECTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS: Allow yourself some time to reflect on your journey so far. What has stood out for you this week? What was challenging and what came easily? What would you like to experience more of? Try not to edit yourself as you write. Allow your mind and your pen to write freely.

