

# WEEK SIX

## FORCE OF NATURE

### THE MAJESTY AND GENEROSITY OF THE NATURAL WORLD

**Nature may be one of the most intuitive ways to connect with gratitude.** It is also so big in scope that it is practically impossible to explore all of the avenues of gratitude in one week's contemplation! This week, we focus on two important avenues: **the majesty and the generosity of the natural world.**

This week, we allow ourselves to get lost in the beauty and grandeur of the natural world. **We allow ourselves to be humbled and awed,** quieting the stories and constant chatter of our mind and slipping into the fullest experience of the present moment..

We also turn our attention to the depth and breadth of the way that Nature sustains us, from the food we eat, to the natural resources that make every single moment of our day possible.

The first activity this week asks you to record all the many individual ways in which you are sustained by nature over the course of one day. Perhaps you notice the minty flavor of your toothpaste. Perhaps you take a moment to appreciate a piece of fruit with your breakfast, or your piping hot cup of coffee. Perhaps you pause to appreciate the cotton or silk in a garment you are wearing, or maybe you begin to notice how prevalent glass is everywhere you look. Look at your world with fresh eyes, seeking out the telltale signs of Mother Nature.

This is a type of gratitude chain (which is explained in this week's Food for Thought mini podcast episode), **but the most important part of the exercise is to get to a place of "wow"** - that point at which you allow humility and gratitude to wash over you for the abundance of blessings you receive from the natural world. If you feel like you are

on a roll, please don't limit yourself to the spaces in your printed honeycomb. Feel free to add as many items as occur to you over the course of the day. **Truly, the more you embrace this exercise, the more humbled you will be by it!**

Before you dive headfirst into the week, however, I want to revisit for one last time all the items you should be tracking in your Accountability Tracker. **Hopefully, by this point, your daily slots should be getting pretty full!**

- 1.) Your predominant emotional state throughout the day.
- 2.) Any time you listen to a mini podcast episode or watch a going deeper video.
- 3.) Any time you do a meditation.
- 4.) Mini Challenges.
- 5.) Any time you do a journal or reflection-based activity.
- 6.) Stop. Notice. Appreciate.
- 7.) Reframing from Negative to Positive.
- 8.) Focus on the Positives Conversations
- 9.) One Gratitude Note per week.
- 10.) Your morning ritual.
- 11.) Listening to the Body.

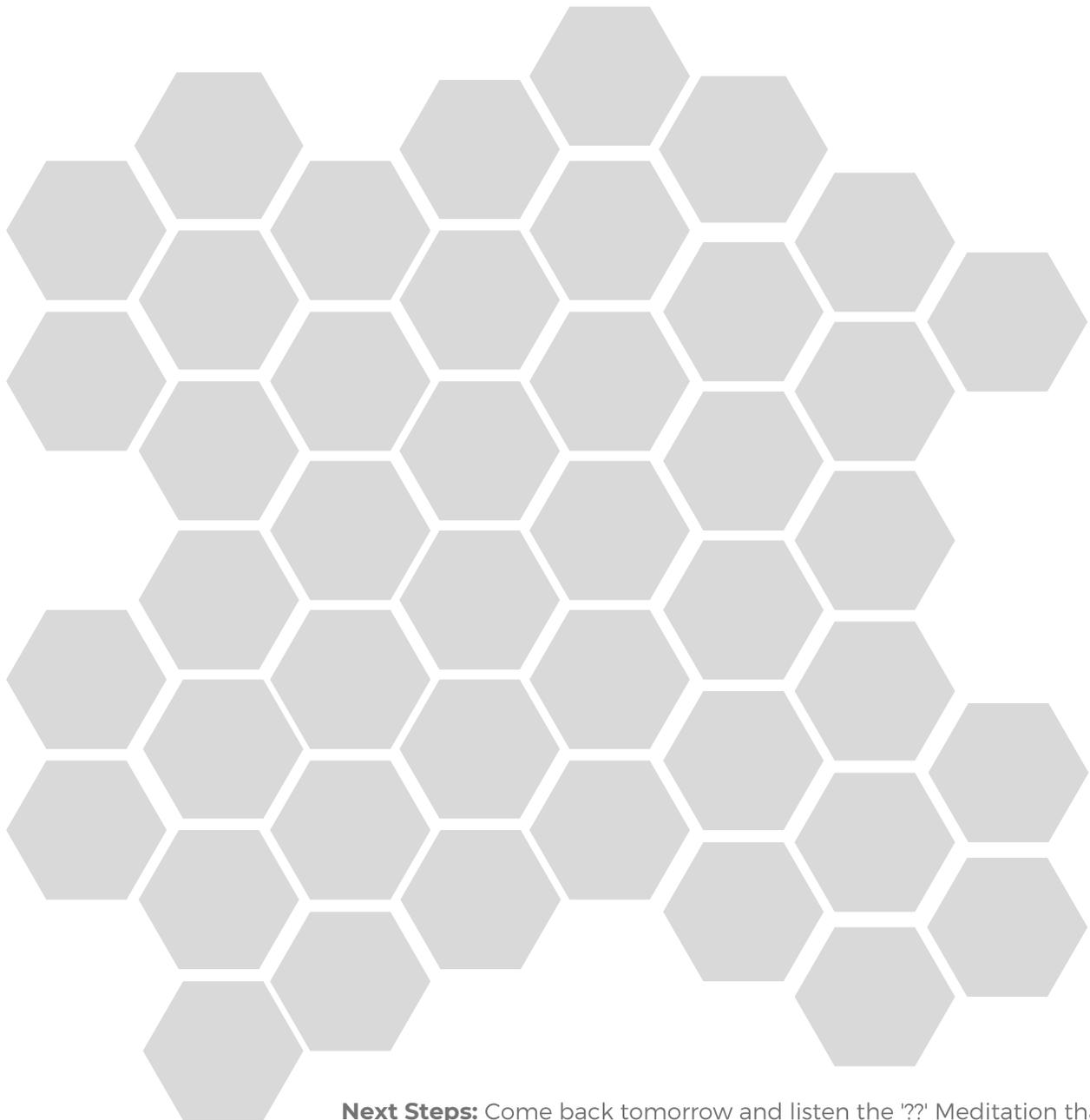
**Next Steps:** Listen to this week's Food For Thought mini podcast episode, if you haven't already and then complete Worksheet 32 on the next page.



## WORKSHEET 32

HABIT BUILDER: GRATITUDE CHAIN - GETTING TO "WOW"

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The point of this exercise is to intentionally expand your awareness to take in the full depth and breadth of what Nature provides day in and day out. Over the course of one day, write one item in each hexagon of the honey comb that is an essential part of your day and which has been made possible through the bounty of nature. Start with the obvious ones - air, water, the various foods you eat, etc. and then move to the deeper layers.



**Next Steps:** Come back tomorrow and listen the '??' Meditation that accompanies Worksheet 33.



# WORKSHEET 33

## GUIDED MEDITATION: SUSTENANCE

**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 **'Sustenance' Meditation** found through the link in your **Week Six Email**.

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



### GUIDED MEDITATION: ??

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 to move on, watch this week's 'Going Deeper' video.

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# MID-WEEK MINI CHALLENGE

## HOW TO

### GRATITUDE WALK

**For this week's mini challenge, we take a step outside and into nature for a Gratitude Walk.** If at all possible, I encourage you to set a destination for this walk that is not overly crowded but *is* particularly inspirational in its beauty. Of course, if that's not possible, that is perfectly ok! Just choose a particularly enchanting and peaceful time of the day. (Sunset is my favorite!)

You will also need to have a good sense of direction or a tool to help be sure that you can identify the four primary compass points in your surroundings (north, south, east, and west). This challenge incorporates a beautiful Native American tradition that honors the four primary directions as well as three more.

**Begin by setting an intention to walk with a soft and open heart and inviting in a sense of connection to the natural world around you.** Seek to connect with the part of your human consciousness that is *of* the natural world, attuned to its rhythms, its scents, its sounds and colors.

When you are ready, begin your walk. Breathe deeply, inviting in the renewal and rejuvenation of the fresh air. **As you walk, tune your attention to small details,** like the movement of leaves fluttering in the wind or the numerous shades of one particular color in the landscape. Pay attention to any sounds or, perhaps, the quality of the silence.

When it feels good for you, **pause and turn to the EAST.**

Notice the colors of the sky. Allow your eyes to trace the line of the horizon if it is visible. Take a moment to appreciate that this is the direction of hope, of promise, of new beginnings, and opportunity. Appreciate the symbolism and inevitability of the sunrise. Some days, it puts on a spectacular show. Other days, it is obscured by cloud, yet it never fails. The opportunity of the day is never refused to you. Say quietly to yourself, **"I am blessed by Nature's unfailing reminder of the gift of each new day."**

Resume your walk and when it feels good for you, **pause again and turn to the SOUTH.**

Notice the diversity of natural life, color, texture, and form in the scene before you. This is the direction of warmth, growth, creativity, and productivity. It is the direction of faith and relationships that bear fruit. Take a moment to appreciate how the earth always provides in good faith for us. Acknowledge how the creative forces of Nature serve as models and inspiration for our own creativity. Allow yourself to be humbled by the extraordinary abundance of the natural world as it *delights* and *sustains* us. Say quietly to yourself, **"I am blessed by Nature's generosity in providing everything I truly need."**

Continue your walk as you feel led. **When it feels right, turn to the WEST.** Notice the quality of light and the play of shadow. Allow your eyes to trace the path of the sun from the peak of day, down past the western horizon. This is the direction of rest and of closure. It symbolizes endings that make way for new beginnings. Appreciate the brilliant exuberance of closure that we know as sunset. There is no sadness here. Acknowledge how the earth lovingly embraces the return of the sun. Seek to learn acceptance from the natural cycle of dark and light, rise and fall, waking and resting, going and returning. Say quietly to yourself, **"I am blessed by Nature's ability to gently teach me to release my resistance and trust that everything has its time."**

Resume your walk. **When you feel ready, turn to face the NORTH.** Allow yourself to feel any breeze or stirring air. Allow your eyes to fall upon the trunks of any mature trees or any outcropping of rock or stone. If there is any body of water in your line of sight, allow yourself to notice the shape and movement of the water. This is the direction of strength, courage, fortitude, clarity and purpose. Appreciate the strength of all of these natural structures, while also noting that each, in its own way, is malleable. The trees dance in the wind. Air carves out caverns and deserts alike. Water is guided by earth and yet it softens stone. Stone builds mountains and fades into hills. Say quietly to yourself, **"I am blessed by Nature's example of how to be strong without being rigid."**

If you feel inclined, continue your walk and when you are ready, **turn once again to the EAST, but now raise your face to the sky ABOVE.** This is the direction of creation, of energy, of spirit, of the Infinite. Appreciate your smallness in the face of the scope of the Universe. Open your arms wide and marvel at the vast expanse of the heavens. Allow yourself to release the burden of control and give in to the simultaneous order and chaos of this system. **"I am blessed to receive the reassurance that life is at once order and chaos, and this is as it should be."**

Staying where you are, **turn your gaze to the ground BELOW.**

If you feel inclined, bend down to touch the earth. Feel the textures, the coolness or the warmth. This is the direction of Mother Nature's spirit. From her womb, we were each born. Appreciate the long natural history that eventually created you. Appreciate how there never has been and never will be another you. You are a beloved child of natural creation. **Quietly say to yourself, "I am blessed to have my life."**

Again, staying where you are, **place your hand on your heart and allow your eyes to close, turning INWARD.** This is the home of your spirit. This is the seat of your unique wisdom and experience. You are the culmination of everyone and everything that has come before you in combination with every experience you have ever had. You are a Universe unto yourself. **Quietly say to yourself, "I am blessed to be the consciousness that inhabits this body, in this place, in this moment. I am enough as I am."**

When you are ready, you may open your eyes and resume your walk. If you feel inclined, feel free to pick up a small token from your walk to take home with you - a particularly beautiful leaf, stone, flower, or other natural item. As you complete your walk, simply allow yourself to be as present, soft, and grateful, as you are able.

Gratitude walks are a wonderful way to ground yourself, especially if you have been experiencing a particularly frenetic pace or have been heavily immersed in mental activity, leaving your sensual experience behind. Although the walk in this challenge is more formal, gratitude walks can be whatever works best for you. The only requirement is that you take the walk with the intention of looking for things for which to be grateful.

I sincerely hope you have found this experience to be moving and uplifting.

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



# WORKSHEET 34

## 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 Six 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 35

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.

A large, solid gray rectangular area occupies the center of the page, intended for the user to write their reflections.

