

## Yoga Week 22: Yoga for Gratitude

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### What Is the Meaning of Gratitude?

- It is the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.
- Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, savor good experiences, improve mental and physical health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.

### Three Parts to Gratitude:

First -----> Feeling grateful for the good things in your life.

Second -----> Expressing your gratitude to the people who have made your life better.

Third -----> Adopting new behaviors because of interacting with those who have helped you.

### Improving Gratitude Daily

- Consider gratitude journaling
- Make a simple list of things, people, places, you are grateful for
  - Start with a list of 5-10 things, then gradually add more. See if you can make a list of 100 things. Be proud of yourself for doing this. This is a huge accomplishment
- Take a moment to send gratitude to someone close to you, someone far away from you and to yourself
- Breathing gratitude
  - Inhaling positivity, exhaling negativity.
- Smile through the challenging poses... remember, you grow when faced with new challenges.
- Practicing an "open heart" posture, lifting chin in the air, back straight, head held high.

### POSES FOR GRATITUDE

#### Child's Pose

- This pose is a resting pose set an intention for your practice.
- Child's pose allows you to turn inward.
- Sit back on the heels with the knees hip-width distance apart.
- Lower your torso and stretch arms overhead as the head lowers on to the floor.
- Relax the neck and shoulder and stay here if comfortable.

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### **Kneeling & Arm Circles**

- Sit up on your knees.
- Pretend you're holding a large beach ball.
- Pick up the large beach ball on the ground start making big circles with your arms.
- If you start going to your left side, complete a few full circles and re start on the right side.
- Stretching the back, spine, and torso allows you to open your heart and chest.
- Stretching arms over your head is beneficial if you're sitting for long periods during the day.

### **Camel Pose**

- Any yoga poses that open our hearts increase feelings of gratitude and connection.
- An example of an active heart opening pose is camel, in which the lower body is solid and supported by your shins on the floor, while your upper body is reaching up and back, opening the heart, throat and front of the shoulders.
- If you know or practice camel, be sure to engage your belly muscles the whole time, to protect the low back and hips.

### **Pigeon Pose**

- Pigeon is a half split with one leg stretched back so the top of the foot presses into the mat.
- The front leg is bent in front with the calf resting on the ground.
- The chest and torso are lifted with a slight arch in the back.
- This pose improves energy flow and circulation, and brings calmness to the mind.
- Hip stretches allow you to connect with the tightness and tension in your body and mindfully, consciously let it go.
- When you bring awareness to where there's tension, you can release it and feel grateful.
- Pigeon is a deep hip opener that has that effect.
- Repeat pigeon pose on the other side.

### **Peaceful Warrior**

- Step one leg back and one leg forward with toes pointed out in front.
- You're in a high lunge pose with your front knee bent.
- Hips are straight and aligned.
- Flip hand in front over so palm is facing the sky and lift arm up over head.
- The neck arches with the gaze toward the upraised hand.
- The back arm drops so the hand rests on the back leg behind the knee.
- This pose allows the chest and hips to open, calming the nervous system, and providing mental and physical benefits.
- Repeat peaceful warrior on other side.

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### Humble Warrior

- This pose will put you in a forward bend where your head will be below your heart.
- Position your legs in a high lunge with the hips squared facing forward.
- Hinge hips forward and arms stretch toward the head.
- The crown of the head may touch all the way to the ground.
- This pose opens the chest.
- This pose energizes the entire body.
- This pose draws focus inward, surrendering to your body and building up strength and stamina.
- Repeat humble warrior on other side.

Take a minute to think about a yoga pose that scares you or challenges you. Try to understand your limits and fears that come with this pose, then find a way to approach it with compassion. Try any pose, whether it's balancing on one foot, doing a headstand, backbend, or any pose to get you out of your comfort zone.

"This is a wonderful day I have never seen this one before."

– Maya Angelou

