

10 Reasons to Be Thankful & Why You Need a Gratitude List

By Jeff Goins

I'm sitting at McDonald's as the Macy's Thanksgiving parade blares behind me on the television. I drink my coffee, look outside, and smile. I have so much to be thankful for.



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The cost of gratitude

Today, I'm aware of the fact that life is better than I deserve, which is saying something these days. The world is full of pain and suffering, hardship and turmoil, disappointment and regret. So the fact that I can be thankful and *mean* it is, in its own way, a small miracle.

I'm learning there is a responsibility that comes with privilege. That I am blessed to bless. Gifted to give. I am not lucky, fortunate, or merely disciplined; I am *expected* to do something with the grace I've been given. And so are you.

When I was younger, I didn't understand gratitude. In a universe that seemed to hurt for no reason, giving thanks felt disingenuous. Living in a world where

children die of hunger every day, it just didn't make sense. But *now* I understand. Being grateful is a *choice*.

So today, I chose to make a list.

The gratitude list

Gratitude is not my natural disposition, so this took some time and effort. It was a discipline to remind myself of the many reasons I have to be grateful. But it was an exercise well worth the discomfort.

Here's my challenge to you: Take some time today, wherever you are and whatever you're doing, to come up with a gratitude list. If it doesn't come naturally, don't let that stop you from still giving thanks. There is still much to be thankful for, if we only have eyes to see.

And in case you were wondering, here are my 10 reasons to give thanks today:

1. I am thankful for my **health**, for being able to run half-marathons and eat turkey dinners.
2. I am thankful for my **wife**, who vowed to be my biggest fan on the day we were married and has never once let me down.
3. I am thankful for the gift and work of writing — that it is both extremely hard and easy at the same time. Easy to do, hard to master. Always frustrating. Always rewarding.
4. I am extremely thankful for the **online community** of writers and readers who are making a difference in the world. You guys inspire me.
5. I am thankful for **living in a town** full of creative minds and opportunities.
6. I am thankful for doing work that matters.
7. I am thankful for **music** — bands like Mumford and Sons and Nirvana and the Beatles. Their words and music inspire me to create my own art.
8. I am thankful for movies — for being able to turn part of my brain off and still be inspired.
9. I am thankful for books — eBooks, audiobooks, children's books, novels, and memoirs. My shelves are full of them, and they are my one true lust.
10. Lastly, and most importantly, I am thankful for **Grace** — for love that cannot be explained (only surrendered to), for a Creator that inspires creativity, for purpose and a hope that there is more to the story than we see.