

GRATEFULNESS PRACTICE

Here is an exercise you could do with your family at a special gathering. It is suitable for a birthday or an anniversary or anytime when you'd like to share your gratitude for life or for particular people.

Young children enjoy and catch on fast to this exercise. I have used it with my young grandchildren as a way to teach them the [Okagesamade Practice](#).

In America, Thanksgiving is celebrated this year on November 23, 2017. If you'd like to refresh your family's traditional ritual of thanks, you might try this:

- Make a copy of the worksheet for each guest.
- Have an adult pair off with a child and together you both fill out your worksheets. Explain that we will be giving thanks to those people who have helped us in our lives.
- Then walk them through each column.
 - Column One refers to a person's gifts, skills or talents.
For example, *"I'm good at making spaghetti dinners."*
 - Column Two reminds us about who helped us become skilled.
For example, *"My mom showed me how to make her special spaghetti sauce."*
 - Column Three is where we express *specific* thanks, making a connection between Column One and Column Two.
For example, *"Thank you, Mom, for your patience when I learned to cook. I know you preferred to do everything by yourself but you made an exception and showed me how to make your sauce. Every time I make your special recipe, you are in my heart. Every time my guests praise this meal, I tell them the story of our time in the kitchen. I have passed this recipe on to many now. I love you, Mom and miss you every day!"*

Then when you gather, preferably after everyone has eaten, take turns and listen as each person shares what they wish to from their worksheet. Let the youngest go first.

Expect to be surprised, friends! Usually, there is much laughter, some tears, and great joy at the heartfelt giving of thanks and the practice of remembering our abiding connection to others.

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 "Let the Beauty you love be what you do."—Rumi

Designs for Peace
Practices for Sustaining Lives of Meaning, Joy, and Beauty

November 18, 2017

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GIVING THANKS

OKAGESAMADE: *Because of you, this is possible...*

| | Body: I am good at... Mind: I know about... Spirit: I am... | Who helped me be good at this? Who helped me learn this? Who helped me become this? | My specific thank you to <u>(name)</u> is... |
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