

A PRACTICE GUIDE

Gratitude: The Tool Against Fear

Built around Dee Lopez's own reflection on the practice that carried her through her darkest times.

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IN DEE'S WORDS

How this practice found her

So I decided to drown out fear. I realized fear was just my imagination amplifying situations that didn't even exist. And if I could control my thoughts, I could control my fear.

That's where prayer became important — in a new way. Even when I had nothing to pray for, even when I was afraid, I could focus on gratitude. I'd pray for things I wanted to thank God for. Or thank Him in advance for things I wanted to happen. That let me ignore the fear and focus on the blessing instead.

That's how I got out of my darkest times. Praying in gratitude — because I couldn't think of anything else, and I didn't want to give my attention to the pain or the fear.

> *Fear isn't prophecy.*

Dee's reflection, presented verbatim from her writing. Two gifts live inside it: the thinking — fear is imagination pointed the wrong way, and you choose which thoughts you water — and the practice — gratitude prayer as the thing that crowds fear out.

THE PRACTICE

Gratitude prayer, step by step

Five minutes. No equipment. Works worst-day approved, because it was built on worst days.

1. Name the fear — briefly

Say it once, plainly, to God. Not a rehearsal, not a spiral: one honest sentence. Fear loses power when it has to fit in a sentence.

2. Thank Him for what is

Three things that are actually true right now — breath, a person, a roof, a mercy from yesterday. Specific beats grand. "Thank You for the coffee and for Rosa's text" outranks "thank You for everything."

3. Thank Him in advance

This is the move Dee's reflection describes: thank God ahead of time for what you are still waiting on. Not as a bargain, and not as a claim that the outcome is guaranteed — as a decision about where your attention lives while you wait.

4. Close by giving the fear back

"I've told You the truth, and I've told You thanks. The in-between is Yours." Then get up and do the next ordinary thing.

> What this practice is not: denial. Gratitude and grief can be true at the same time — see the Mourning & Sorrow Journal, also free in the Downloads library. Gratitude doesn't pretend the hard thing away; it refuses to let the hard thing be the only thing in the room.

SEVEN DAYS

A week of gratitude prayers

One page a day. Write the prayer itself, not a summary of it — the writing is the practice.

Day 1 — What held

Thank God for three things that simply held today — however ordinary.

Day 2 — Who showed up

Thank God for one person, by name, and for exactly what they did.

Day 3 — In advance

Thank God ahead of time for the thing you are most afraid about, as if the waiting were already behind you.

Day 4 — The small mercy

Thank God for the smallest mercy you can find. Hunt for it if you have to.

Day 5 — Strength I forgot I had

Thank God for one strength He has given you that you forget to use — and use it today.

Day 6 — Even this

Thank God for one thing inside a hard situation that is genuinely, defiantly good.

Day 7 — Out loud

Say today's gratitude out loud, to a person. Gratitude spoken becomes somebody else's courage.

FOR THE LOUDEST NIGHTS

When fear is louder than gratitude

Some nights the practice won't feel like it's working. Do it anyway — smaller. One thank-You, whispered, for one true thing. Then meditate with Psalm 27 or Psalm 34, the psalms Dee keeps near for exactly this, reading slowly until the words start praying you back.

And if the fear ever turns toward harming yourself, gratitude practice is not the tool for that moment — people are. Call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, U.S.), day or night.

Tonight, one true thing.