

# SKETCHBOOK ADVENTURES

## Prompt 9: A day of gratitude – Recognizing the grace in your life

My dad is one of those people who has it all figured out. He's in shape (even at over 60 years old he has a six pack), he always seems to be in a good mood, you never hear the words "I'm so stressed out" come out of his mouth, and he gives the best advice out of anyone I know. People who don't know him well think that he's just lucky to be happy, fit and smart, but they don't realize all the work he puts into being the best version of himself. He works out every day. He watches what he eats. (I actually asked him once why he didn't like French fries because I'd never seen him eat more than one. "I love French fries but I love fitting into my jeans even more," he answered.) He pays attention when people talk. There's always at least one personal growth (aka self-help) book on his bedside table. AND ... every single morning he writes a list of 10 things he's grateful for.

"What if you're not feeling particularly grateful one morning?" I asked him.

"Those are the days that writing down things I'm grateful for is the most important," he answered.

It made sense that on those days when you really don't want to get out of bed or when the tasks in front of you seem overwhelming or when you're focused on all the things that are wrong with you or your life, taking time and pushing yourself to seek and appreciate the good stuff is imperative. I tried his grateful exercise for a while and I was surprised, not because I had a lack of things to write down but because of the abundance. I'd start out thinking of one thing that I was grateful for and feeling pressure that I wouldn't be able to think of nine more things, but then before I knew it I was at 10 and the gratitude was still coming.

This prompt is inspired by my dad and his grateful list but I added a few twists. First divide your page into equal squares that are no smaller than 1.5 inches so that you have a bit of room to work with (my page divided into 12 squares). Then choose a day when you can spare 10 minutes once an hour and begin to fill each square with something you're grateful for. At each new hour, start a square until your page is full. Challenge yourself to use several of the techniques you learned in the workshop like collage, hand lettering, drawing etc. You can dedicate squares to things you're grateful for at the moment (like morning coffee) or general things in your life (like making art). At the end of the day, reflect back on your page of gratitude and marvel at the awesomeness of you and your life.

\*This is a great prompt to repeat multiple times since everyday there are new things to appreciate.

