

# NOVEMBER GRATITUDE CHALLENGE 2022

*Disrupt with Gratitude*



# INTRODUCTION

Gratitude is often seen as something to do in response to something, such as writing thank you cards for gifts received. But gratitude can also be a powerful tool to interrupt routines or moments of anxiety and act as a reminder that good can be present in those things too. This month, we want to invite you to see gratitude as a powerful tool for disruption. Feeling grumbly about doing the laundry? Take a moment and disrupt it with gratitude. HUD estimates that about 20% of Americans do not have a washer and dryer in their home, so instead of grumbling, give thanks for your washing machine...just take a second, disrupt the grumble with a deep breath and a moment of gratitude (then grumble about the fact that socks get eaten by the dryer). This month, we challenge you to embrace how practicing gratitude can interrupt us in really good and important ways.

We encourage everyone participating in the gratitude challenge this November to use the weekends as a chance to continue this new practice of disruption (more on this later). Each week, we invite you to take time for play on Saturdays. We'll give you some suggestions, but the idea is to intentionally create time without purpose in order to unlock creativity and joy, both of which generate reasons to be thankful. We're inviting everyone to see Sundays as a chance to practice self-care.

We hope that committing to 30 days of interrupting daily life practicing gratitude will inspire and sustain us through the holiday season and even help us interrupt those traditions and plans with unexpected moments of play, curiosity, joy, and gratitude.

# WEEK ONE

## *Disrupt Relationship Dynamics*

### **Nov 1: All Saints Day**

Today in the Christian Tradition we remember the incredible people who shaped our faith traditions. Sometimes it is easy to point out what we don't like about the Saints, so today, try and think of a saint you find challenging, and see if there is anything about them you can give thanks for.

### **Nov 2: All Souls Day**

Today in the Christian tradition we remember everyone who has died. Today is a chance to remember that humans are complicated and grief is complicated. We encourage you to give thanks for those you have loved who have died, and give yourself space to feel your feelings...gratitude, grief, joy, and sadness.

### **Nov 3: Those You Live With**

Sometimes it is easy to forget to give thanks for those you live with or interact with each day. Today we encourage you to disrupt the status quo at your house and thank each person you live with or those you encounter on a daily basis. Thank them for being a part of your life or for something specific they have done for you.

### **Nov 4: Friends and Family who Live at a Distance**

We live in an age where many of us live far away from our extended families or some of our friends. This can mean that we get busy and don't stay in touch like we would like to. Today, we want to invite you disrupt the usual routine and call someone who means a lot to you to let them know you are grateful for them.

# WEEK ONE

## *Disrupt Relationship Dynamics*

### **Nov 5: Play!**

Today we want you to plan to play. Look at your calendar and carve out time each week (we're suggesting Saturday, but you can do it whenever you want) that is unstructured. Remember, unstructured doesn't mean spontaneous; we sometimes have to make time for play. Treat play as important and protected as any other meeting on your calendar. Now, spend some time doing something you love! The best way to know if you've played well is to lose track of time, so go get lost in something you enjoy and give thanks for the time to play.

In Brené Brown's *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Brown spends an entire chapter talking about the importance of play. It is a core value of living what she calls a "whole-hearted life." Brown writes:

*Researcher Stuart Brown, MD, describes play as time spent without purpose. To me this sounds like the definition of an anxiety attack. I feel behind if I'm not using every last moment to be productive, whether that means working, cleaning the house or taking my son to baseball practice. But I can't ignore what the research (mine and others') tells us: Play—doing things just because they're fun and not because they'll help achieve a goal—is vital to human development. Brown believes that play is at the core of creativity and innovation. Play can mean snorkeling, scrapbooking or solving crossword puzzles; it's anything that makes us lose track of time and self-consciousness, creating the clearing where ideas are born. Which means it's a mistake to restrict play to vacations.*

Each week, we invite you to take time for play on Saturdays. We'll give you some suggestions, but the idea is to intentionally create time without purpose in order to unlock creativity and joy, both of which generate reasons to be thankful.

# WEEK TWO

## *Disrupt Chores*

*This week is a bit different from last week. While we've assigned a task to each day, feel free to jump around on the journal to meet your typical schedule, or feel free to disrupt your schedule and do chores on a completely different day!*

### **Nov 6: Self-Care Sunday!**

Today we want you to make a plan for ways you can take care of yourself each Sunday in November. Plan a small activity or outing for each Sunday that will help you feel rejuvenated, as our inability to practice gratitude often comes from the reality that our bucket is dry. Fill your bucket back up to help you practice gratitude and empathy this week.

### **Nov 7: Laundry**

For many of us, laundry is a chore that feels like slow torture. Today as you're doing the laundry, remember that for many people doing laundry is a much harder chore than it is for you. In our world today, many will have to use a laundromat while others will wash their clothes by hand and hang them on a line to dry.

### **Nov 8: Cooking**

While many of us enjoy cooking or baking, sometimes cooking becomes a chore. This week we want you to interrupt any grumbles about cooking with gratitude, because even though we'd probably all welcome a break from cooking, it is a gift to be able to provide sustenance for ourselves and for others.

# WEEK TWO

## *Disrupt Chores*

### **Nov 9: Dishes**

Not unlike laundry and cooking, doing the dishes can feel like a never-ending chore. With that said, doing dishes is a task that we can interrupt with gratitude in a few ways. Consider your dishes—why did you pick them, why do you like them, or who gave them to you? Give thanks for the dishes themselves and the way they make life easier.

### **Nov 10: Cleaning**

As you go about cleaning today, think about the tools that make it faster or easier and give thanks for those. Think about the things you are cleaning; do they offer you a moment to give thanks for something? Perhaps the easiest opportunity for gratitude is giving thanks for a newly cleaned living space.

### **Nov 11: House Maintenance Projects**

Today, we want you to practice gratitude as you go about your home maintenance projects, be it painting a room, raking leaves, or fixing something that is broken. Make sure to give thanks for yourself, your health and abilities, because without that you wouldn't be able to do the project.

### **Nov 12: Play!**

Today we encourage you to take the time to play! You might want to also take time to plan for play beyond the month of November. If you love to do embroidery, today you might want to make sure you have the supplies on hand. One of the best ways to use play as a form of disruption is to have something on hand to do that brings you life.

# WEEK THREE

## *Disrupt Schedules*

*While we've assigned a task to each day, you might not do that task on the day we have it listed, so feel free to jump around on the journal to meet your typical schedule, or feel free to disrupt your schedule and do errands on a completely different day!*

### **Nov 13: Self-Care Sunday!**

Today we encourage you to take time for self-care. Do something today that will help you feel rested and rejuvenated because often times our inability to practice gratitude comes from the reality that our bucket is dry. Today, we encourage you to fill your bucket back up to help you practice gratitude and empathy this week.

### **Nov 14: Groceries**

Grocery prices have made going grocery shopping more stressful than in years past. For many of us, the experience isn't a lot of fun, but a necessary task. Today, as you head to the grocery store, look for things to give thanks for, from items in stock to items on sale. Also be sure to practice gratitude by saying thank you to the employees you encounter today.

### **Nov 15: Gas Station/Mass Transit**

As you engage with transit today, consider ways you can practice gratitude in the midst of it. Give thanks for transportation, for the people who make it happen, for the ability to get from place to place, and so on. What are you thankful for when it comes to ways to get around your community?

# WEEK THREE

## *Disrupt Schedules*

### **Nov 16: Coffee Shop**

Often the practice of getting coffee is a habitual errand. As you go to the shop you frequent the most, consider what you like about it, from proximity to ambiance, give thanks for those things. Many of us say thank you to employees without much thought or consideration, but today consider practicing intentional gratitude with the staff of your favorite coffee shop.

### **Nov 17: Restaurants**

Disrupt the chore of cooking dinner with gratitude by eating at a restaurant. We often forget that going to a restaurant for dinner is a gift. Today, when you eat away from home, we encourage you to give thanks for the opportunity to do so. Consider those who've made your dinner a gift – from the cooks to the hostess – and say thank you with intention.

### **Nov 18: Work/School**

Work and school are places our days fall into routines, but are also some of the easiest places to disrupt with gratitude. Are there people who you can thank who make your work easier? Can you do something to help someone without their asking? Can you create a space for your colleagues to have a moment for gratitude or creativity? (Like organize lunch or a dance break.)

### **Nov 19: Play!**

Today we hope you think about ways to incorporate play into your time off. How can you add some play time into your vacation time? Or how can you play during your lunch break? Where can you plug in a moment or two of play in the midst of your schedule?



# WEEK FOUR

## *Disrupt Traditions*

### **Nov 20: Self-Care Sunday!**

Today we encourage you to take the time you set aside at the beginning of the month for self-care. Do something today that will help you feel rested and rejuvenated.

### **Nov 21: Travel**

Many people in the US will travel this week to visit family or go on vacation. While travel can be a chore or mindless, we want to encourage you to find ways to give thanks, from the opportunity to have time off to the people who are working so you can travel. Take a moment and give thanks for these things and practice gratitude with the people you encounter.

### **Nov 22: Thanksgiving Meal Prep**

Many people in the United States spend a great deal of time preparing food for Thanksgiving. From brining the turkey to creating dishes only prepared once a year. For many, this is a joyful and busy experience, and it's easy to get into a routine. We invite you to take a moment and give thanks while you're doing it. Are the recipes you're using a family tradition? Can you share stories of that person with younger generations? Can you practice gratitude at the store or with your family during this time of preparation?

### **Nov 23: Land Acknowledgement**

In the US the narrative around Thanksgiving that many of us were taught is harmful and not historically accurate. Today as we prepare for thanksgiving, interrupt those narratives by creating a new tradition. Take a moment today to research the Indigenous people who occupied the land where you are celebrating this week and learn something about them.

# WEEK FOUR

## *Disrupt Traditions*

### **Nov 24: Thanksgiving**

Today will be a busy day for many as they gather for Thanksgiving. Interrupt the busyness with prayer and gratitude. We encourage you to consider using the litany in the UTO Liturgy booklet for Thanksgiving, included at the end of this booklet (p. 14). If the litany doesn't feel appropriate given the guests gathering in your home, consider adding a gratitude practice as a part of your celebration. It can be as simple as having a few gratitude prompts for everyone to respond to or asking everyone to share a photo from their phone of a moment they are thankful to have experienced.

### **Nov 25: Black Friday**

Today is Black Friday - regardless of if you are shopping, we invite you to interrupt this day with gratitude for hourly workers. Many shop employees and their work goes unnoticed, but today we hope you'll give thanks for them either in person or at home. Give thanks for the people who move goods around the globe and for those that create them.

### **Nov 26: Play!**

Today in addition to the time you have set aside for play, we encourage you to invite someone to play alongside you. The fun thing about play is that it can be contagious. If you like playing games, they are more fun with a group. Invite someone to go for a walk with you to just hang out or take an art class with a friend. Commit to play with another person at least once before the end of the year.

# WEEK FIVE

## *Disrupt Transitions*

### **Nov 27: Self-Care Sunday!**

Today we encourage you to take the time you set aside at the beginning of the month for self-care. Do something today that will help you feel rested and rejuvenated because often times our inability to practice gratitude comes from the reality that our bucket is dry. Today, we encourage you fill your bucket back up to help you practice gratitude and empathy this week.

### **Nov 28: Disrupt the Rush**

As we move closer to December 1st, there is a great deal of pressure to move into Christmas well before the holiday begins. From shopping on Black Friday to Cyber Monday, many people have their eyes set on Christmas at this point, but what if we disrupted the rush to move from Thanksgiving to Christmas by taking a moment to give thanks for this in-between time. In-between times of transition can be moments of anxiety or moments of rest. What things can you give thanks for as one season ends and another begins? How can gratitude help you stay present to this moment before rushing to Christmas?

# WEEK FIVE

## *Disrupt Transitions*

### **Nov 29: Giving Tuesday**

Today in the United States we celebrate Giving Tuesday, which is in some ways a cultural phenomenon of gratitude. It asks us to donate to organizations doing good in our community or around the globe. We invite you to pay attention to Giving Tuesday, as an interruption to consumerism. How does Giving Tuesday help you recognize the good things happening in your community that you might otherwise overlook?

### **Nov 30: Commit to continuing the disruption**

As November comes to an end, we hope you've enjoyed the invitation to disrupt things. Tomorrow we will enter the season of Advent, a time of waiting and anticipation. It is a challenging time for most of us, as society wants us to rush to Christmas. Some stores put up Christmas items as soon as Halloween is over, but the work of waiting, anticipating, and preparing is important. So, today, we encourage you to think about ways you want to commit to disrupting the urge to rush to Christmas and list them here. We strongly recommend gratitude, play, and self-care as continuing forms of disruption.