



It's the little things

by **Ruth Simpson**

Doctor of Philosophy

Sometimes when you feel overwhelmed or stressed, it can start to make you feel like the world is a bit... meh. As a British student during COVID, I spent three months living in isolation during the lockdowns. All I saw every day was my four walls, my laptop screen, and my dirty pots and pans. The world started to feel very small and very lifeless. I knew I had to change something in my life.

My friend suggested to me that I start doing 'gratitudes'. She explained to me that you do this by choosing a few things to be grateful for every day. If I'm honest, at first, I rolled my eyes at the suggestion. Be grateful?! For being stuck in a pandemic and being locked in my house?! It just sounded so ridiculous at the time, but I know you can't knock it 'til you've tried it. With the intention of 'knocking it' later on, I gave it a half-hearted attempt. I started with the big things like 'I'm grateful for the sun, I'm grateful for my friends, I'm grateful for my mum...' It felt a bit superficial at the start, but the more I did it, the more I started to be won over by it.

After a week or so, my friend had decided that I'd graduated to the next level and challenged me to say unique 'gratitudes' every day; the smaller the better. While it was initially tough, I got used to noticing little beautiful things I had overlooked before. Tiny flowers pushing up from the curb, the lovely colour of my neighbour's washing, the carving of 'Nick + Gemma' on a park bench. Honestly, this changed a lot for me. Every day, when I went on my run or tidied my house, I was training my brain to search for things to be happy about, and I was surprised at how many were starting to jump out at me. While materially I was in the same place as I started, internally my perception of my situation had changed. I'm not saying this strategy will solve the larger issue, but for me, it helped to make the stressful days a little easier to manage and got me through the tough days of the lockdown.

And I still use this technique today! In fact, here are three things I'm grateful for this week:

- » I'm grateful that my flatmate made me a cup of tea when I got home
- » I'm grateful that my friend recommended that I switch to audiobooks rather than physical books (gamechanger!)
- » I'm grateful that the spider in my house came into the hall and not my bedroom

You really can be grateful for anything. I mean, I'm an arachnophobe being grateful for the spider in my house!

Give it a go and see what it does for you. Now, go forth and be grateful!

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finding small
moments of beauty
in the everyday