

The Blind Boy

..... source unknown (adapted and modified by Amy Fox)

There was once a blind boy who sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. In his hands he held up a sign which read, "I am blind, please help."

There were only a few coins in the boy's hat - spare change from folks as they hurried past. A man who was also walking by took notice of the boy's sign and the passerby's as they threw change into the boy's hat. The man took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat, but he also took the sign from the boy's hands, turned it around, and wrote some words. Afterwards, he put the sign back in the boy's hand so that everyone who walked by would see the new words.

Soon the boy's hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy.

Later that afternoon, the man who had changed the sign returned to see how things were. The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?"

The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way." I wrote, 'Today is a beautiful day, but I cannot see it.'

Both signs, you see, spoke the truth. But the first sign simply said you were blind, while the second sign conveyed to everyone walking by how grateful they should be to see..."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

OPENING CLASS

"Gratitude helps you see what is there, instead of what isn't."

We often think of gratitude as the opposite of our challenges and the things that make life hard. But, gratitude isn't waiting for things to be perfect, nor is it a blindly optimistic approach in which the bad things in our life are whitewashed and ignored.

Suffering and adversity are part of life, but when we focus on the gifts of life and the gifts we have in our life, we're able to find joy, happiness and hope. Gratitude is a matter of where we shift our focus and attention.

As you arrive on your mat today, what can you celebrate? Maybe it's that you made it to your mat today. Maybe it's that you have your breath, the gift of being alive. Maybe it's your kids, your husband, your wife – someone who lights you up.

Start to deepen your breath and with each inhale, call up something you're celebrating. See how much you can expand your breath and your mind to see what's good. And if it's challenging, just focus on the breath. Start there and know that's enough.

DURING CLASS

We take about 22,000 breaths a day. How many today have you noticed? How many more can you fully lean into and appreciate?

Gratitude isn't about waiting for things to be right or perfect – or even for them to change. Gratitude is a habit. It's a way of looking at the world and all the good things in it, regardless of whether or not our current situation is to our liking. It's a heart-centered practice and approach to life that allows us to attract more things into our life for which to be grateful.

What in this moment can you celebrate? Maybe it's that you have a body with which to practice today, even if your practice doesn't look like yesterday's practice. Perhaps it's that you have a strong heart pulsing blood through your veins, giving you the gift of life and movement.

Start with the little things. The little things will become the big things. And the more we celebrate, the more we find to celebrate.

CLOSING CLASS

Take one hand to your heart, one hand to your belly. Feel the rise and fall of your chest, the swell and empty of your belly. Notice your breath.

See if you can locate the subtle beating of your heart.

These two simple things, things we often take for granted because they automatically happen for us, are gifts, never the guarantee. None of us know if we have five years or five minutes from now.

May you make the most of this moment. May you celebrate and cherish what you already have in your life.

You are enough. You have enough. And where you are in this moment, is exactly where you are meant to be.

A NEW WAY TO THEME

Sometimes a really powerful way to tell a story is to start with a prompt to prime our students brains and then jump into telling the story later in class before driving the point home.

Obviously, you can tell the story at the start, but you can also use the Opening Class prompts to start class. From there go into your Sun A, B and C movements. During this time you can use the During Class prompts. After your Sun C movements, while your students are holding a static posture of effort, you can tell the story. Not only does it help hold your students attention but it can drive home the lesson of gratitude and the power of shifting our focus in moments of intense effort and challenge.