



If you are like most people, you notice what goes wrong more than what goes right. I tend to blame myself a great deal more than I praise myself. I find all of the things that I have done wrong, or not well enough, and gloss over the things that I have completed successfully. It is easier for me to beat myself up than to congratulate myself for a job well done.

When I don't practice, I start to feel it first in my body. Little aches and pains appear first. My mental state is affected next--- I start to notice all of the little things that are going wrong. I overlook all of the little things that are going right. I start to look at the big long "to-do" list and a dreaded sense of foreboding begins to creep in. Things seem out of control and overwhelming.

Luckily, as quickly as all of these negative emotions appear, coming back to my mat makes these feelings fade. Things start to fall into perspective. The little things that seemed like boulders ready to topple me turn to pebbles, and I shift my vision. Things are more manageable.

The most valuable and poignant lesson that yoga has taught me is gratitude. I have learned to

be thankful for and cognizant of all of the little miracles in my life. Every day, I witness some miracle or another. We live in this divine world, and when we take time to step away from the grind, the little miracles appear. Sometimes it's a beautiful and delicate flower growing and flourishing between two hard and unforgiving bricks, a soft light precariously wedged between two hard surfaces. Sometimes it is the kind action of a stranger, or the heartfelt words of a friend at just the right moment.

I am grateful for my yoga practice for teaching me gratitude. My family is grateful for my yoga practice because it keeps me sane. I feel and behave noticeably different when I abandon my practice. My practice never abandons me.

The holidays tend to bring out the stress. This Thanksgiving, take a break from beating yourself up. Get off the couch. Take time for yourself. Come to your mat and get grounded in gratitude. Our bodies are miraculous. We are capable of doing amazing things. When we count our blessings and tune into our true, authentic selves, we become grounded in gratitude and able to reach new heights, on our mat and in our lives.

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