



EVERYDAY GRATITUDE

Gratitude is often talked about during times of grief, but why?

Grief shakes up our world, fogs our brain, and can even take a toll on our body. These changes take so much emotional and physical energy, it can be difficult to process feelings, life events, stress, etc. While it is sometimes tempting to just ignore our grief or sweep it under the rug, we know deep down that these things don't actually *help* us - it just delays the journey.

One great thing that we know about the brain is that we can train it. We can train it to take time to honor and process our grief, and we can train it to see small but wonderful blessings in the midst of a difficult journey. Gratitude is not "at least I still have ..." or "I'm hurting so much but ..." Those are dismissive to your struggles. It is giving compassion to your struggle while also taking time to notice small bits of brightness through the dark. It's taking time to be grateful for a specific family member or friend's support, it's being able to use your person's favorite mug for coffee that morning, or noting a special change in seasons. It's about training our brain to live along side grief - not letting it lead us or leaving it behind. It's tucking it in our pocket for safe keeping, as we continue to enjoy small things in our daily lives.

All you need for this activity is an empty picture frame, a print out of the gratitude graphic, and a dry erase marker. Cut the graphic down to a size that will fit in your frame and close it up. Place it in your home where you will be able to see it. Make a habit of writing some things you are grateful for on the glass with your dry erase marker every day. It's functional art that helps us to cope with our grief and continue to practice enjoying life!