

# Gratitude practice

I'm having a hard time writing a holiday reflection this year. So much suffering. So much joy. How can one heart hold "everything everywhere all at once"? My meditation group has responded with a focus on gratitude, so I'll start there:



by  
Janet Rechtman

The author is a retired University of Georgia faculty member who moved to Chico in 2018 to be near her grandchildren.

I am "grateful-for" having a family, a home, friends, enough food and warmth to make it through life's challenges. I am grateful-for Medicare, for paved roads, for our beautiful parks and green spaces, for the big sky that greets me every morning. I am grateful-for Zoom which lets me stay connected to good friends and good ideas.

Being grateful-for is a way to appreciate what life offers.

The counterpart to grateful-for is feeling grateful-to. I am grateful-to all those who help ensure I have all the things I am grateful-for. I am grateful-to my family for being

there when I need them while living their own rich lives (for which I hope they are grateful). I am grateful-to folks who make up crossword puzzles and those journalists who report on important issues in the newspapers that surround those crossword puzzles.

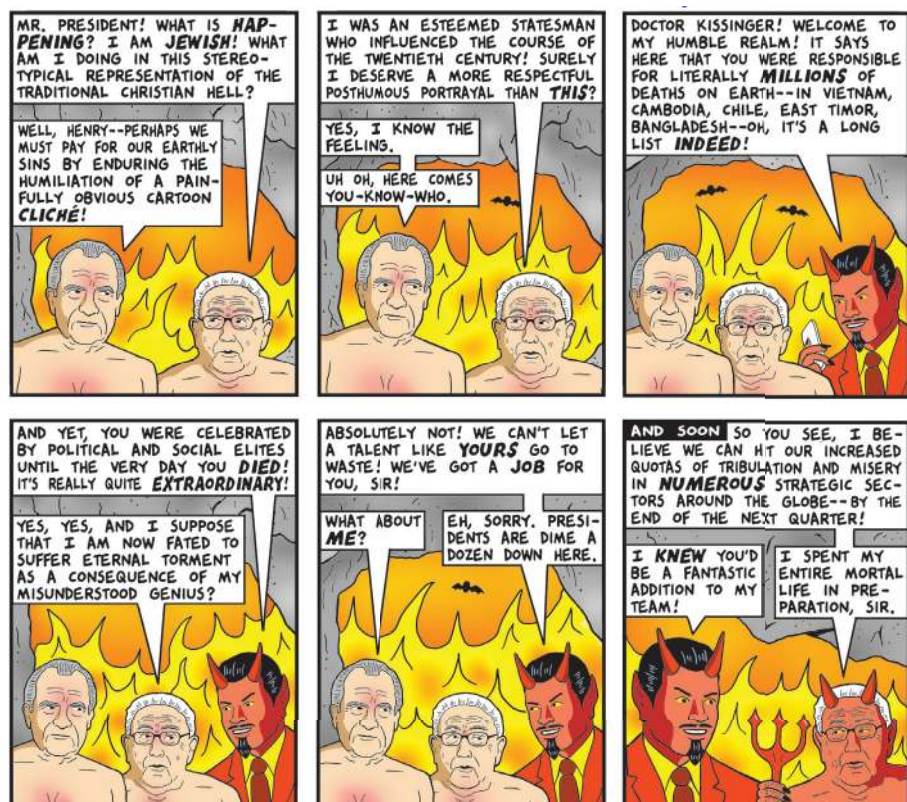
I am especially grateful-to people who have the courage to stand up for their beliefs, bearing witness to wrongdoing and acting with kindness and compassion in response to suffering. For example, those who appreciate having homes can more deeply understand the challenges of being homeless. People who have enough money may choose to help rather than blame those without resources. Gratitude for good health softens the tendency to stigmatize others for their mental and physical illnesses, addictions, and lack of self-care.

The practice of gratitude can help ease the pain of loss and grief, by being grateful-for the lives of people now gone and grateful-to those we lost for the gifts they brought when they were alive. I also think of the Camp Fire survivors I've met who were burned

GUEST COMMENT CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

## THIS MODERN WORLD

BY TOM TOMORROW



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