MAY CAUSE HAPPINESS

A GRATITUDE JOURNAL

FROM THE
TEACHINGS OF
BROTHER DAVID
STEINDL-RAST



sounds true
BOULDER, COLORADO

EDITOR'S NOTE

Sounds True is delighted to bring you this journal—peppered throughout with quotations from the writings of our dear friend, Benedictine monk Brother David Steindl-Rast, particularly his writings on gratitude and happiness. One of Brother David's core teachings, and one that continues to move us in deep and surprising ways, is that in any given moment life gives us the opportunity to be grateful.

If you have ever kept a journal, you know that a regular writing practice is a wonderful gift, especially when we are feeling stressed or stretched by life. It gives us permission to observe, question, and wrestle with how life works and who we are within it. We live in a world so full of distractions. As Brother David writes in *The Way of Silence*, "Oversaturation of our senses tends to dim our alertness. A deluge of sense impressions tends to distract the heart from single-minded attention. This gives me a new appreciation for the hermitage, a fresh understanding of what solitude is all about. The hermit—the hermit in each of us—does not run away from the world, but seeks that Still Point within, where the heartbeat of the world can be heard."

Regular journaling allows you to find your Still Point—that quiet place within you where your innate wisdom resides—and hear the heartbeat of the world. We think Brother David's extraordinary insights about living with passionate aliveness will aid in your inquiry. (It should be noted that Brother David

reviewed the quotations and in some cases changed the wording slightly in order to clarify a point.)

There is no right or wrong way to use this journal. Bring it with you in your bag or briefcase. Pull it out and scribble down a few thoughts as they occur to you, or leave it by your bedside or reading chair and develop (or continue) a regular writing habit. If you have been telling yourself that you never have time to write, pick a regular, convenient time each day or week and commit to writing then. Put it on your calendar or set a reminder on your phone. Just try it and find what works for you.

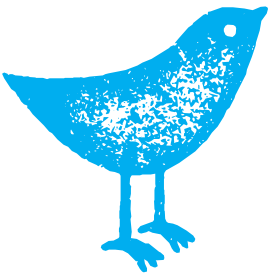
Brother David's words are added for inspiration. I hope they help unlock your stories, thoughts, and feelings. Sometimes they want to be read more than once, or you may find yourself wrestling with them. You might even want to talk back to the words at the top of a given page. Great. It's *your* journal.

And may you find, as I have through the process of re-reading Brother David's body of writings to select the quotations for this journal, a glimpse of what he means by a sense of "limitless belonging" to this world, an awakened sense of gratitude, curiosity, and awe. As Brother David writes in *Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer*, "As we learn to give thanks for all of life and death, for all of this given world of ours, we find a deep joy—the joy of courageous trust, the joy of faith in [what Reinhold Niebuhr called] 'the faithfulness at the heart of all things.' It is the joy of gratefulness in touch with the fullness of life."

CAROLINE PINCUS FOR SOUNDS TRUE



BEFORE I TURN
OFF THE LIGHT IN
THE EVENING, I JOT
DOWN IN MY POCKET
CALENDAR ONE
THING FOR WHICH I
HAVE NEVER BEFORE
BEEN GRATEFUL.
I HAVE DONE THIS
FOR YEARS, AND THE
SUPPLY STILL SEEMS
INEXHAUSTIBLE.



BEING IN THE PRESENCE, BEING PRESENT, MEANS A CONTINUOUS ENCOUNTER WITH MYSTERY. NOT ONLY BEING PRESENT TO ANOTHER, BUT BEING PRESENT TO THE WATER WE DRINK, AND TO THE FLOWERS WE SEE, AND TO EVERYTHING THAT COMES OUR WAY—EVERY THING, EVERY PERSON, EVERY ANIMAL, EVERY PLANT, EVERY SITUATION IN LIFE, OPEN FOR ENCOUNTER.



On an island in Maine, I once found tidal pools on the granite shore with water so still and clear I could see the fine fibrils of sea anemones on the bottom, waving like festive streamers. Still more limpid is the inner space to which silence is the key. I don't always find that key, but when I do, I simply enter.