



The Gratitude Ride! 90-minute Thanksgiving Ride

The Gratitude Ride 2012

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I've dedicated my Thanksgiving ride to "Gratitude" because we have so many reasons to be grateful in life. We also have challenges, but when you can find a way to be grateful even for the challenges in your life because of the lessons they bring you, and for all the ways that you've grown, those challenges seem less burdensome; they are yet another lesson on our paths. Think about it! Most of our personal growth has come from the challenges of our past.

As my students walk into class, I'll give them a Post-It Note and a pencil, and ask them to write down three things they are most grateful for on one side, and on the other side, write down three challenges in their life they would like to overcome. Tell them you won't be collecting them and that no one else has to see them – it's just for them. Just the act of writing them down will bring these thoughts to their attention. They can fold them up and put them in their pockets or slide the folded paper just under the elastic of their bike shorts so it's kept close. Or, they can use the sticky side of the Post-It and stick it to their handlebars. During the ride, we will focus on each of these, and hopefully, they will discover that their gratitude list will grow and grow (we'll highlight a few more during the ride), while their challenges list can seem less and less of a burden depending on how you look at it. It's all about *ATTITUDE!*

I'll throw a couple of motivational quotes in throughout the ride.

1. Celebrate Love, Klangstrahler Projekt, Pick Me Off the Dirt, 4:54 90bpm

The first part of this ride is an "appetizer"and that appetizer is love. Since this holiday represents family and gratitude, what is better than celebrating love? This song has a gentle vibe and rhythm to get you started, and the 90rpm does wonders to warm-up the body for the journey ahead.

(Explain the purpose of the ride, hand out the Post-it Notes and pencils, ask everyone to write 3 things they are grateful for, and on the other side, 3 things that are challenges in their lives. No one else will see it, but they'll consider these things at some point in today's ride.)

As you warm up, as your legs can take on a little more, add a little more resistance every now and then. In today's ride I'm going to take you past your comfort zone. I hope you'll go there with me. Because you know what?

Life begins on the edge of your comfort zone!

So, if you'll allow me to push you, you'll do a lot more than just burn a lot of calories today. I'm going to make you think, and I'm going to challenge you to do just a little bit more than you thought you could.



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*“If we did all the things we are capable of, we would literally astound ourselves.”
Thomas Edison*

2. Love is My Religion, Ziggy Marley, Love is My Religion, 3:44 97bpm

Continuing the appetizer of “Love”, this time you’ll surge the legs to the 97rpm (to match the song), hold for 45-ish seconds, then let the legs slow down (cadence your choice, below 80rpm) for 30 seconds. A great warm-up.

3. Maximum Joy (DJ Rene Club Mix), Frankie Goes to Hollywood, The Club Mixes 2000, 9:45 70bpm

Ease yourself onto a climb. This is our first one of several we’ll encounter, this one almost 10 minutes. We’re going to start carving off those calories! The name of this song is Maximum Joy, and that is what I want you to keep at the forefront of your mind. Enjoy the feeling of the work on your legs. Enjoy the sensation of challenge. Enjoy the Maximum Joy that riding brings you.

Add resistance at 2:00, then pause at 3:06, have everyone focus on the lyrics, then stand at 4:15 for 30 seconds. Then sit, back off a little. Continuing adding a little more every minute, until you pause at 6:08 when the music pauses. Then after it builds, stand at 6:38 for 30 seconds, and then alternate in and out of the saddle every 30-45 seconds, for about the same amount of time. Intensity is challenging, but still below threshold. Finish the song out of the saddle.

As you continue to climb, think about the maximum joy that family, friends, fitness, and food brings you! Isn’t that what this holiday is about?

4. Say Hey I Love You, Michael Franti & Spearhead, All Rebel Rockers, 3:56

Use this time for a recovery, you’ve got quite a bit of challenge ahead of you. Still working on the appetizer of love, filling up our thoughts with gratitude.

Just before the next song starts, tell them:

This next song will represent some challenges in your life. And it has a reminder for you...listen to the lyrics as soon as the song starts....

5. Take a Breath, Klangstrahler Projekt, Sinnestauschung, 6:48 100bpm

Let him talk until 1:15 into the song before saying any more. First have them grab the beat at 100 rpm, but keep the resistance mild until the three challenges below.

Your first task is to grab onto that beat. It’s a fast cadence of 100 rpm. For some of you, that in itself will be a challenge to do it correctly. If you relax your upper body you’ll find it a little easier.

*The message? **Take a breath!** Whenever you are presented with a challenge in life, take a deep breath before reacting. You’d be surprised at how much difficulty would be avoided if we all did that, right? It’s also a very important message to athletes, in other words,*



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YOU, as your challenge continues. You are going to focus on your breath in this segment here. You are going to grab onto the beat and turn up the resistance and pedal fast against a resistance in intervals of 45, then 60, then 90 seconds at 100rpm. Each time the challenge grows.

Remember the three challenges you wrote down on your note? Bring those to mind during these three short intervals. Before you know it, they will be behind you. But I want you to learn from each one. Because you know what they say,

“Live and Learn. Or Live and Don’t Learn.”

It’s pretty simple! It’s your choice. Let’s learn from these, and get better each time. Did you know that emotional fitness can be trained just like physical fitness? But you have to work at it, just like you have to work at your fitness, simply talking about it just doesn’t cut it – and we are about to simulate that. Ready?

These are the intervals. Because of the high cadence, do these seated, but if your students need a saddle break, do it during the recoveries while slowing down the legs.

- Start the first “challenge” at 2:00, raise the resistance (R) but maintain the cadence (C) of 100rpm. If their legs slow down, it’s too much resistance. Hold for 45 seconds. Then turn it down. They can slow down the legs if needed. It’s a short recovery of 30 seconds.

- Next one at 3:13 (with the cymbals). Hold 60 seconds. Then ease up (R & C)

When he says “Take a Breath” at 4:30, remind them how important that is, to be aware of their breath both to recover and also during the actual physical challenge. This is one of the lessons they can learn from these “interval challenges”.

- Next one at 5:07 (with the surge in energy of the song), and hold until the end. This will be quite hard if done correctly, the song builds at 6:15 (it will be 1:40 total). Total relief when the song is over! The song gets a bit shrill at the end...but that is the idea.

Hear how the song has become shrill? That’s ok, that’s your sign you’re doing this right, moving past the uncomfortable things in life, those challenges that grate on us. Yes it hurts a bit....hold it, hold it, it all comes to an end sooner or later.

As soon as the song ends:

That my friends, was a challenge in your life that you have just ridden past, and you learned from each one!

6. Joe Cocker, Feeling Alright 4:12

This will be an easy to moderate seated flat, preparing for more hills. Stand up occasionally to stretch the legs.

*Feeling grateful for feeling all right! Thankful for life, thankful that challenges in life always have an end to them. Remember, those challenges are what have made us the people we are today. Stronger, more resilient. They will always, **always** pass! And how we*



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*get through them is more dependent on our **ATTITUDE** than anything else. Remember this wonderful quote:*

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change!
~Wayne Dyer

7. Thing of Beauty, Hothouse Flowers, Songs From the Rain, 5:27 128 bpm

The MAIN Course is about to start! You've got an 18-minute hill in front of you. Start by grabbing the beat, then dial a moderate hill underneath you. Make sure to give yourself room to grow your hill.

What is the first thing on your "gratitude" list? Let that accompany you on this first part of the climb. This song asks you to feel grateful for the beauty around us, it's there to remind us every single day. Do you appreciate it on a daily basis? If not, try doing that, and you might see a difference in your day!

Resistance load once a minute for the first 4 min, then stand up at 5:00 and stay standing for 90 sec.

8. Feeling Good (Epic Mix), Huff & Herb, Buddha Bar (disc2) 6:57 130bpm

Sit back down, ease up the hill just a little, but continue to climb to the beat at 65 rpm.

*What else are you grateful for today? Here's one to add to your list: the name of this song is **Feeling Good** – and it has that feeling good joyful vibe! Nina Simone, the famous jazz singer, gives you another reason to feel grateful – grateful for feeling good; grateful for our fitness, grateful for these bikes, how they help us feel even better, even fitter, even more beautiful!*

At the end of each minute, stand up for 15 seconds, then sit back down, back it off, but not all the way to where you had it. In other words, let it get a little harder each time, until you reach threshold, then hold it, still standing for those 15 seconds at the end of each minute.

9. Right Here, Right Now, (Freemasons Mix), Fatboy Slim, Shakedown, 5:44, 126bpm

So, how about that third thing on your gratitude list? Bring it into your attention for this last song on this hill. For this song we're going to alternate seated climbs with standing, but this time about every 30 or so seconds. Try to keep your intensity constant to the top.

Note: try to match the energy breaks of the song when you sit and stand.

*This song's message? **Grateful for the present moment.** Right here, right now. It's impossible to be bummed out when you are right here, right now, focusing on your movement, your breath, how your body is sweating, how it reacts to the climb.*

At 2:48, it slows down, sit during the lyrics "Right Here, Right Now" be quiet and let them absorb it, then when the energy picks up at 3:20, stand up.



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*We do not remember days; we remember moments!
Make this a moment to remember!
Nothing is worth more than this moment!*

- 10. Thank You, Alanis Morissette, The Collection (Bonus Track Version) 4:18 92bpm**
Come off the hill, let the legs spin. Collect your energy, collect your thoughts. This song challenges you to be thankful even for the things that challenge you! Breathe, relax, recover.

Notice at 20 sec, she says “How bout stopping eating when I’m full up” – perfect to bring to your class’ attention!

- 11. Food & Creative Love, Rusted Root, When I Woke, 4:13, 134bpm**
The first part of this song is easy, Start thinking of your feast on this Thanksgiving – Food and Creative Love.

At 1:42 the song takes off...

Dial in a hill, and listen to those lyrics. All I Want is Food and Creative Love... Grateful for the food, and grateful for the creative love that prepares your feast. Even though we love it, we need to burn it off....let every pedal stroke counter another mouthful. Enjoy this short climb.

Stay seated until the final 30-45 seconds, then stand and push).

- 12. Peaceful World, John Mellancamp, John Mellancamp’s Greatest Hits, 4:08 88bpm**
Flat road consistent 88rpm, stand occasionally if needed, but you may have to slow the legs when you stand.

Here is another reason to be grateful – for a peaceful world! Who doesn’t want that? Sometimes we just need to put our collective energy to create the peace the world needs now. There are too many places in this world where peace is a long way away; even in our own country there are a lot of social challenges, but all I want you to think of is his words in this song, “If you’re not part of the future then get out of the way.” The future is up to you and me, now more than ever.

- 13. Coming to America, Neil Diamond, 4:19, 130bpm**

Resistance load on this part of the hill staying seated all the way, get them ready for a harder second part of the hill.

We’ve got our final hill in front of us, this one is 12 minutes. This song represents what the original Thanksgiving was celebrating, being grateful for a safe arrival in America. And now look where we are! It is not perfect... but we still are (should be) grateful for



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what we have.

14. Now We Are Free (Andy & The Lamboy Club Mix), Andy vs Dreamgate, 7:47

This song is a culmination of everything we've pondered today. It's your climb, you can do what you want, you can do what the music inspires you to do. There is plenty of energy if you feel like pushing yourself, or if desired, you can just sit and climb this hill at a moderate pace. You can stand, you can sit, you can alternate, just feel the joy of this song.

Don't talk much, just enjoy the moment with your students!

15. Lust For Life, Iggy Pop, Trainspotting, 5:13 100bpm

Come off the hill, let the HR come down for a minute...

...but I didn't say the challenge was completely over just because the climb was over, did I! We've got one more, similar to the other fast cadence challenges we had earlier. You're going to push it to 100rpm for 60 seconds, recover 30 seconds, then push again for 60, continuing that to the end of the song. Short fast surges, a challenge worthy of those who have a Lust for Life!

16. Whoever You Are, Geggy Tah, Sacred Cow, 4:34

Ah yes, it's time to cool down, time for the dessert course. No more challenges. Please forgive me if you end up with this song in your head the rest of the day...but this is on purpose. Now's the time to add a few more items to our gratitude list – be grateful for those little things in life too, like he talks about in this song. He's saying Thank You to someone he doesn't know, just because they let him change lanes in his car! But think about it, the more we are grateful for, even those little things we usually take for granted, the more we attract a lot more good things into our lives.

16. Ray Charles, America the Beautiful

17. Closing Song: To Go Beyond, Enya, The Celts, 1:22

Don't we live in such a beautiful place?

Stretch. Remind them how they overcame their challenges and solidified the things for which they were grateful. Give them one more challenge:

I've got one more challenge for you to take with you: over this weekend, see how many things you can find to be grateful for. You may even want to write them down. Think about things you hadn't thought about before, things that might seem insignificant, but things you realize you either couldn't live without, or even things you wouldn't want to live without. I guarantee you, once you bring them to your attention, they won't be insignificant anymore!

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Dear members of the Indoor Cycling Association,

First I want to say I am very grateful to you for trusting me to educate and inspire you in your amazing journey as an indoor cycling instructor. Wayne Dyer said, “*Doing what you love is the cornerstone of having abundance in your life.*” Creating ICA has been my chance to really do what I love, and because of you all, you who have joined ICA to learn and grow, I have abundance in my life, and I am truly grateful!

I want to leave you with another amazing quote. I consider myself a spiritual person, but not religious, so depending on your beliefs, you can substitute the word “God” with “The Universe”; but in the end, it’s all the same! This quote is more about being empowered and taking responsibility for whatever we become. I think this quote is perfect for the challenges that are presented in this ride, and for the meaning of this Thanksgiving holiday - *being grateful*. This quote represents what I mean about being grateful even for the challenges we encounter in our lives because of how they mold us into the people we become. You may decide to read this to your class if you feel comfortable doing so. I do believe that as coaches of indoor cycling classes, we have a unique opportunity to tie our physical efforts in class, our lessons in patience and perseverance on the hills or intervals, our suffering, our need to push ourselves beyond what we thought we could do, our need to recover and take care of ourselves, and all of our successes, into what we encounter on a daily basis in our lives outside of cycle class. This analogy is a unique characteristic of coaching indoor cycling!

Happy Thanksgiving, wherever you are in the world!

Love and Cadence,

Jennifer Sage

*I asked for STRENGTH... and God gave me difficulties to make me strong.
I asked for WISDOM... and God gave me problems to solve.
I asked for PROSPERITY... and God gave me brawn and brains to work.
I asked for COURAGE... and God gave me dangers to overcome.
I asked for PATIENCE... and God placed me in situations
where I was forced to wait.
I asked for LOVE... and God gave me troubled people to help.
I asked for FAVORS... and God gave me opportunities.
I asked for everything, so I could enjoy life.
Instead, He gave me LIFE, so I could enjoy everything.
I received nothing I wanted, but I received everything I needed.*