

# Gratitude

HERMOSA BEACH, CA

11TH JUNE, 2024

7:00PM

## WRITTEN BY + DEDICATED TO:

*Marina Williams*

### CAST

Amanda Gleason  
Amy Ruth  
Bella Carson  
Charlie Lusk  
Chelsea Cho  
Devon Parkes  
Ella Corcoran  
Harper Mitchell  
Kamille Peterson  
Kamryn McCook  
Karenn Merhta  
Kylie Clark  
Maxwell Shinn  
Maitreya Donahue  
Mia Carney  
Olympia Secondari  
Paige Corcoran  
Sophie Nack



## ABOUT 'GRATITUDE'

Nearly a decade ago... One of our beloved students whose passion for dance was over the moon, feared she had severe asthma. Through years of excessive testing, diagnosis, re-diagnosis, and treatments, Marina found out she was battling multiple life-threatening diseases. The term for Marina's illness "Dysautonomia" is most easily explained as the umbrella term for disorders that disrupt your autonomic nervous system (ANS)... But there's nothing easy about it. She lives second to second hoping one of the chronic illnesses she has doesn't attack another. Her journey has left her unable to stand up, sit up, or speak... But you wouldn't know any of this if you were to spend a day texting with her. A few months ago, when deciding the direction of our final show, I was feeling defeated and complacent. Without knowing any of this, Marina sent me a text message out of the blue that changed my perspective quickly. She simply shared how grateful she was for our time together dancing. At that moment, she stated she hadn't been able to watch herself dance in years and finally pulled a video out of some improv she did for me years ago. She could finally watch it again and feel grateful for the time in the studio she had. It made my purpose reignite, just from her saying those simple words. It was her gratitude for a safe place to dance and create that reminded me of my why all over again, and here I am... capable of moving, Marina not, and SHE was the one finding glimpses of gratitude that we often forget to see or let all of the hard stuff cloud the gratitude we should be locating. Gratitude, it was the perfect title and it was my honor to ask her to write out her understanding of it and how it's changed throughout her life. This beautiful explanation of gratitude from someone who you would think would have the hardest time locating any gratitude at all... she does, so eloquently and realistically. It is our honor to define gratitude in the way Marina saw fitting & hope the sounds of music and the art of dance serve as a reminder of the countless gifts life offers, urging us to embrace them with open hearts and minds.

*a reminder of locating gratitude, through dance and music...*

Think of all the small  
moments.... the tiny things.

Think of all the small moments.  
The tiny things that we often take  
for granted. Taking a deep  
breath... standing... sitting...  
running... jumping... dancing...

How does the intangible become  
tangible? How do you not only  
think about gratitude, but embody  
it in your daily life?

# I AM GRATEFUL FOR...

## ALL THE SMALL THINGS

TINY THINGS - TINY HABITS

Bella, Harper, Kamille, Maitreya, Maxwell, Olympia

## HEALTH

FEELING GOOD - MICHAEL BUBLE

Amanda, Amy, Charlie, Chelsea, Kamryn, Karenn, Kylie

## STANDING

GET UP - CIARA

Bella, Kamille, Maitreya, Maxwell, Mia, Olympia

## DANCING

LOSE CONTROL - MISSY ELLIOT

Amanda, Amy, Charlie, Chelsea, Devon, Sophie, Kamryn, Kylie

## JUMPING

JUMPIN - PITBULL, LIL JOHN

Amanda, Amy, Chelsea, Devon, Sophie, Kamryn, Kylie

## RUNNING

RUN IT - DJ SNAKE

Amanda, Amy, Charlie, Sophie

## SAFETY

I'LL KEEP YOU SAFE - SLEEPING AT LAST

Kylie, Sophie

## FRIENDSHIP

O - COLDPLAY

Bella, Kamille, Maitreya, Maxwell, Mia, Olympia

## MEMORIES

OLD FRIENDS - COLDPLAY

Chelsea, Devon, Kamryn

## SUPPORT

FIX YOU - COLDPLAY

Amy, Ella, Paige

## STABILITY

TILL FOREVER FALLS APART - ASHE, FINNEAS

Charlie, Karenn

## SACRIFICE

YELLOW - COLDPLAY

Kamryn

## INSPIRATION

THE CHASE - EMMIT FENN

Chelsea, Kamryn

Often we associate the word gratitude with an overwhelming feeling of positivity. But later realize it isn't always rainbows and butterflies. Many times gratitude is found in the darkest and most heavy of times. Times in which finding light seems impossible...

Consider loss, you realize gratitude isn't about toxic positivity. It isn't about happiness, it isn't about learning lessons from trauma. It isn't a fixed point. It's like you have to go through these really heavy, hard emotions to feel this sense of peace and acceptance. You HAVE to locate a semblance of a path forward. You are forced to dig deep to find grit and determination.

So what is it? It isn't fixed. It's this moving, breathing, living thing, that is flexible, malleable, and adaptable. It changes a lot. Something you might be grateful for one day, doesn't even cross your mind the next. It all depends on the circumstances. It's about just being. Sitting in the moment, taking the emotions in as they come and finding solace in that.

**THROUGH... | I FOUND GRATITUDE FOR**

**FEAR | COURAGE**

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD - 2WEI  
Amy, Charlie, Karennna, Paige, Sophie

**DARKNESS | LIGHT**

ARE YOU WITH ME? - NILU  
Amy, Charlie, Karennna, Paige

**LOSS | MOMENTS**

NIRVANA - ELLIANA  
Karennna

**ALIENATION | INDEPENDENCE**

CREEP - EMBER ISLAND  
Amy

**GROWING PAINS | GROWTH**

SHE USED TO BE MINE TINY HABITS  
Charlie

**SADNESS | MEMORIES**

ROME - DERMOT KENNEDY  
Paige

**HARDSHIPS | STRENGTH**

YOU'RE GONNA BE OKAY - BRIAN + JENN  
Amy, Charlie, Karennna, Paige

**FEELING SCARED | BRAVERY**

THE 30TH - BILLIE EILISH  
Ella

**LONGING | DETERMINATION**

OVERCOME - NOTHING BUT THIEVES  
Chelsea

**SILENCE | FAITH**

WALK ME HOME - ILLENIUM, CHELSEA CUTLER  
Amy, Charlie, Karennna, Paige

**EXHAUSTION | BREATH**

AMMAN - EMMIT FENN  
Amanda, Amy, Charlie, Karennna, Kylie, Paige

**BREATHLESSNESS | PERSEVERANCE**

BREATHE AGAIN - EMMIT FENN  
Amanda, Amy, Charlie, Karennna, Kylie, Paige, Sophie

"Celebrate the small moments,  
things that you take for granted,  
taking a deep breath...  
standing... sitting...dancing..."

## I AM GRATEFUL FOR...

### LOVE

ONLY LOVE - MUMFORD + SONS

Amanda, Amy, Charlie, Chelsea, Kamryn, Karenn, Kylie, Paige, Sophie

### THIS MOMENT

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD - LOUIS ARMSTRONG  
CAST BOWS

*Thank you so much for your support & taking the time to be here!*

## FROM THE AUTHOR

When creating the show concept, I immediately thought of all the small moments, things that most people take for granted, being able to take a deep breath, being able to stand, being able to sit, etc. While these might not seem like “big” things, for me I can’t do any of those things, so I find gratitude in the even smaller moments like being able to use my fingers to type (because I once couldn’t do that) or being able to have access to oxygen (that helps me breath a little better). To me, when I think of the word gratitude, it feels like this abstract intangible idea, while it’s the process of being grateful for something, but how does that translate in daily life? What does this look like in practice? How does the intangible become tangible? How does one not just think about gratitude but embody it in their daily lives?

Another idea that immediately came to mind, was probably the complete opposite of what most people think of when they think of gratitude. I think oftentimes we associate the word gratitude, with this overwhelming feeling of positivity, and what I realized throughout this journey is that gratitude isn’t always rainbow and butterflies, a lot of times gratitude is found and practiced in the darkest and most heavy of times, times in which finding light seems impossible, and one has to dig deep and find grit and determination in order to locate any semblance of a path forward.

For me, I associate gratitude with the five stages of grief, in my journey, sometimes the losses I have experienced and the impending losses I might experience hit me hard, no one prepares you for having to grieve the life you thought you would live, grieve the loss of ability, grief the loss of autonomy, etc. after the grief, sadness, and anger, that’s when I feel the most grateful. It’s like you have to go through these really heavy hard emotions to feel this sense of peace and acceptance and through that is when I feel the most gratitude. Like exploring gratitude after a huge loss, because to me gratitude isn’t about positivity or happiness, it’s about just being, just sitting in the moment and taking the emotions as they come and finding solace in that.

At the start of my journey, I used to say I was really “grateful” for the trauma I endured because it taught me lessons, and I have learned now that’s totally wrong. I’m not grateful for that at all. I don’t think gratitude means having to have this toxic positivity I think it’s just learning to sit with it.

When I used to think of the word gratitude, what immediately came to my mind was the practice of being thankful for something, I felt like it was this end, it was a fixed point, and I’m grateful for said thing and move on, but now I realized that gratitude isn’t fixed, it’s this moving breathing living thing, that’s flexible and malleable and adaptable and changes a lot. Something someone might be grateful for one day doesn’t even cross their mind the next, it all depends on the circumstances.

I really haven’t written anything in such a long time because of how sick I am, so this is definitely a first in a long time. Thank you so much for letting me share, and have some part of this, it means so much.



To our audience,  
In helping Marina through her fight, we have  
set up a GoFundMe for her. If you feel  
compelled to, you can read more of her story  
and donate by scanning the QR Code here.

*xoxo - Marina*





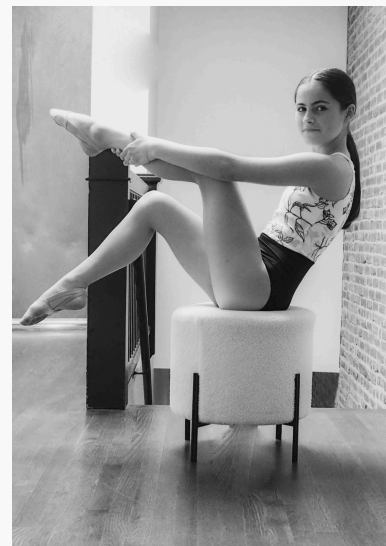
Thank you for everything you taught us through your eye-opening, profound words. You have inspired your whole audience through the amount of gratitude and strength you possess. Thank you again for taking the time to write such an amazing definition of gratitude. It is our honor to showcase your work tonight! - Your Cast

# MARINA

We are so proud of you today and every day! We love you! - Mom



# KYLIE



# BELLA

To our beautiful Bella Ballerina,  
Your passion and love for dance and music makes our hearts melt with joy our precious girl. Watching you do what you love and have fun is our greatest wish for you. We are all so proud of you and cannot wait to see you shine in the show tonight! Love you to the moon and back, Papajoon & Nana, Ampa & Nona, Daddy, Mommy and your little bro Kiki



# SHOW RECOGNITION

## THE ORIGINALS: 2016 - NOW

Amy Ruth  
Charlie Lusky  
Marina Williams  
Paige Corcoran

## SHOW #8

Kamryn McCook

## SHOW #7

Mia Carney  
Harper Mitchell  
Karenn Mehta  
Sophie Nack

## SHOW #5

Chelsea Cho  
Kylie Clark  
Maitreya Donahue

## SHOW #4

Olympia StJohn

## SHOW #2

Bella Carson  
Ella Corcoran  
Kamille Peterson

## SHOW #1

Amanda Gleason  
Devon Parkes  
Maxwell Shinn

