

How to Create an Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow. - Melody Beattie

Happiness and Success

I believe the key to happiness and success in life and work is to be thankful for the gifts you have received. You tap into positive energy and generate optimism about future possibilities.

It starts with being grateful and a prosperity mindset. Abundance will flow into your life and work when gratitude flows from your heart. You will experience more joy, love, peace, and happiness.

Gratitude Mindfulness

Appreciating others and saying thank you is good for your health and peace of mind. A large body of research on positive psychology and happiness suggests that developing an attitude of gratitude can improve psychological, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being.

Recent research indicates that people who frequently feel grateful have increased energy, more optimism, increased social connections and more happiness than those that do not. Grateful people are less likely to be anxious, depressed, self-absorbed and greedy or suffer from substance abuse. They are economically better off, sleep better, exercise more regularly, and are more resilient.

The research is part of the “positive psychology” movement which focuses on strengths. Cultivating gratitude is a form of cognitive –behavioral therapy focusing on changing peoples’ thought patterns which can positively affect their moods.

As simple as it sounds, gratitude is actually a complex emotion that requires self-reflection, humility and empathy for others. Being grateful requires a shift in mind-set from negativity and blaming others focusing on problems, annoyances or perceived injustices to appreciating and giving credit to others.

Gratitude is essentially being aware of and thankful for the good things in our lives. We consider the things for which we are grateful; we count our “blessings.”

Psychological research indicates that the experience of gratitude makes us happy, and that the regular experience of gratitude can actually enable us to elevate our typical level of happiness in a sustained way. It takes regular practice to become a healthy habit.

Imagine intentionally focusing on the things in your life for which you are grateful. These might include significant relationships, your own achievements, or the contributions others have made in helping you accomplish your goals, small kindnesses from loved ones or even just the experience of sitting quietly for a while without the intrusion of your phone or Blackberry.

Gratitude increases well-being because it promotes the savoring of positive experiences. When we contemplate our “blessings” we squeeze the most out of these experiences. We stop taking things for granted and notice small things with a sense of wonder and appreciation. Gratitude allows us to get the most from the good things in our lives.

Count Your Blessings

To whom in the past are you grateful? Someone who gave you a break, someone who cared about you, inspired you, believed in you, or someone who simply listened to you? Have you ever sought them out to personally thank them?

For whom are you grateful for in your life right now? Have you let them know lately how much you appreciate them? A simple warm-hearted thank you can make someone’s day and lift your spirits.

Gratitude is quite simply an attitude or conscious choice. The one thing we can always choose each day, in any situation, is our attitude. We always have the ability to choose an attitude of gratitude.

One great benefit of a gratitude attitude is you become much more aware of the abundance you already have in your life. Another great benefit of a gratitude attitude is you often attract even more abundance into your life.

Have you ever noticed that what you focus on tends to be what happens? When we focus on our blessings it’s much easier to look out for others as well as ourselves.

If you intentionally try to focus on your “blessings” you’ll likely notice that it is impossible to simultaneously feel negative emotions. I experienced this during the San Francisco Loma Prieta earthquake when I lost many of my possessions. The acts of kindness of so many people shifted my thinking to appreciation of what truly

mattered, and not things that could be replaced. My entire experience of the event was instantly transformed when I focused on those things for which I was eternally thankful.

Gratitude Research

Research demonstrates that people who experience relatively more positive emotions (joy, love, confidence) than negative (anger, fear, anxiety) are more successful and accomplished in various areas of their lives.

They:

- Enjoy more satisfying and longer marriages
- Develop more close friendships
- Build more cooperative, charitable and helpful relationships
- Earn higher income
- Achieve more productivity at work
- Get better work performance evaluations
- Receive better manager ratings
- Engage in richer social interactions
- Express more self-confidence
- Create more resilience
- Demonstrate more creativity
- Experience more energy and “flow”
- Exude better physical health
- Live longer lives

Psychological research indicates that these characteristics are not simply associated with happiness. Experiencing more positive emotion actually leads to this success.

Gratitude Exercises

Many of the people I’ve coached have experimented with gratitude exercises and found them to have a significant positive impact on their professional and personal lives. Successful people are self-aware and take action.

You might consider using the present moment as an opportunity for such an experiment. Here are seven methods that research indicates can have sustained positive effects:

1. Keep a gratitude journal. Note one to three good things that happened during the day and be specific. Post your intention on Facebook or Twitter. There’s even an iPod app for gratitude journaling!

2. Find a “gratitude accountability buddy”. Swap gratitude lists with a friend or co-worker; acknowledging where gratitude is due will keep it from sounding like bragging.
3. Watch your language. Using disparaging self-talk reinforces negative thinking. Don’t gossip.
4. Practice mindfulness. Several times a day, pause and focus on the sounds, smells, touches around you.
5. Take the time to savor all experiences. Smell the coffee and roses.
6. Count your blessings not sheep when going to sleep. Review events and people to be grateful for and let go of the rest.
7. Go on a gratitude visit. Write and personally deliver a letter of gratitude to someone who has made a positive difference in your life, but whom you never properly thanked.

Creating an attitude of gratitude at home and work can make everyone happier. Even small boosts in positive emotions can make life more fulfilling and satisfying and the world a more peaceful place.

So what are you thankful for? What’s good about your life? Be sincerely grateful. What dream do you want to create at home and at work? Trust it is possible and get excited about the possibility. It takes positive energy, a clear vision and massive action.

Thank You for Your Readership!

Are you working in a professional services firm or other organization where executive coaches provide leadership development for senior leaders? Does your organization provide executive coaching to help leaders develop a more sustainable business? Expressing gratitude and appreciation helps enlightened leaders tap into their emotional intelligence and social intelligence skills to fully engage employees.

One of the most powerful questions you can ask yourself is “Do I regularly express gratitude and say thank you?” Emotionally intelligent and socially intelligent organizations provide executive coaching for collaborative leaders who create sustainable businesses.

Working with a seasoned executive coach and leadership consultant trained in emotional intelligence and incorporating assessments such as the Bar-On EQ-I, CPI 260 and Denison Culture Survey can help you create a happy and prosperous business where everyone is fully engaged. You can become a leader who models emotional intelligence and social intelligence, and who inspires people to become fully engaged with the vision, mission and strategy of your company or law firm.

About Dr. Maynard Brusman

Dr. Maynard Brusman is a consulting psychologist, executive coach and trusted advisor to senior leadership teams. He is the president of Working Resources, a leadership consulting and executive coaching firm. We specialize in helping San Francisco Bay Area companies and law firms assess, select, coach, and retain emotionally intelligent leaders. Maynard is a highly sought-after speaker and workshop leader. He facilitates leadership retreats in Northern California and Costa Rica. The Society for Advancement of Consulting (SAC) awarded Dr. Maynard Brusman "Board Approved" designations in the specialties of Executive Coaching and Leadership Development.

Dr. Maynard Brusman

Consulting Psychologist and Executive Coach

Tel: 415-546-1252

E-mail: mbrusman@workingresources.com

Web Site: <http://www.workingresources.com>

Subscribe to Working Resources Newsletter: <http://www.workingresources.com>

Visit Maynard's Blog: <http://www.workingresourcesblog.com>.

Connect with me on these Social Media sites.

<http://twitter.com/drbrusman>

<http://www.facebook.com/maynardbrusman>

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/maynardbrusman>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/maynardbrusman>

Working Resources is a Strategic Talent Management and Executive Coaching Firm Helping Innovative Companies and Law Firms Assess, Select, Coach, Engage and Retain Emotionally Intelligent Leaders; Executive Coaching; Leadership Development; Performance-Based Interviewing; Competency Modeling; Succession Management; Career Coaching and Leadership & Team Building Retreats

Dr. Maynard Brusman

Consulting Psychologist and Executive Coach

Trusted Advisor to Senior Leadership Teams

Subscribe to Working Resources **FREE** E-mail Newsletter:

<http://www.workingresources.com>

Visit Maynard's Blog: <http://www.workingresourcesblog.com>

E-mail: mbrusman@workingresources.com

Voice: 415-546-1252