



In the last decade, numerous scientific studies quantified the extent of gratitude's multiple and powerful benefits for business, as well as for society. These studies also emphasize that there are no risks and minimal time involved in acting grateful. Here are some of those benefits and easy ways to enhance your gratitude.

Why gratitude?

We're only as good as all the people who have helped us in big and little ways. Our character, motivation, and successes are in large part by-products of their examples, training, and correction. Consequently, are we saying "Thank you" often and sincerely enough to these people?

Gratitude also can spark or reinforce other excellent behaviors such as timely follow up, responsiveness, helpfulness, punctuality, and servant leadership which in turn help others ...and you.

"We hardly realize how much more we receive than we give, and life cannot be rich without such gratitude. It is so easy to overestimate the importance of our own achievements compared with what we owe to the help of others."

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Letters and Papers from Prison,
a German Lutheran pastor and
theologian who also was a leader of
the German resistance against
Nazism. He was arrested and
executed by Hitler.

How much does gratitude help in business?

Most people stay with or resign from a job due to the amount of progress in their work and respect by their employers. Progress and respect are often situational or subjective. How many times has excellent work been overlooked or not appreciated? How many great products were the result of numerous failed attempts?

Bosses and co-workers significantly shape one's perception of progress and respect by showing appreciation. Also, employees who feel appreciated are more motivated to help others, less resentful of some co-workers, and more positive and productive. Researchers at the Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania found that their university employees were 50% more productive after given generous amounts of gratitude. (> [Full article](#))

Additionally, in an extensive national survey commissioned by the John Templeton Foundation, 93% of those polled agreed that grateful bosses were more likely to be successful, and only 18% thought that grateful bosses would be seen as "weak." Ironically, these same respondents were the least likely to express gratitude in workplaces despite wishing to be thanked more often themselves.

(> [Full research](#))

*"The way to develop the best that is in a person
is by appreciation and encouragement."*

— Charles Schwab

"The deepest craving of human nature is the need to be appreciated."

— William James
19th century American philosopher and psychologist

What are gratitude's deeper benefits?

Consider this. It may be impossible to be both grateful and depressed at the same time. Numerous research studies prove that expressing gratitude significantly reduces “depressive symptoms” (> [Full research](#)). Gratitude also impacts people in a deeper emotional way than many other positive actions, thus creating closer relationships and heightened reciprocal social support.

Could gratitude be a key path to happiness? A current Harvard Medical School article cites three research studies showing that expressing gratitude can bring more happiness, meaning, professional success, and interpersonal connection into people's lives and even fewer doctor visits. Research participants also experienced these benefits quickly, some within weeks, and the positive effects lasted long. (> [Full article](#))

“Those with a grateful mindset tend to see the message in the mess. And even though life may knock them down, the grateful find reasons, if even small ones, to get up.”

— Steve Maraboli
Life, the Truth, and Being Free

“At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

— Albert Schweitzer

So, why do most people not show gratitude often, even in its simplest form – thanking others?

We are always busy – job, kids, social media – so we are usually too distracted to thank others. Also, some of us are unorganized so we lack good follow-up, responsiveness, and punctuality – behaviors which can be sparked or reinforced from gratitude. Surprisingly, people in job transition are the ones who should be perfecting these traits, but often they are not.

Are people generally ungrateful or is gratitude not an awareness that is top of mind? One might assume that those who suffered setbacks during the great recession would have exhibited more awareness and acts of gratitude once the economy recovered. However, research studies do not support this trend. For instance, in the same John Templeton Foundation survey, a “Gratitude Gap” was revealed where Americans say they often feel gratitude and believe it's important, but they express gratitude infrequently and this frequency is declining.

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”

— William Arthur Ward
20th century American writer

“Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has plenty; not on your misfortunes, of which all men have many.”

— Charles Dickens

What sparks the awareness of gratitude in us?

Crisis and then redemption? Recovering from a severe illness or injury? Intimate connections to disadvantaged people? Traveling to economically depressed places? Alternatively, could simple acts begin kindling a more grateful spirit in us, like:

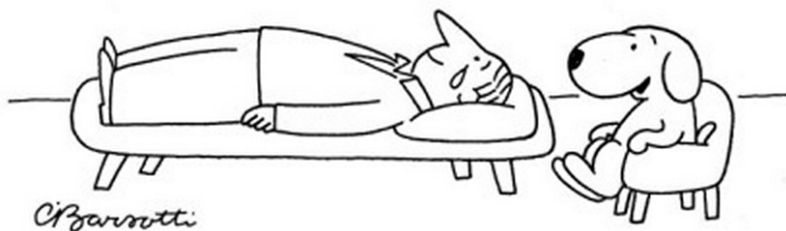
- Watching a sunset unfold
- Sharing in a young child's joy
- Hearing a co-worker praise you to the boss
- Holding the hand of your terminally ill parent

*"My expectations were reduced to zero
when I was 21.
Everything since then has been a bonus."*

— Stephen Hawking
Developed ALS at 21. Lived until 76.

*"Since my experiences in the camps,
I feel gratitude in my heart each time
I can meet someone and look at his or her smile."*

— Elie Wiesel



"Well, I think you're wonderful."

Can you begin to weave gratitude deeper into your life?

Gratitude is a learned behavior and thus must be practiced, according to Dr. Robert Emmons, a renowned expert on this subject. One of his recommendations is to write down one grateful thought each day for a month. These notes of gratitude could also be posted so a close friend or family member could see them.

Additionally, ask yourself, "How many people have I thanked today?" "Who should have been?" This month, use a few seconds daily to compliment someone or simply say, "Thank you." Author Roy T. Bennett suggests an expanded way of thanking people:

- Use their name, but don't overuse.
- Do more listening than talking.
- Talk more about them than about you.
- Be authentically interested.
- Be sincere in your praise.
- Show you care.

*"Thankfulness is the beginning of gratitude
and consists of words.
The completion of gratitude is shown in acts."*

— Henri-Frédéric Amiel
19th century Swiss philosopher and poet

*"Imagine if humans showed the same unconditional
appreciation as dogs do for us."*

— Tom Mallory