



**The Art of Being
Thankful**

THE ART OF BEING THANKFUL

Am I the only person that appreciates the words “Thank You?” I think not—and hope not!! However, leaders forget sometimes employees need to hear “the magic words.”

I met Tom the other day at a community function. He and his wife worked for two years for the betterment of the community in a leadership position. I said, “Thank you, Tom, for the hard work you have provided for the betterment of the community.” He looked at me sadly and, then, with his head bowed said, “You are the only one in the whole community that has offered a thank you.” I could hardly believe that an entire community would thwart such a contribution to society without recognizing verbally or in writing this contribution. Where, then, have we gone astray? Service of any kind for the improvement of a business or society deserves a leader’s recognition and a “THANK YOU!”

Try to recognize the little things that others do not recognize. Teach employees by your example of thanking each of them for specific behaviors. Expect and make it clear that phone calls start or end with “Thank you for calling.”

If there is anything I have learned that has been “good” for me and others, it is the psychological realization that *all behavior has meaning*. If you understand that concept, you can often find a reason why a person performs and acts as they do. You will find that if you assess carefully what you witness and experience with a person, you will have the capacity and desire to thank that person for the legitimate good they do, as well as help them understand why they do not perform to your expectations, if needed. Recognition of legitimate positive behaviors will help to assure more positive behaviors!

Oh yes—let’s not forget that what people do in their lives involves doing *what works for them at that point in time and under the given situation!* As you consider “what is working for them” you must put yourself in their situation. When I bring this concept to the attention of supervisors who do not understand what they are seeing and experiencing with another person, it often takes time for contemplating what is actually “working” for that person—and why. What a tremendous insight a leader can get just by thinking out-of-the-box about another person’s behavior. Now—those are the clues that tell you how to respond to that person to increase productivity and elements of positive reinforcement—for which a “thank you” should be forthcoming.

There once was a leader who carried in his pocket self-adhesive stickers with the words “GOOD JOB” on each sticker. Whenever he heard an employee thank another person appropriately he would simply reach in his pocket and put a sticker on the employee. The employees wanted to know how they did a “GOOD JOB.” The leader merely said that they said something special—and so they did! Each employee finally figured out what they said that was so special without being told. Everyone began to recognize and reward verbally employees who were kind and thoughtful. Pretty soon most employees had their own sticker. When they left work the sticker was stuck on the side of the computer and they replaced the sticker on their chest the next day. For one month everyone that expressed thankfulness to someone else and most of the employees had a sticker! The message is that every employee should express thankfulness to other employees and customers because there is ALWAYS something each

person contributes for which there should be a message of thanks. If there is no positive contribution by any employee that does not warrant a “thank you” for positive performance, then that employee should not be employed.

You, as a leader, can make a wonderful difference in another person’s life. You are the catalyst for positive change! If you want **POWER**, this little act of expressing kindness by saying “THANK YOU” is more powerful than almost anything else you could do for another human being. This exquisite power is no secret, really! This secret of thankfulness has been known since the beginning of time. We just need to remind each other of its existence for the purpose of gaining the type of positive power that will make our profession and our life have purpose and meaning. Gratitude for others, often times, does not come naturally, but must be practiced daily. It was one of the many beginning tenants of the nursing profession.

Another reminder—ORGANIZATIONS OFTEN TAKE ON THE PERSONALITY OF THE LEADER. JUST ONE GIANT REASON THE LEADER’S PERSONALITY NEEDS TO BE RECOGNIZED AS KNOWLEDGEABLE, HELPFUL, SUPPORTIVE, AND APPRECIATIVE OF EXCELLENT WORK! IMMULATION OF THESE GOOD QUALITIES BY EMPLOYEES IS CALLED THE “MIRRORING EFFECT.”

Thank you for allowing me to, hopefully, make a difference in your position as a leader! By providing you with a lifetime of my remembrances of “what you need to know about leadership—but no one would tell you,” you will open the door to the magical world of leadership success. I am grateful for you! Please enjoy making leadership theory your reality! And—THANK YOU!

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