

Be Generous with Appreciation

The longer I work with teams and the PassionWorks! Model, the more I have come to deeply understand that we are often, usually unintentionally, miserly with our appreciations.

Appreciation is an essential driver of meaning and progress for many people. And, it functions as a driver for both the giver as well as the receiver of the expressed appreciation.

First of all, what do we mean by appreciation? In our context, we can use Wikipedia's first two definitions:

1. *The recognition and enjoyment of the good qualities of someone or something*
2. *Gratitude for something*



When people feel appreciated, it supports one's awareness of one's good qualities, which everyone possesses; sometimes, however, we focus so much on what we can do to improve that we don't celebrate our strengths. Others can help us live fully in our gifts, when they appreciate us in ways that are made visible to us.

What about Continuous Improvement?

Most of us work in a culture which promotes continuous improvement. This is a good thing, as we are consistently challenging ourselves to make our products, our services and even our world a better place; however, we sometimes forget to acknowledge and recognize our abilities and qualities that enable us to achieve our aspirations.

Performance feedback often falls into this trap as well. Managers often neglect the supportive, positive feedback and focus more on the corrective or constructive feedback. It is important to know how to grow and develop; but, it is equally important to know how to leverage your strengths and live in ways that align you to these talents.

Expressing our Personal Values

Appreciation also reinforces relationships. When someone is grateful for someone else, it uplifts the other's spirit and encourages that person to move forward or to persevere in difficult times. This support, given generously by someone, without underlying motives, inevitably deepens the relationship.

When we know another person “sees” us, the best of what we have to offer, we can trust that person. They are demonstrating to us that they will be there to support us, not cut us down; to uplift us, not to criticize in order to make themselves feel better. And, when, and if, they do offer constructive feedback, we are more likely to listen because we know they have also seen us at our best and want to support us in achieving our goals.

A Daily Practice

Look for opportunities, on a daily basis, to sincerely and authentically appreciate the people around you. Being generous with your appreciations will generate benefits for you and others that will amaze and delight you!

10 Ways to practice Appreciation and Gratitude

1. When you say thank you, look the person in the eye. It lets them know you really mean it.
2. Handwrite a thank you note rather than sending an email.
3. Give small, inexpensive gifts that mean something. For example, if someone helped you meet a deadline, buy a toy firefighter to say thanks!
4. When someone completes a task well, point out to them what you appreciate about how they handled it.
5. Prepare a meal or a snack for your team.
6. Celebrate their birthday in fun and modest ways!
7. At least once a year, tell your boss or your employee what you appreciate the most about them.
8. Donate to someone’s favourite charity in their name rather than buy them a gift or a gift certificate.
9. At the end of each day, ask yourself, what did I do well today? And, pat yourself on the back!
10. Do random acts of kindness around the office!