

Episode 33 – Develop an Attitude of Gratitude

With Canadian Thanksgiving just around the corner, I thought it would be most valuable to talk about developing an “attitude of gratitude”. Being grateful does the need to only occur Thanksgiving. When you start to recognize what you are grateful for the more you will discover to be grateful for. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude." In today's world, if you get caught up in the media hype of wars, accidents, and bombing, you may find it difficult to find things to be grateful for. However, what you focus on expands.

Developing an attitude of gratitude is not a one-time meditation, prayer, or mindfulness practice. It is about how you think and feel about life. Research studies show that people who develop a gratitude mindset have a stronger immune system, lower blood pressure, and sleep better as well as feel more rested. These individuals tend to be more compassionate, more forgiving, and are less isolated because they are more outgoing. They tend to have a more optimistic view of life and find joy and pleasure in everything that they do.

Gratitude shifts your focus. People who are problem focus tend to complain and blame others for faults in results rather than being the solution focused. When you are solution focused, you are able to come up with new ideas and solutions to challenging situations. During times of adversity, gratitude helps you realize that you would not be who you are without the situations and circumstances that have occurred both good and not so good. You are better able to bounce back and become more resilient in situations. When you develop a shift in focus and mindset, you also shift away from the victim mentality to one of the victor. You will shift from “I have to” do something versus “I get to” or “I choose to” do something. Gratitude is not a chore it's a privilege.

Think about all the things you “get to” do that many others do not.

Small thank yous can make a big impact. You can make a big difference by acknowledging someone and thanking them for what they have done for you. The smallest thank you can be the most memorable. When people are recognized for the things that they do their confidence grows and they are more apt to believe in their abilities and stretch beyond the current capabilities. Their work takes on a greater purpose and they feel that they are making a difference. When people hear that their work is appreciated, they tend to be motivated to work harder to hear more praise and appreciation.

Keep a journal and write down what you are grateful for. By writing down what you are grateful for you can start paying attention to the thoughts that you have been having

and take note of any patterns in your thoughts. Your thoughts and feelings impact the actions you will take. Epicurus stated, "Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you have you only hoped for." Start by writing down three things every day that you are grateful for and encourage others to do the same. Gratitude is contagious.

Write a letter and reach out to others who you are grateful for. By doing this you can change someone's world. Several years ago I sent a card to a schoolteacher that I had, she sent me a thank you card back because the card had brought her to tears is no one in her years of teaching at centre thank you for the impact that she had made the difference.

It's important to give gratitude but also important to learn how to accept it. When someone gives you a gift of a compliment or helps you in some way, acknowledge and thank them for it. Don't brush it off by just saying oh it's nothing because to them it was something.

At the end of the day, like attracts like, and people who are grateful are fun to be around and tend to be happier. Why not choose to be more grateful at home, in the workplace, in your business, or organization today? You never know whose life you can change it may be your own.

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DEBRA KASOWSKI, BScN CEC is an award-winning best-selling author, transformational speaker, blogger, and Certified Executive Coach. She has a heart of a teacher and is certified in Appreciative Inquiry and Emotional Intelligence. Her writing has been published in a variety of print and online magazines. Debra Kasowski International helps executives, entrepreneurs, and organizations boost their productivity, performance, and profits. It all starts with people and passion. Sign up the Success Secrets Newsletter and get your free mp3 download today! www.debrakasowski.com

Time: 10:14 min

Keywords: develop an attitude of gratitude, attitude of gratitude, mindset, gratitude, grateful heart, accepting compliments, accept thank you, accept gratitude, journaling, gratitude journal, gratitude expands