



Gratitude

-Mark Haeussler, CEO

The word gratitude is from the Latin *gratia*, meaning grace or graciousness. Definitions of grace include a simple elegance or refinement of movement, courtesy, poise, goodwill, acknowledgment, recognition, obligation, and gratefulness.



Leaders consume a lot of brainpower and physical endurance during the day. Leaders may do some or all the following: listening, discerning, reflecting, analyzing, imagining, decisioning, negotiating, visioning, solving, innovating, collaborating... the list goes on. It is easy to imagine any leader feeling the pressure to manage all these things while working to improve the organization. Can a leader take on being in and speaking in gratitude in all of that? It is imperative they so do. Grace and gratitude are elegant leadership qualities, and they accrue many benefits. The list of what to do is simple:

First: Speak gratitude to others with regularity – and get to the point where it is a daily practice. Everyone is craving the recognition for their ideas, how they show up, their contribution, and their successes (both in their role and in other domains of their lives). Speaking gratitude is a way of expressing *grace* to others. When speaking gratitude, be specific. Saying, “Mark, you’re doing a great job,” does not come anywhere near as powerful as, “Mark, I appreciate you and how you showed up with Wanda during the meeting yesterday. It was clear that she needed to work through her thoughts by talking herself through it. You allowed Wanda the opportunity to develop her problem solving skills. Such moments help people develop critical thinking skills and empower them.”

Second: Speak gratitude to yourself. Happiness does not create gratitude; *gratitude increases happiness* (this has been shown in studies). *Every day*, identify at least one thing for which you are grateful and speak it (even if just to yourself).

People who practice gratitude manage stress better, have lower anxiety, less depression, less pain, better sleep, and many other benefits. Practice gratitude in every one of your relationships. One last note: it is most powerful when you start with “I appreciate you when you... (then what they did)”, rather than leading with, “I appreciate (what they did).” Make it a point to embrace grace – gratitude – of the *person* more than the contribution.