

## Conversation 7 – Leveraging Gratitude

**Background:** The science of gratitude has expanded greatly in the past twenty years. Studies increasingly show that regularly practicing gratitude contributes to better relationships, decreased anxiety, and increased internal satisfaction. These bolster what Daniel Goleman labels emotional and social intelligence, key items for success in our careers and lives. When we pause to focus on things we're grateful for, we shift our thinking from negative to positive. This can energize and reinvigorate us even on a bad day.

What are you grateful for? Jot a few items here.

**The Challenge:** Could you increase your practice of gratitude? This may sound simple, but if you write down three things you are grateful for each day for twenty-one days, former Harvard researcher, Shawn Achor, says you will train your brain to look at the world differently. Once the habit is formed, you will start scanning the world for positives instead of threats. It's a game changer.

Researcher Robert Emmons, likewise, said that even though we do not have total control over our emotions, "being grateful is a choice that can sustain us through the ups and downs of our lives." When we become more grateful, we are more stress resistant and our self-worth increases. This often shows outwardly. When that is noticed, it can result in career progression and success.

Are you willing to take the 21-day gratitude test? (i.e., Will you write three things per day for which you're grateful?)  
\_\_\_ Yes? \_\_\_ No? \_\_\_ Maybe?

How might increasing gratitude help your career? (Make a list of ideas here.)

Here are some additional thoughts around gratitude, along with some ideas to try at the office:

1. Start your next meeting with a gratitude question. For example, ask attendees (or your teammates) to:
  - a. Name a project you're thankful to be working on.
  - b. Name a work colleague and tell how you're grateful for them.
  - c. Describe a recent lesson you have learned, and how are you thankful for it.
2. In work situations, think about how you can be grateful for the person, not just their output.
3. Gratitude and appreciation go hand-in-hand. Review Dr. Gary Chapman's *5 Languages of Appreciation* (<https://www.appreciationatwork.com/>). Consider folks with whom you work, and how they prefer to receive gratitude. How might you show gratitude and appreciation for them this week?

**Homework:** Start and maintain a gratitude list. Keep it simple so it's not a chore. Carry it with you and refer to it weekly (at the very least). Try one of the three ideas above at your office.

**Additional Reading:** Dr. Gary Chapman's *5 Languages of Appreciation* ([appreciationatwork.com](https://www.appreciationatwork.com/))