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# What is gratitude?

**Gratitude** is the feeling or quality of being thankful, a readiness to show appreciation for and return a kindness. It allows us to celebrate the present and is one of the foundations for creating happiness. Gratitude has three parts: appreciation, goodwill, and acting on appreciation. <sup>1</sup>

Gratitude has many benefits, including:



Increased happiness



Boosted immune system



Reduced stress



Improved relationships



Improved sleep

## How can expressing appreciation benefit you and your workplace?

Expression appreciation has a profound impact on our interaction with the world around us, including our workplace. Research shows that appreciation is one of the top motivators for employees to work harder and to be more committed to their companies.

Employees respond to appreciation expressed through recognition of their good work because it confirms that someone values their work. When employees and their work are valued, their satisfaction and productivity rise, and they are motivated to maintain or improve their good work. Whether it's a simple thank you or an office party, everyone likes to be appreciated.

**Employee recognition and appreciation can also create unique company culture and strengthen employee relationships.**





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Here are a few ways to show appreciation in the workplace:

- Thank employees by name
- Involve employees in decision making
- Send thank you notes
- Hold social events such as lunches or holiday parties

- Acknowledge the small successes as well as the big ones
- Thank the unsung heroes
- Recognize team successes as well as personal ones

Other ways to practice gratitude:

**Keep a gratitude journal.** Recall things you're grateful for, including people, places, objects, moments, and successes. Research has shown that keeping a gratitude journal can make you feel better about your life as a whole and will increase optimism.<sup>2</sup>

**Give back.** Once you sense that your needs are being met and your sense of gratitude increases, you'll have more to give to others.

**Express your appreciation.** Sometimes it's not enough to simply keep your gratitude to yourself. You can increase your feelings of gratitude by expressing that same gratitude to the people you care about.

**Be kind to yourself.** Speak to yourself in a creative, optimistic, and appreciative way.

**For a great resource on gratitude, visit** <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/gratitude>

<sup>1</sup> Fitzgerald, Patrick. "Gratitude and justice." Ethics 109, no. 1 (1998): 119-153.

<sup>2</sup> Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: Experimental studies of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 377-389. [pdf]

