

From: Steve Thompson Coaching steve@stevethompsoncoaching.com
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To: Steve Thompson steve.thompson110@comcast.net

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The "Different Perspectives" Newsletter

It can be fun to step back and look at the world from a different angle. Here, we step back and look at commonly used words in business and life, ask a provocative question, and see what others are doing differently by applying a different lens on life. I hope you enjoy "Different Perspectives" and that you begin to step back when needed and observing what else is possible.

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November 25, 2024

Word Choices

Gratitude: /grat-i-tood/ noun, Def - the quality or feeling of being grateful or thankful

Grateful: /greyt-fuhl/ adj, Def - warmly or deeply appreciative of kindness or benefits recieved. Pleasing to the mind or senses.

Given that this is Thanksgiving week in the U.S., I felt it necessary to explore these words as both words are very popular in the workplace and for being included in a wellness practice. I feel that most of us get what gratitude means, but I wanted to explore what gratitude and being grateful actually does for us.

Humans have a program of negativity bias running inside our minds at all times that evolutionarily had a fantastic purpose, but that purpose may not be serving us so much now. Negativity bias is a protective thought process meant to protect us from danger. For example, it was incredibly beneficial to the cavemen to help them from not getting eaten by the wild animals while they were out on the hunt. Negativity bias scans the world for threats and helps protect us from the dangers of getting injured, or worse, dying.

However, negativity bias today is being overstimulated by the news cycles, some political rhetoric, and the ever-increasing stressful world. Ever felt more agitated after watching the news or reading the paper? That is the activation of your negativity bias and that activation can be carried out into our personal and work worlds.

A gratitude practice can help to combat or lessen the effects of our negativity bias. A gratitude practice can simply look like thinking of 3 things you are grateful for at the end of the day. The research shows that doing a daily gratitude practice can actually change your brain activity, improve your mood and mental health, and change your thinking.

Since this is Thanksgiving week this week, I challenge you to take a moment at the end of each day to think of three things for which you are grateful. You can be grateful for people in your life, nature, the weather, or for things that have happened to you. You might be surprised with the results you feel. And if you want to take this practice a bit further, share your gratitude with others if they have done something for you that you are grateful for. One of my favorite quotes is "Gratitude unexpressed is ingratitude received", meaning that others may feel that you are not thankful for something that they did if you don't tell them that you are grateful for their help.

Question of the Week

What are you grateful for?

What kind of gratitude practice can you create?

Lessons from the Camino

On my recent trek on the Camino de Santiago, I was blessed with some amazing weather - mid-70's temps and only 3 days of rain. On one particular day of hiking 15 miles, the forecast was for only an occasional sprinkling of rain while I walked from O Cebreiro to Triacastela. This should have been an easy day with 2500 feet of descent and some beautiful views.

However, I woke up to blustery winds with cloudy and rainy skies. So, I could have chosen to bitch and moan about the weather, which, admittedly, I kind of did at first, but I chose to embrace it and hope that it would only be raining for the first part of the trail and then would clear up as the weather app was indicating.

After nine miles of hiking, completely drenched by the persistent pouring rain, I started to laugh at my predicament and I leaned into some gratitude work. I could have very easily kept complaining (to myself) about how soaked my shoes were, or how cold I was, or how I was hating my rain poncho, but I chose to take some time to be appreciative and grateful and it changed the rest of my trek that day.

I started with myself and found gratitude that I was walking on the trail, given my recent recovery from a shattered ankle 17 months prior left me hobbling and barely able to walk 1/4 mile 7 months before I was where I was that day. Next, I leaned into gratitude to my wife and my life for giving me the time to be out on this journey. Finally, I found myself so grateful to be on this pilgrimage, to be in Spain, and to be a part of something so special and historic. The result was the last 6 miles were some of the most enjoyable times on the trail. I found myself smiling, laughing, and thinking of wonderful memories.

The lesson for this week is that no matter how bad things seem around you. how

nasty the weather is, how stressful things are at work, you can find some very small things to be grateful for and those small moments of gratitude can grow into massive transformations in your life.

Did You Know?

Did you know that our brains have two major operating modes? The Default Narrative Network and the Direct Experience Network. Let's explore!

The Default Narrative Network has a relationship with our negativity bias. Know that voice inside your head that keeps rattling in your mind, criticizing and judging you and never seems to shut up? That is the Default Narrative Network. This network gets activated by the news, social media, and negative rhetoric and chatter and leads us to feel more distracted, overwhelmed, exhausted and burned out.

The Direct Experience Network is based on our sensory data - the sounds, sights, objects we see and experience each day. Think of the Direct Experience Network as what might be caught on a video camera. Our senses are closely tied to our emotions so the Direct Experience Network works with our emotions as well.

In today's world, our Default Narrative Network is highly active and our Direct Experience Network is very inactive and under utilized. Doing a gratitude practice can help to strengthen and activate the Direct Experience Network and calm the Default Narrative network.

A request of you...

My goal with this newsletter is to reach 50,000 people in the next year, either through direct sign-ups or sharing. If you appreciate what I include in these newsletters, please, please, please share this with your friends and colleagues and

ask them to sign up to receive it. I want these newsletters to activate the senses and mind and to reactivate our Direct Experience Networks to help people live happier lives. You can share this link with others to have them sign up.

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I would be eternally grateful for your trust and sharing...



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