

PLAY
BOOK

GRATITUDE

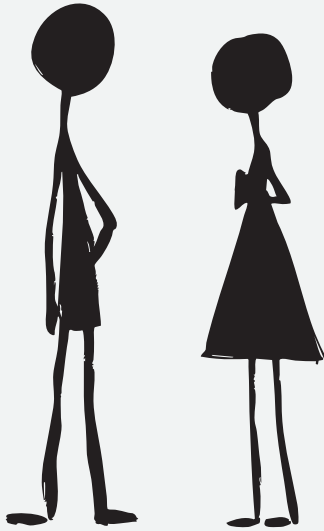
THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF THANKS



Frameworks | Mindset

THE PARADOX

The assumption is that
gratitude is **for the
receiver** of the thanks.



But science shows that
the **giver can benefit**
as much or more.

HEALTHY RESPONSE

A study had different groups
journal every week for 9 weeks:



- **Gratitude Group:** Participants listed 5 things they were grateful for the past week.
-



- **Hassles Group:** Participants listed 5 hassles they encountered the past week.
-



- **Control Group:** Participants listed 5 things that they did over the past week.




Source: Emmons & McCullough, 2004.

The *Gratitude Group* was better off across the board:

25% Happier 

More Optimistic 

Felt Better About
Their Lives 

Felt Fewer Ailments 

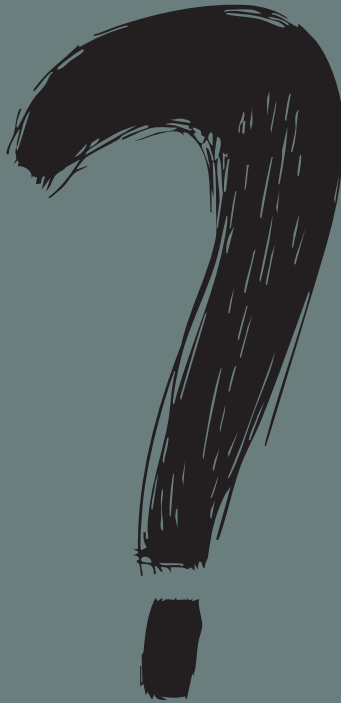
Exercised More 

Source: Emmons & McCullough, 2004.

"Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions."

—Zig Ziggler.

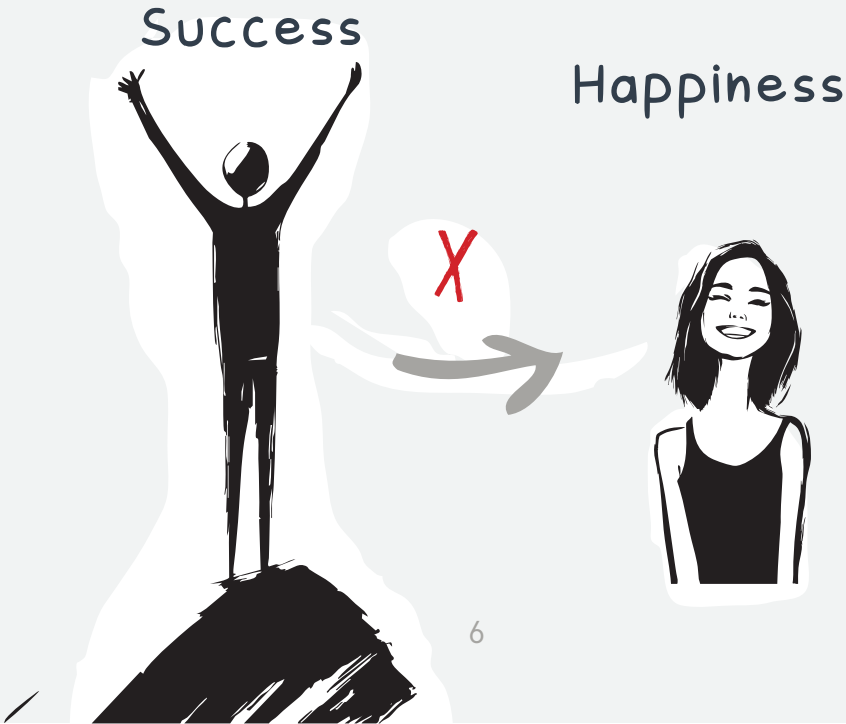
What makes
gratitude so
beneficial?



POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

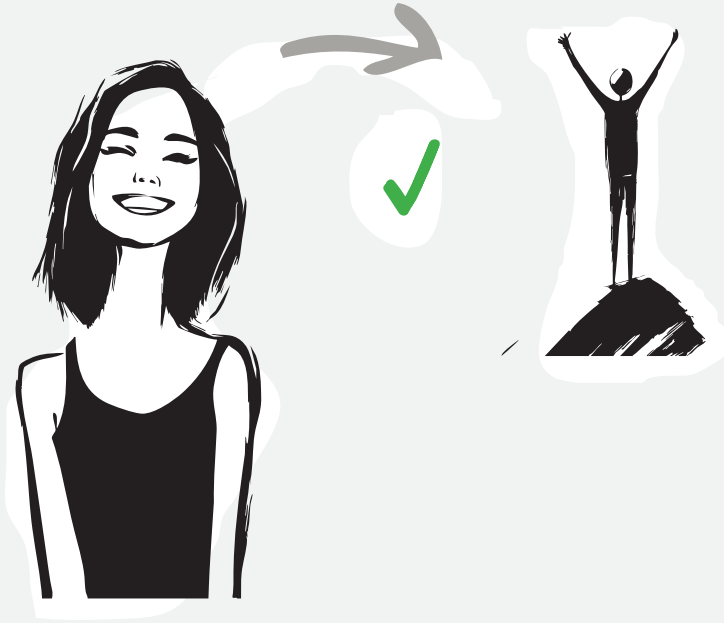
The power of gratitude rests in the notion of **Positive Psychology**.

Studies find that **success doesn't lead to happiness** as might be assumed.



Happiness

Success

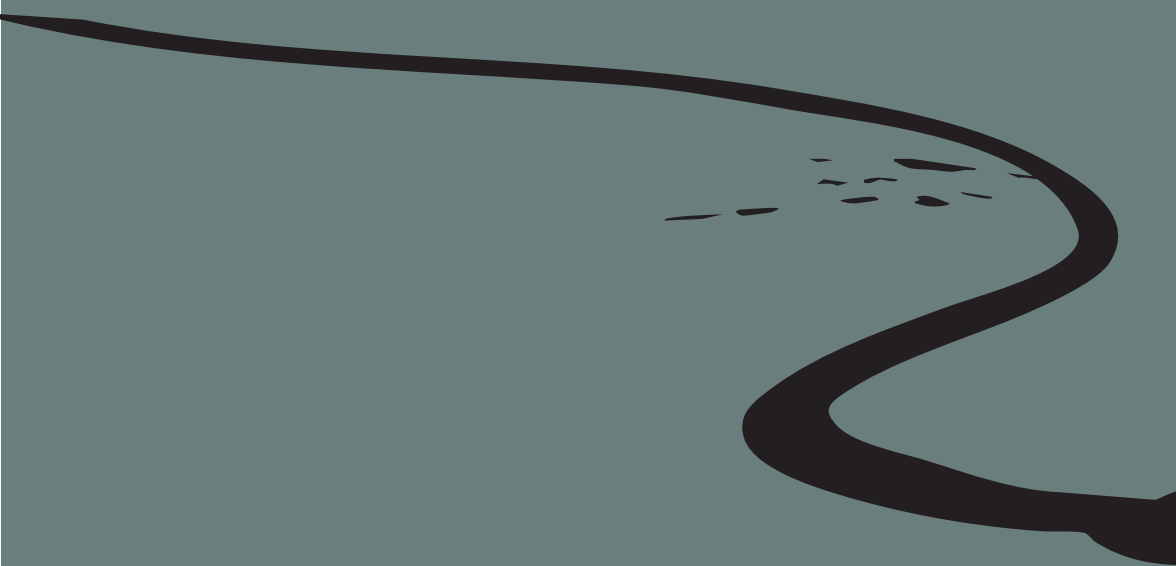


Instead, they've found rather that
being happy leads to success.

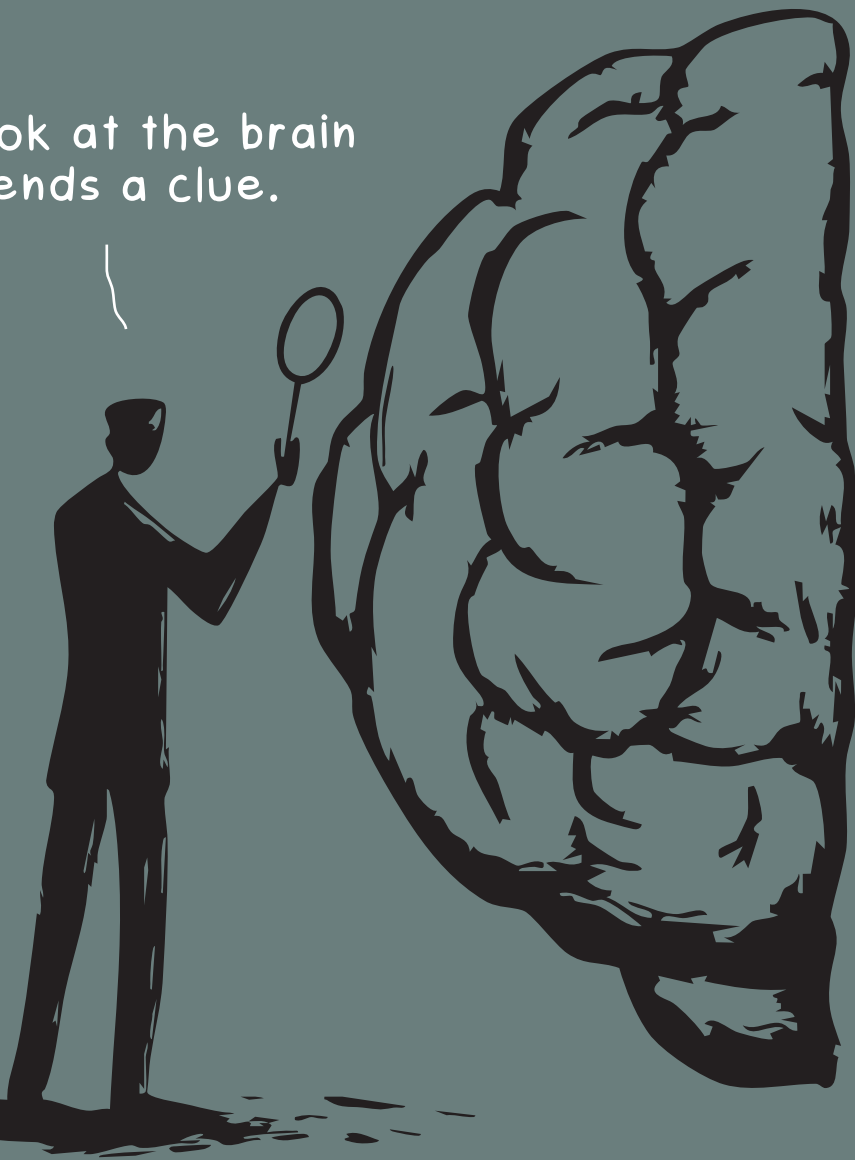
“Your **brain at positive** performs
significantly better than at
negative, neutral, or stressed.”

—Shawn Achor,
The Happiness Advantage.

But, if success doesn't make
you happy, what does?



A look at the brain
lends a clue.



According to a 2004 study, active **appreciation** prevents your brain from dwelling in a state of **fear** or **anxiety**.

It is impossible to be grateful and depressed at the same time.

Source: *What Happy People Know*, Dan Baker.

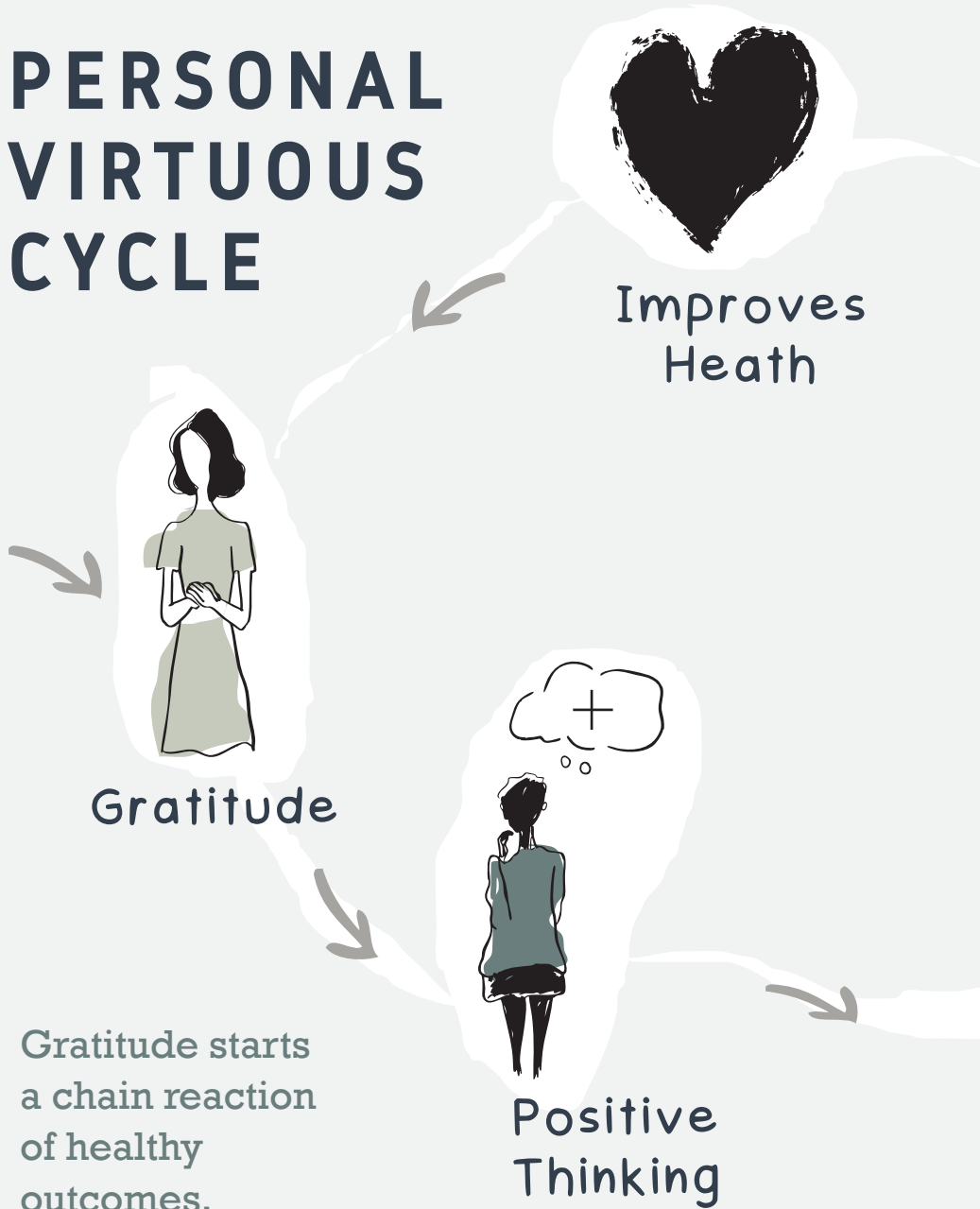
THE SECRET

What's more, gratitude fosters a mindset that is essential for happiness.



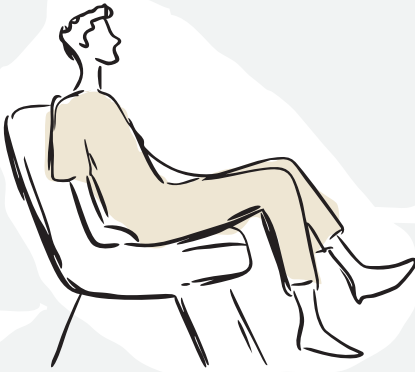
Source: PositivePsychology.com

PERSONAL VIRTUOUS CYCLE

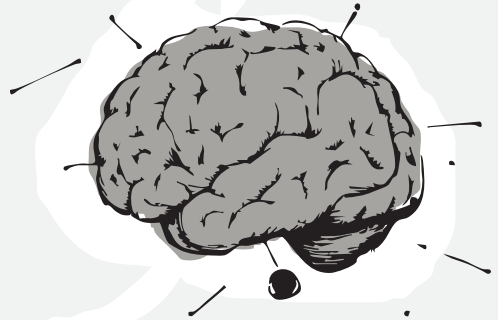




Improves
Sleep,
Exercise



Reduces
Stress



Increases
Dopamine,
Serotonin

Source: Zahn et al., 2009.

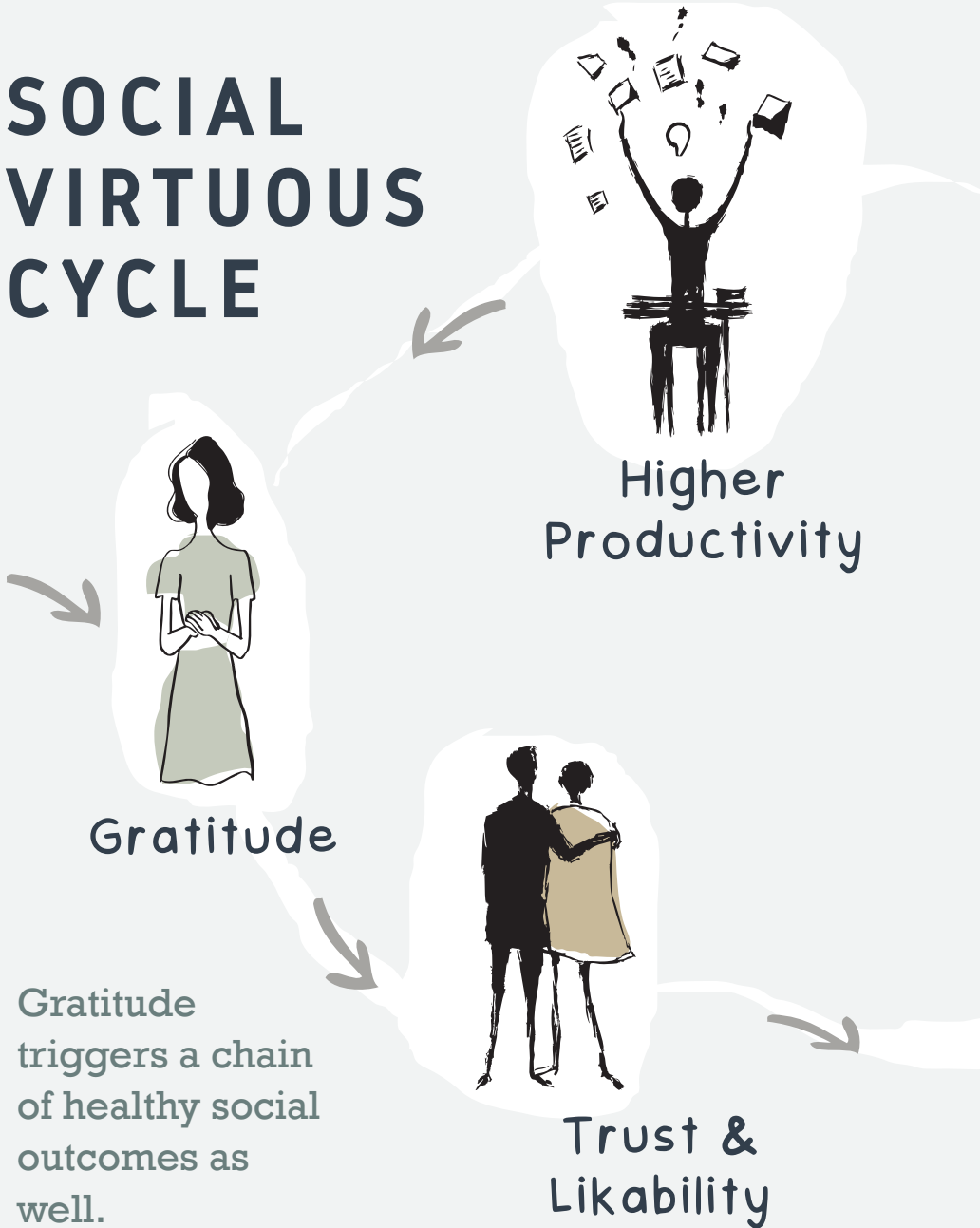
"The more you
are in a state of
gratitude, the
more you will
attract things to be
grateful for."

—Walt Disney.

Gratitude is perhaps even
more important in how it
fosters *healthy society*.



SOCIAL VIRTUOUS CYCLE





Better
Group
Dynamics



Improved
Communications



Strong
Interpersonal
Connections

Source: Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008;
McCullough, Kimeldorf, & Cohen, 2008

Given the power of
gratitude, why isn't it
more common?

According to a recent study,

73%

of respondents found that life's
busyness made it challenging
to be thankful for all they had.

Source: OnePoll for Josh Cellars.

WHAT IS GRATITUDE?

Gratitude can be broken down into a three-step process:

1

Something good happens.

2

You acknowledge that the good has come from an external source.

3

You express the appreciation toward that source.



GRATITUDE ENABLERS



Gratitude Aspect	Enablers	Derailers
1. Something Good Happens	Objective Thinking, Positivity, Grounding in Reality	Myopia, Negativity Bias
2. Acknowledge External Source	Reduced Egoism, Humility, Universal Perspective	Self-Centeredness, Zero-Sum Mindset
3. Express Appreciation	Empathy, Enhanced Interpersonal Skills, Disciplined Communication	Cultural Norms, Power Dynamics

To be more grateful, boost the **enablers** and lessen the **derailers**.

So, what can you do to
be more grateful?

Start with these

6

Gratitude Practices



1

Focus on
what you have
rather than what
you don't have.



Objective Thinking,
Positivity, Grounding
in Reality



Myopia,
Negativity Bias

- **Take an inventory** of all you have, material, relationship, skills & talents.
- **Compare** yourself to yourself, not others.
- **Reframe challenges:** Every cloud has a silver lining—what are yours?
- **Thought experiment:** What if you woke tomorrow and all you had were the things you were grateful for today?



"I used to complain
that I had no shoes
until I met someone
without feet."

—Amerind Traditional.

2

Keep a Gratitude Journal.



Objective Thinking,
Positivity, Grounding
in Reality



Myopia,
Negativity Bias

- **Write down** 3-5 things you are grateful for that day, no matter how small.
- **Be specific:** Instead of “I’m grateful for my friends,” try “I’m grateful for the supportive conversation I had with Sally today.”
- **Describe why:** “The sunny weather made my walk feel relaxing and energizing.”



"A journal can offer
you a place to be
someone, anyone,
who you want to be."

— Brian Ledger.

3

Pray in Thanksgiving.



Reduced Egoism,
Humility, Universal
Perspective



Self-Centeredness,
Zero-Sum Mindset

- **Prepare:** Find a quiet space, pause & reflect, enter with reverence.
- **Be consistent:** A prayer before meals is one of the best times to appreciate the goodness in your life.
- **Be thankful for challenges:** Know that you can learn & grow from all challenges & be thankful for the opportunity.



"We pray, not to
change God's mind,
but to change our
own."

— Peter Kreeft.

4

Thank
everyone you
meet with
for his or her time.



Humility, Universal
Perspective,
Empathy



Self-Centeredness,
Zero-Sum Mindset

- **Understand** that time is the most precious resource for most people & spending it with you is costly.
- **Acknowledge at the start:** Thank them for making the time as the meeting starts.
- **Close with gratitude:** Reiterate your appreciation when you close the meeting.



"Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future, but today is a gift. That's why it's called the present."

—Bil Keane.

5

Make a habit of
giving
positive feedback.



Empathy, Enhanced
Interpersonal
Skills, Disciplined
Communication

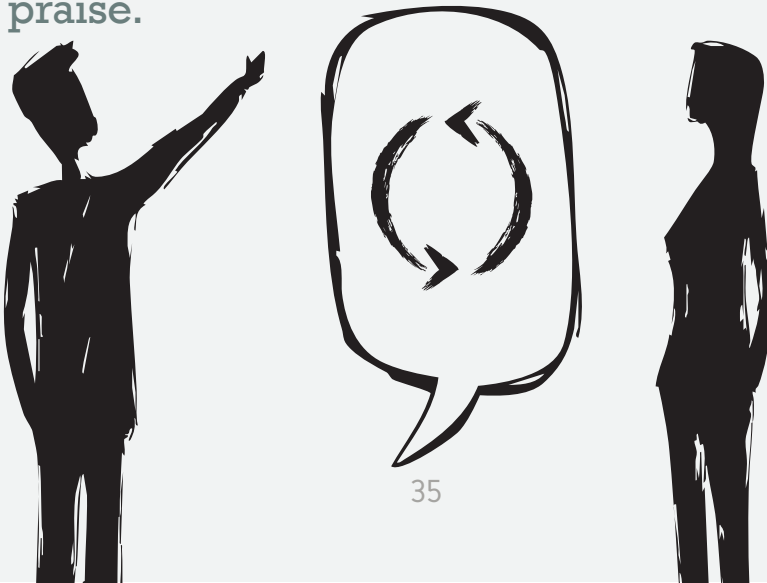


Cultural Norms,
Power Dynamics

- **High performing teams** give 5.6 compliments for each critique. Low performing teams give only .36 compliments for each critique.

Source: Losada & Heaphy, 2004.

- **Be objective:** Acknowledge effort and highlight the impact on the team.
- **Make it genuine:** Ensure your feedback is heartfelt and authentic, not just empty praise.



"Feedback is the
breakfast of
champions."

— Ken Blanchard.

6

Give back.



Empathy, Enhanced
Interpersonal
Skills, Disciplined
Communication



Cultural Norms,
Power Dynamics

- **Be intentional:** Approach volunteering as a way to express gratitude, not as an obligation or a way to seek recognition.
- **Choose** a cause close to your heart.
- **Reflect:** After volunteering, take time to reflect on what you've learned and the blessings in your life.



"I slept and I dreamed
that life is all joy.
I woke and I saw that
life is all service.
I served and I saw
that service is joy."

— Rabindranath Tagore.

6 Practices to be More Grateful:

1 Focus on **what you have** rather than what you don't have.

2 Keep a **Gratitude Journal**.

3 Pray in **Thanksgiving**.

4 Thank **everyone you meet** with for his or her time.

5 Make a habit of giving **positive feedback**.

6 **Give back**.

Now it's your
turn.



Go forth and
be grateful.

I can't thank you enough for reading!

Want to learn how the best thinkers & doers are **using frameworks to shape the world?**

Follow **Eric Robert Morse** **@FrameworksMindset** for more content like this.



“I would maintain
that thanks are
the highest form
of thought; and
that gratitude is
happiness doubled
by wonder.”

—G.K. Chesterton.

