

Gratitude (taken from the book Gratitude Stories from Our Hearts)



My gratitude journey started at the Entrepreneur's Organization Global Leadership Conference in Bangkok, Thailand. A smart lady and now friend by the name of Gina Mollicone- Long was speaking during a break-out session. Gina is a Process Control Engineer by education and a trainer of Performance Coaches professionally. I was lucky to be in the audience when she talked about the role of energy and emotion in human performance. During her lecture, she proposed that humans perform at their highest level when they express or experience gratitude, and at their lowest level when they express or experience fear or shame. Little did I know that thought would completely change my life.

When we returned to the United States, I drove myself to our local Home Depot and bought a small, galvanized pail. It wasn't heavy but it's noticeable, it's shiny, not easy to carry in your pocket and you can't really hide it, the pail is about eight inches tall and eight inches across. I wrote the word "gratitude" on a piece of paper and dropped it the pail. I carried the pail everywhere with me. That pail became a physical reminder to me to be intentional about my gratitude practice. It sat in the passenger seat of my car, in my truck, on the desk in my home office, on the credenza in my actual office, and beside the TV when Sunday movies came on. I did this for six months. The pail was my physical reminder to practice gratitude The interesting thing about gratitude, is the more you practice gratitude the more grateful you become. After six months or so I made the decision, I was going to share my newfound gratitude with my Company Leadership Team.

We started a weekly Gratitude Exercise called One Good Thing. Every Monday at nine in the morning, each member was given one minute or two to share One Good Thing. One Good Thing is a share of whatever a person is most Grateful from their business, family, or personal life from the previous week. It was awkward at first and took a while before people were comfortable enough to really share, but once they did, their stories were eye opening.

Two stories stand out for me. One of my teammates was a parent to a daughter who loved soccer. When it was his turn to speak, he said that he was grateful that his daughter finally introduced him to her friends. You see, my teammate had been attending his daughter's soccer games week in and week out, but his daughter never acknowledged that he was there. Until one day, she did. That tiny moment made my teammates' week.

Another teammate was a new grandmother. We all knew that her daughter was pregnant, and that they were all excited for the baby. What we didn't know was that the baby had been diagnosed with a congenital defect that increased his risk for not surviving to term. If he did survive to term, the doctor said that it would be likely that he would be stillborn. If he wasn't stillborn, he would most likely die immediately after birth. When it was her turn to speak, she said that she was grateful that her grandson was born. Though he lived only an hour, she was grateful to meet her grandson, hold him and tell him she loved him. I thought I was going to teach my teammates about the power of Gratitude, and I learned so much more than I taught.

Hack #2

