

Productive Leaders

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How to Lead Gratitude at Work – The Happy Thanksgiving edition



What can leaders do, especially heading into the holiday season, to help our teams support each other, work cooperatively together, and practice gratitude?

1. Create incentives for people to help each other

People respond to incentives. Make the project success part of everyone's responsibility and award bonuses for those results.

2. Encourage collaboration

Make it clear that work is not a zero-sum game, that if someone is successful or "wins" that someone else fails or "loses." In classes I occasionally encounter students who didn't want to work with other students because they believe that if other students got a good grade, that there would not be enough A grades for them. We had to review that EVERYONE could be successful, and that the way for them to succeed was to help others succeed too.

3. Develop an internal gratitude movement

The holidays are a great time to start a gratitude movement. The "Purple Card" movement is an easy way to show appreciation, and there are many uses in an organization.

Managers can "catch people doing something right" and give them a Purple Gratitude Card. Organizations can also create a Purple Card Campaign.

If a group does the Purple Card Campaign, managers can make sure that everyone receives a Purple Card for something they did right. Everyone needs to be acknowledged, or else

resentment kicks in, and the situation gets worse. At the end of Purple Card Week, some organizations show more appreciation by allowing employees to pick a \$10 gift card from a basket. It is all about showing genuine appreciation.

The Purple Cards are effective because they are for a specific act, and they recognize a person for a specific ability or accomplishment. Purple Carding someone takes about 10 seconds, and the results are astounding.



4. Encourage employees to keep a gratitude journal

Yes, I know this sounds crunchy, but studies show that people who journal about things for which they are grateful are happier and less stressed. My friend, Tim Durkin, www.TimDurkin.com, introduced me to this 5-Minute Gratitude Journal. It is a journal for people who don't like the idea of journaling. [The Five Minute Journal: A Happier You in 5 Minutes a Day](#) and it works. I keep mine by my bed and write in it every night.

5. Use a gratitude app to stay grateful

Beth Ziesenis, my Nerdy Best Friend, is found at YourNerdyBestFriend.com. She profiled a series of gratitude apps to help us stay on track in [this article](#).

6. Give to those less fortunate

When you meet people who are less fortunate than you, or hear about people who are going through hard times, you immediately recognize the fact that there are people out there who have a tougher life than you do right now. Wherever we are, we are two steps ahead of someone else, so we can reach back and give them a push forward.

Several charity organizations work tirelessly in the international and local community to improve the living conditions of those less privileged. Find a way to help them with their mission. Often people feel that cash is the only option. Many organizations need you time, talents, and skills. You can update social media, run online campaigns, make phone calls, perform administrative tasks, and write grants all from home.

7. Accept the concept of absolute advantage

We are not all going to be great at everything, so focus on strengths and abilities instead of deficiencies. I joke that I am starting to give up on my dream of playing in the NBA. I cannot jump, shoot, rebound, guard, and I am not as fast as I used to be. There are people who are far better than I am at playing basketball. They have the talent, skills, and ability to play at that level. They should play basketball. I should not. I understand basketball is not in my wheelhouse so I vow to encourage those who have that talent.

8. Play to your strengths

Focus on what you are good at doing. Give yourself a break. You don't have to be good at everything. This is why we have other people and teams. Admit when you need help and enlist the talents of those around you to help with tasks that are not your strengths.

9. Look at the rest of the world

If you want to compare yourself, compare yourself to those in underdeveloped nations who live without electricity, the millions of people who worry every day about not having enough to eat, those living in war-torn countries, the people living in areas where drought is killing their animals and crops, and people in danger of dying from dysentery. If you are reading this, you are wealthy. Find out [how wealthy here](#).

We have so much to be grateful for, so let's please focus on how we can help others rather than focusing on what we don't have.

Make Thanksgiving count. This year, let's be truly grateful and carry that gratitude throughout the holiday season.

Watch for my December newsletter - we are giving away cash!

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Mary C. Kelly





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