

Dr. Drewyer's Attitude of Gratitude Continues...

When I discover myself in a conversation about what is wrong with the world, can I be the shape-shifter and switch the theme over to gratitude? I have actually read where educators have infused this "George Bailey" effect into the classroom. You all are likely familiar with the Holiday movie-staple, "It's a Wonderful Life". Some professors have had their students write about how their lives would be changed if they subtracted one possible positive experience from their lives. Subsequently, they were more grateful for that instance than they had realized before the assignment. What would your life be like without a spouse, or job, or child?

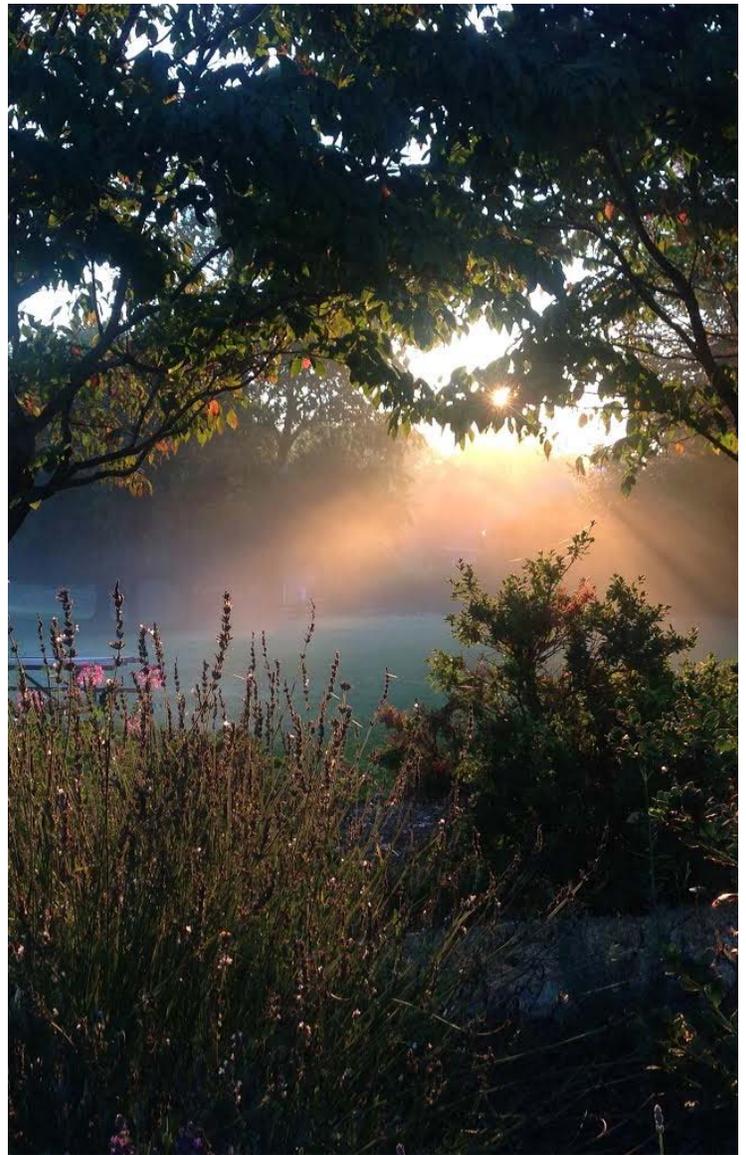
Perhaps I can simply begin with gratitude that I am aware, that I can recognize things to be grateful for. There are folks who do not experience gratitude, thereby missing out on the rewards.

By now, we all know you can save hundreds of dollars in 15 minutes on car insurance. But, did you know that some folks do not feel pleasure, and then do not express gratitude? This leaves them feeling un-connected, isolated, depressed and anxious.

Anhedonia, defined in Wikipedia "as the inability to experience pleasure from activities usually found enjoyable, e.g. exercise, hobbies, music, sexual activities or social interactions."

Culturally, it is accepted that we would "mind our P's and Q's." In doing so, we see it as a sort of mark of moral behavior (say "Please") and response ("Thank you"). The benefits show up as an expanded sense of belonging and support in times of need. Without a sense of P's and Q's, a lack of intimacy, feelings of isolation, and lost sense of community present. Very sad, I say.

So next time you are feeling down in the dumps, try on a dose of grateful and see what shows up. Keep in mind, there are those among us who do not sense the pleasure, and therefore struggle to be gracious, and are not getting the same dose of happy that we thrive on. If you know some of these folks, please give them a hug, you will feel better, and they will gain valuable insight about their connection with you.



Light in Balance

*Once in a while there's light
Then, gradually, maybe not even noticing,
The light disappears
Left in the dark, what now?
And again,
slowly,
deliberately slowly,
The light creeps back in
Creeps perhaps because appearing suddenly
may be too shocking,
blinding me before I can acclimate
Yet, there it is,
the light appearing in a strange place,
shining inside
And if I would only notice it
Balance returns to the tides, the winds,
the light and the dark*

-Nici Repose

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.

Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!

Even if they're a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still, treat each guest honorably.

He may be clearing you out for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.

- Rumi



Thankful Therese

This Thanksgiving I am giving thanks to my patients. On November 11th I celebrated my 17th anniversary working with Dr. Doug. I have been a hygienist for over 30 years and most days I leave the office having learned something, received a compliment, or best of all a story or moment that made me smile or laugh. Thank you all for making my life more enriched! Here is a quote by Albert Schweitzer that sums up my feelings for you,

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person.

Each of us has a cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Holidays!

On the occasion of 28 years together...

Barb'd Wired

All the books are read

Some, neatly stored.

Enough cycles have gone by

To know the costs and rewards

Of living from the heart

Lessons passed down through time

Of waking each day

Somehow knowing

It will all work out just fine

I'm grateful for your hand

It steadies my path

I'm grateful for your heart

It softens the landing in the aftermath

I'm grateful for your vision

It keeps my eyes open wide

To all the reasons, everyday

To raise a smile from down inside

So as long as we share this gift

Of all these precious days

Allowing mutual freedom

To get in each other's way

I'll remain so very grateful

And welcome destiny's fate

To have you keep on Barbin' me

For another 28

Gratitude, Fast at Work with Danielle

When my dad invited me to write an article on gratitude I jumped all over the opportunity to share some personal thoughts on a passion of mine: workplace happiness. Seven years in the "real work world" practicing leadership development, with an eye for wellness at work, prompts me to offer perspectives on what I learn from the most seasoned employees, leaders and positive psychology experts paired with a fresh viewpoint of my own. My wish is that my writing slows you down just long enough to savor a few words and perhaps a cup of coffee, and latch on to a tip or two for enjoying life to its fullest and spreading that joy.

“Gratitude, Fast at Work!”

I eye my clock with torment as I pull into the long line of cars awaiting coffee. Restless, I check and re-check my work email on my phone and wonder what others in front of me could possibly be ordering that's taking so long. I'm not on pace to be late to work quite yet, but four more special-order lattes runs the risk of doing the trick. Finally I arrive at the window to pay, card in hand, ready to go (“I won't be the delay for the next patron's morning schedule!”) only to find out that my morning jolt was pre-paid for by the guy in line in front of me. Wow, that was really nice! I think I'll pay for the person behind me to pass it on.

Great stories of “paying it forward” buzz around all the time and I have experienced the positive acts first-hand, even created them myself, especially during the holiday season. How does it feel, to hear about that drive-thru generosity? What is it like to be on the receiving end? What about being the giver? Warm and fuzzy? Joyful? Satisfied? Empowered? Lighthearted? HAPPY? Ah, the elusive *happiness*. A simple act like picking up the next-in-line's joe in the morning can shift an attitude from impatient, caffeine-deprived irritation to exuberance and zest for the day. In less than a minute. Without breaking stride from morning routine. And then I have had my coffee. And get to the office. And the gratitude does not always follow.

I have experienced the *automated* “thank you” at the end of an email at work. And wondered why the project I poured my heart into goes completely unnoticed as nothing more than checking off the next box. I have paused for a moment and realized that the creative dialogue that moved problem to solution so quickly last week was not even acknowledged. And more often, did not pause and realize that. Because everything and everyone, including me, is moving so quickly these days. The office is no exception, rather it seems to be the role model. More employees than ever are reporting a lack of time to get their job done, and finding the time to acknowledge the meaningful, valuable things that happen along the way is an afterthought, if a thought at all. Life moves at the speed of light these days. I have people telling me that multi-tasking is a real thing, a necessity to keep up. I have 24/7 access to everything the world tells me I need and a whole lot more I could probably do without. Stop. Think. How has technology supported my thankfulness lately? What has my busy schedule lent to gratefulness this week? Did I even stop to truly taste that coffee?

The amazing speed at which I can get things done and my ability and others' to push ourselves, to juggle work, home, wellness, social lives, etc., etc., showcases the incomprehensible wonder of the human mind and body at work. And also tends to result in a lack of attention to being grateful, truly appreciating interactions with each other or even noticing the small (or large for that matter) things that make it great to be alive and working together. Jobs seem only to be more and more demanding, family and social priorities do nothing but grow and the world around us reveals that it is not slowing down anytime soon. I am keeping up, making it work. And yet what does that truly mean? And is it really what I want, or need? This fast-paced world is more efficient, more productive, more connected and more and more, lacking authentic gratitude.

Robert Emmons is a gratitude expert, defining the word as “a felt sense of wonder, thankfulness, and appreciation for life” and further describes gratitude as “an affirmation of goodness” and an acknowledgement that “outside of ourselves, other people- or even higher powers, if you're of a spiritual mindset- give us many gifts, big and small, to help us achieve the goodness in our lives.” Emmons' and others' report a wealth of data on the positive impacts that gratitude has on individuals, as well as strong links to employee effectiveness on-the-job, resulting from simple acts of appreciation. Studies show that people who practice gratitude consistently experience physical, psychological and social benefits such as stronger immune systems, better sleep, more alertness, joy and pleasure, more generosity and compassion, more forgiveness and less loneliness. Any of these examples have also been proven to contribute to higher levels of employee engagement and productivity at work, and therefore bigger and better business results for companies. And yet, recent research via the John Templeton Foundation reveals that “people are least likely to express gratitude in workplaces...despite wishing to be thanked more often themselves at work.” It also points out that most people feel better when they thank someone at work, yet surprisingly only a small number do this regularly. I make strong efforts to manage, accomplish, do, check emails 27 times a day and answer every phone call that comes in while scarfing bites of lunch in between words. And yet somehow it is a struggle to fit in a sense of wonder, thankfulness, and appreciation for life- I am not prioritizing something so simple that can reap such huge benefits. Why do acts of appreciation and thoughtful “thank yous” get left behind so often? Gratitude with Danielle continues on the next page....



Gratitude, Fast at Work with Danielle continues

There is that nagging issue of time, the need for speed and efficiency that naturally drives productivity up and meaningful human connection down. But “quick and easy tips” at fingertips and technology-at-the-ready abolish that excuse; which forces me to take a closer look within. People can be very uncomfortable with contemplating, sitting with their own thoughts or exploring their own emotional intelligence, especially when it comes to work. University of Virginia studies show that adults would rather shock themselves with electricity than sit alone in a room with their own thoughts for 15 minutes. Research offers that “many of us find it too uncomfortable to self-reflect and focus on our own thoughts and feelings.” Challenging as it may feel, this is where and how gratitude begins to take shape, within ourselves. Studies show that we can deliberately cultivate gratitude, and can increase our well-being and happiness by doing so. In addition, grateful thinking, and especially expression of it to others, is associated with increased levels of energy, optimism, and empathy. And who does not want more happiness and good health?!

Contrary to what the time-constrained, speed-driven world might be telling you, gratitude can naturally be prioritized, even at the office. It takes intention and commitment, and trying out one or two of these speedy practices, then making a habit out of it, to rapidly improve health, wellness and happiness:

“Stop and smell the roses.” When I savor positive experiences, I am reflecting, however briefly, on the good in the world and what it means to me. Also, it is quite difficult to feel negative emotions like jealousy or anger at the same time as feeling grateful and appreciative, which means gratitude can actually create a barrier to the “bad stuff.”

Share meaningful thank yous only. And do not forget to say thank you. It is not going to work as well if I do it just because I was told to, or think I should. It is great to think about the last thing, however small, I was thankful for: Did I express that thanks? Saying (or emailing) thank you when I truly mean it can work wonders for my well-being as well as for the person on the receiving end. It is never too late. And I definitely recommend getting rid of that automated “thank you” in the email signature line- it takes less than 10 seconds to type it out when you truly want to say it.

Smile. A smile to a stranger says “I am grateful to be here and to see you”, one of the few things in the world that is easier done than said perhaps. Smile really big for no reason while driving or walking around just so others will take notice and catch the “bug.” Smiles are understood around the world so they can be shared with anyone, even if you do not speak the same language.

Keep a gratitude journal. Even if you do not feel you can stop and appreciate every living moment (although I encourage you to rise to the challenge), take a few minutes, perhaps at the end of each day or week, to write down everything, or maybe five things, that you are grateful for. There is even an app for that - check out “Happy Tapper” to take gratitude online. It spreads even more of the wealth to write gratitude letters and send them. Take a few minutes to write down an experience, interaction or gift someone else offered, share appreciation in a note and send it to them.

These are “efficient” ideas to focus on inside or outside of work to more consciously practice gratitude, regardless of how much time or pressure is present. The idea is to start small and keep at it, propelling small bursts of thoughtful pauses, meaningful reflection and contagious pleasure into as many moments of the (work) day as possible. Good luck, and **Thank You!**



Aging Gratefully with Barb

When asked by Dr. Doug to think about what we are grateful for, we all could have a pretty long list. Most of our list would consist of all the wonderful things in our lives, but what about the “not so wonderful things” like aging.

We have all heard the many clichés about growing old, like “Getting old ain’t for sissies” or “The golden years aren’t all they’re cracked up to be”. Yet I am grateful for this “over the hill” time. I am not saying I enjoy some of the nuisances of this aging body but it does remind me that I am still among the living and that this body is just the vehicle I am traveling in.

I have come to be grateful for a slower pace, no longer the pace of my youth. Not minding every time I have to rake leaves or scrub my kitchen floor, knowing I may not be able to do the everyday tasks at some point. Not needing to accumulate “things”. Realizing less is more. Recognizing when my grown children do and do not need my advice. To step back and let them teach me some things.

I am thankfully watching the wonders of childhood through my grandchildren. How they see the world so differently, like when my granddaughter said to me, “Nanny, I love your wrinkled hands.”

So far, for me, aging has shown up as a very peaceful place.

I wish to continue to age gratefully.

Dr. Drewyer's Toothpaste Talk

I am well aware that I have a particular dis-position most often when asked about toothpaste. I can hear me now, "it's all about marketing" blah blah blah... "whitening has little to do with dental wellness" blah blah blah... "all the 'goodness' of toothpaste is washed away immediately when we rinse after brushing" blah blah blah... "toothpaste, if you like the flavor and consistency, will promote longer brushing" blah blah blah...

Effectively, I de-emphasize toothpaste as the 'magic bullet' behind the creation of sustainable, preventive-profile dental wellness. And, I am also aware that we, as consumers for our dental wellness, are certainly faced with choices regarding which toothpaste and why as we walk the long, shiny dental corridor at the neighborhood supermarket. And so, herein I am offering a brief overview of some highlighted indications for certain toothpastes at certain times for certain folks (adults), in the interest of supporting a 'best choice' for you and your intimate relationship with your dentifrice.

When reading labels pay special attention to two types of ingredients, the "ACTIVE" and the "INACTIVE". The simplest group to decipher are the Inactives, so I will start there. A surfactant is the ingredient that contributes to the "foaminess" of toothpaste. Foaminess helps to loosen plaque and debris from the surface of our teeth, something like laundry detergent. Beware, Sodium Lauryl Sulfate is a very common surfactant ingredient, and you may be sensitive to it. If you have a SLS sensitivity, you may end up getting recurrent Aphthous ulcers, so look for low or no SLS. Other Inactive ingredients are the abrasives, those ingredients that are used to remove surface stains. Tech Alert – the RDA value is the Relative Dentin Abrasivity. The higher the number, the better stain removal. CAUTION – that may also translate into destruction of tooth structure! To minimize that concern, choose a low RDA value. Arm & Hammer – Low. Colgate Tartar Control – High. Colgate Total – Middle.

Toothpastes are a drug. The FDA considers toothpaste as a drug suitably safe for over the counter disbursement without supervision by a healthcare professional. The FDA approves toothpaste for one or more claims (the role of ACTIVE ingredients) as long as they meet requirements. Fluoride is an anti-decay agent. Calcium Phosphate products are non-Fluoride anti-decay agents. Recent significant research detailing the uptake of different Fluoride (F12) products showed that an OTC product containing 80% less F12 (a Stannous Fluoride toothpaste) substantially outperformed a prescription strength F12 toothpaste. Anti-sensitivity toothpastes will have one of several active ingredients, including Stannous Fluoride (SnF2) and Amorphous Calcium Phosphate (ACP) – providing long-term sensitivity relief. The active ingredient of Potassium Salts helps sensitivity as long as it is used. For Anti-Gingivitis, SnF2 is a terrific anti-bacterial, even better than Sodium Fluoride (NaF) in reducing gingivitis. Triclosan is a reasonably new and therefore still-under-scrutiny-yet-available anti-gingivitis active ingredient.

Looking for Adult protection against erosion, those ditched notches at the gumline or heavy tongue-side wear surfaces? SnF2 with ACP is your recipe of choice, ideally with an emulsifier that soothes soft tissues and a flavor you like! Identify a toothpaste with SnF2/ACP together with a low RDA and a very soft toothbrush and you have hit the homerun of efficacy in a toothpaste: anti-caries, anti-sensitivity and anti-gingivitis with low abrasion. You will have to ask me "off-the-record" for the name of this product.



*What am I supposed to bring tonight?
What's just the proper thing?
And how am I supposed to know?
Sadly twisted, I don't even know
what I'm carrying.*

*Should I carry sarcasm?
Would that fit just right?
If I show up with confusion,
May I still spend the night?*

*If I seem somewhat unattached
It's my load of lonesome showing
I might look just fine
You'd have no way of knowing*

*I may not see things just your way
In fact, I may not see at all
I likely won't make choices
Even when actions call*

*So what will I bring tonight?
By I, I mean you and me
What do we expect the other to bring?
And what does the other expect of me?*

*Son, we do this with each other
all the time
We look at what we're bringin'
on occasion we draw a line
in the darkness we're either whistling
or singin'*

*We say we're looking out for each other
Looking out for doing fine
Putting so much pressure on what we're
bringing
as if that will heal things up in time*

*And when it comes down to it
In front of all the rest
Does what we bring prove just enough
To pass the final test?*

*When all has been laid on the line
All that's left comes from up above
The thing we bring most powerfully
Is the connection we call LOVE*

- Nici Repose

*Endless themes and mindless dreams
Thoughts about what could have been
And what could never be.*

*I'm looking for you. And don't know what I've found
I'm wondering if we even touched common ground
You accepted my embrace
And the expression never changed on your face
You must've seen my tears
Wept for past and future years
And it's just as if you were my support
So solidly planted on firm ground*

*I don't know what's been lost
Not sure what I've just found
And leaving you once again
Has brought me to my knees*

*Endless themes and mindless dreams
Of what is and what could never be*

*Will you ride back to where you used to be?
Or where someone supposes you should?
Will you piece it all together
Like some folks think you could?
Or are you riding still further away
Deeper into the darkest wood?*

*Endless themes and mindless dreams
Of what is and what could never be.*

*If something good will come from this
Something worthwhile, redeeming
If something becomes apparent as a gift
With some deeply appreciated meaning
Then I'll bow to you just as you be
And share that sweet sweet smile
The giggle and the whistle
to let me know
that you're still there with me*

*Endless themes and mindless dreams
Of what is and what could never be*

- Nici Repose

★ **Editor's Note.....**
★
★ Happy end of 2014! Amazed? I am! Thank you for reading
★ our newsletter. I hope you enjoyed the theme of
★ "gratitude" and all our contributors had to offer! I very
★ much enjoyed our theme and on more than one occasion
★ lately, it has caused me to stop in my tracks and really
★ pay attention to what is going on all around and within
★ me. It has been quite a year for me and I found this quote
★ from Oprah that really sums it up for me: "It's not easy
★ being grateful all the time. But it's when you feel least
★ thankful that you are most in need of what gratitude
★ can give you." See you in 2015!
★
★ **Deb** 
★
★*****

*It was in the Blood- moon's mystery moment
That space in time between*

*When the light of the brightest star
didn't shine where it's always been
It's there I found me hiding*

It's there the secret hid

*It's there I faced and found myself,
profoundly reminded*

*And yet it was in that Blood- moon's mystery moment
That space in time between*

*When the light of the brightest star
didn't shine where it's always been*

*That I found out, yes I did
the answer I've always carried,
that somehow had been hid*

*That I can only hunt, and through hunting
one day discover
the answer to the moon's mystery that's waiting
to be uncovered*

*It must have something to do with waking up,
with gaining sight inside,
what that one night was revealed to me in the eclipse
of midnight's light:
we belong to each other,
way beyond all rights and wrongs
and we alone, each one of us, choose how to belong
even when its seems so dark we'll never see again*

*It's just a matter of a real short time
when the light creeps back in*

*While eclipsed in the juxtaposition
of something not intended or created to be in the way*

*I get to say how big a shadow
I'll let darken any part of my day*

*It's in that space that I can pause
Pause and decide*

*When to ride the wave
Or when to wait on the changing tide
And yet it was in that Blood- moon's mystery moment
That space in time between
When the light of the brightest star
didn't shine where it's always been
That I found out, yes I did
the answer I've always carried,
that somehow had been hid*

- Nici Repose