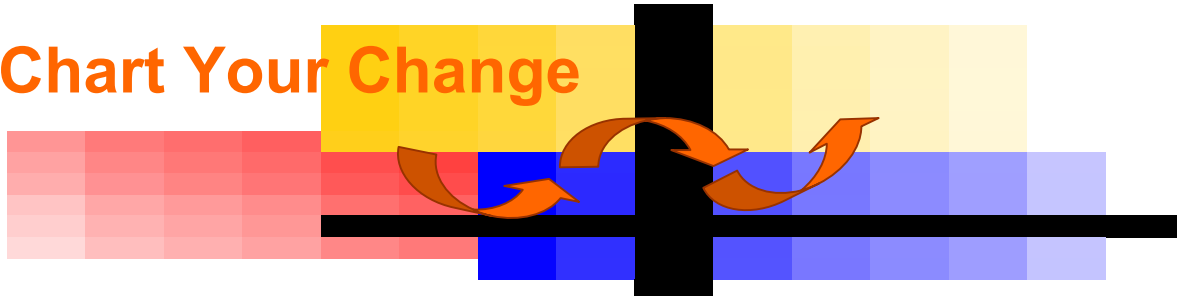


Chart Your Change



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"Gratitude is something of which none of us can give too much. For on the smiles, the thanks we give, our little gestures of appreciation, our neighbors build their philosophy of life."

-- A.J. Cronin

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Welcome to Chart Your Change

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1. QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

-- Melody Beattie

2. THE GRATEFUL HEART

"Do not ever underestimate the power of the heart to bring forth a higher intelligence, a higher awareness and greater solutions to existence than you would ever have anticipated."

-- Glenda Green

Thankfulness is about being thoughtful. Gratitude is about being aware. When we are aware of our blessings, we say and do thoughtful things. Look back to the beginning of this year and examine what events, what friends, family, colleagues and strangers have done or said to impact your life. Who put a smile on your face? Who extended a helpful hand? Who supported you through a difficult time? Write on a sheet of paper all the things you are grateful for - small things, big things, incidental things. Fill the page and notice how you feel after you've done it!

Years ago, I kept a gratitude journal and each night I would jot at least five items I was grateful for that day. As I continued to do this, I found it easier to write more and more things. After about a month, the page would overflow and I also found myself feeling lighter and happier. I was grateful for a fresh breeze, for a sunny day, for rain. I began to notice and see my natural world and the people in it with renewed appreciation. I noticed myself writing all the positive aspects of having my own business. I acknowledged even the most difficult people in my life - for their humanity and contribution to my growth.

Being grateful is one important emotion I believe leads to mental and physical well-being. There has been research by Martin Seligman and others to substantiate that when we feel grateful, we have more vitality, suffer less stress, and are less likely to get depressed. We actually behave much better with others because we feel happy.

Other researchers have taken a closer look (University of Michigan studies) and found that cultivating gratitude may actually undo the effect of negative emotions such as anger and anxiety.

3. TIPS FOR MAINTAINING A GRATITUDE ATTITUDE

Do you find yourself going to the dark side with negative thoughts? How often might you be doing so? How often do you experience having thoughts of gratitude. How might people at work respond to you when you are thinking critically vs. when you are thinking with gratitude. Notice on a daily basis, how many of your thoughts are the result of a critical attitude rather than a grateful attitude. Put a paper clip in the "critical" cup or in the "grateful" cup for each thought. Notice which cup has more paper clips.

In the language of Abundance, how can you expect more from the universe when you don't appreciate what you already have? Are you appreciating the quiet joys, simple pleasures, your family, friends, your home, your health and those everyday moments when you catch yourself smiling?

4. WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO DRIVE US CRAZY?

"If we learn to open our hearts, anyone, including the people who drive us crazy, can be our teacher." Unknown

In Tibetan writings, there are several principles of mind-heart training techniques. The 13th guidepost is "Be grateful to everyone." This principle begs the question, "Even people I dislike?" If we are fully aware, this attitude can help us to see the people and

situations in our lives for what they are and not through our fears and filters, which keeps us “under the covers and locking the door.” The truth about those people we don’t like or find insufferable or intimidating is that, if we look closely enough, we will find (maybe to our own horror) that they are exhibiting characteristics of ourselves that we cannot face. If we listed what we don’t like about these people, we would find our own rejected qualities (am I hearing resistance to this concept?) which we then project onto our external world. Observe which individuals trigger your hot buttons and then notice how many times those buttons have been triggered in your lifetime. Have you discerned that this reoccurring stuff, is what you haven’t worked out yet? These individuals are giving us an opportunity to befriend all the ancient history we carry with us like a heavy sack of Idaho potatoes - by just mirroring back to us.

The overriding premise of “be grateful to everyone” is that we have the basic wisdom, intelligence and goodness to learn from everything. It’s just a matter of tapping into what’s already there and having a complete change of attitude. It’s the willingness to open our eyes, our heart and mind, to allow situations in our life to become our teacher.

Let’s get personal and talk about that person(s) in your life that causes you grief; those individuals (Jane or John) that are part of a situation you can’t escape. To communicate successfully with Jane or John, you must trust your own wisdom and find out how to open that door for yourself. Sometimes, we want Jane or John to give us a break and disappear. Even if we do manage to get rid of them, they seem to reappear with another name and another face. Here it is again, the lesson not yet learned, addressing the point where we are most stuck. Okay, so now, this is driving you crazy. You don’t want to be grateful to them. These people are making you feel bad.

Being grateful and showing compassion in action and speech is a lifetime journey. We don’t always succeed. It begins with acknowledging that Jane or John is getting to us. We are not always willing to admit to the basic goodness in others and respecting their humanity. How you open to the situation so that your basic goodness can meet the basic goodness of Jane or John is the point where you are communicating and no longer having your buttons pushed. You are living the conviction of being grateful to everyone.

Inspired by an article by Pema Chodron

4. COACH’S TIP # 11 - WHAT MAKES PEOPLE HAPPY?

What Makes People Happy?

Interventions That Work!

According to the research studies of Martin Seligman, using the following interventions will produce lasting benefits. The benefits were observed to last even three months after the interventions and showed that people were significantly happier and less depressed after doing these exercises.

1. Three Good Things

Participants were asked to write down three good things (big or small) that happened during the day every night for one week. Next to each good thing listed, individuals addressed the question, "Why did this good thing happen?"

2. **Using Your Top Strengths**

Individuals were asked to take the Values in Action Signature Strengths Survey (free at www.authentic happiness.org), write down their top five strengths, and then "use these strengths more often to come up with ideas on how to use these strengths in new ways" during the week.

Try at least one of these exercises for one week and notice how it impacts your happiness quotient.

"You simply will not be the same person two months from now after consciously giving thanks each day for the abundance that exists in your life. And you will have set in motion an ancient spiritual law: the more you have and are grateful for, the more will be given you."

-- Sara Ban Breathnach

Have a Joyful Month and a Happy Thanksgiving!



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Request Flo for your next event. In addition to being the founder of Thinking Well Consulting, Ms. Mauri is an Executive Coach and Educator at NYU, teaching Organizational Behavior, Emotionally Intelligent Leadership and Management Styles. She is certified in Conflict Resolution and Organization Development. Ms. Mauri specializes in assessment tools and self-awareness techniques for maximizing human potential. Are you getting in your own way toward advancing your true aspirations and talents? Are you experiencing challenges in your business relationships and want to breakthrough repetitive no-win cycles? Are you ready to define and lead with your strengths? A coach can help you take action to achieve your goals. Contact Flo today for a conversation.

Chart Your Change is your select source for inspiration, coaching tips and personal development. We share the very best of essays, research studies and success tools for taking your human potential to the top of Maslow's pyramid: self-actualization and transformation.

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