

In This Issue > Real Women

Coach's Corner: The Gift of Thank You

By Sharon Pahlka

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Few things in this world are as precious as giving thanks and being thanked. Expressing your thanks is an important skill to learn. You will never be sorry for developing a “thank you” habit.

Saying thanks in writing is a lovely addition to your life as well as the people you give your thanks to. Write the thank you as soon as possible after you get the gift or receive the favor. When you write, say something about how much effort the giver must have put into getting the right gift for you, even when it’s not the perfect gift. You can put something about how you are using the gift or enjoying it. Even if you thanked the giver in person, sending a follow up note is a nice gesture. E-mails are fine, but I think a handwritten note is even better.

How about branching out with thank you notes? What about thanking people who support you all year long or went out of their way to help you? Now would be a good time to send a note of appreciation to the health care professional who went out of their way to help you understand something of importance to you, the bus driver who is always on time, or the waitress who always greets you with a smile and is glad to see you. Think about how they might feel to receive this recognition from you.

When I am grateful it does something for me too. Last week seven of my buddies got together for a birthday party for our dear friend Beth. Part of the agenda was for each of us to basically tell Beth how thankful we were for her. Imagine how you would feel to be the recipient of seven people, one after another, in their own way, telling you thanks for being you.

You can be creative with your thank yous. How about starting with a “thank you” project? Make a list of people who helped you this past year, get a stack of cards and write a thank you to each of them. Or pick a few and think about what would be the perfect thank you. Once you start, keep it up. A few thank yous add a lot.

Coaching Question: Have you written a thank you note lately?

Coaching Tip: Thank someone who:

- Gives you a gift
- Provides excellent service
- Does you a favor
- Helps you with a tough situation
- Interviews you for a job

- Recommends you

And always thank someone whenever you feel moved to do so.

Homework: This week schedule some time to write a few thank you notes. Try to make a habit of setting a goal of no less than one or two “thank yous” a month.

Quotes: *“God gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today. Have you used one to say, ‘thank you’?”*

– William Arthur Ward

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”

– William Arthur Ward

“If the only prayer you say in your whole life is, ‘Thank you,’ that would suffice.”

– Meister Eckhart

Sharon Pahlka is a life coach and speaker. In her coaching, she helps her clients live well and meaningfully, especially those with chronic health challenges. Sharon’s column, “Coach’s Corner” offers helpful tips from her work.

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