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Happy Thanksgiving!

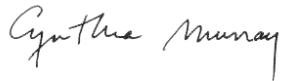


North Bay Leadership Council wishes you a very Happy Thanksgiving! As we reflect on the many reasons to be thankful and express our gratitude, it is a good time to assess the benefits of living a grateful life. We are bombarded with bad news and threats daily, distracting us from what is good in the world and in our lives. Taking just five minutes a day to give thanks for the positives can be beneficial in many ways as described in the first article this month.

And then, a twist! Instead of lamenting the dysfunction of our government, we remember the words of Abraham Lincoln and his reasons for hope for our country when he spoke at Gettysburg 150 years ago. We hope you find gratitude for our democracy by learning reasons to rejoice in our messy, frustrating form of government.

We leave you with one of my favorite Native American sayings: “Give thanks for unknown blessings that are already on their way.”

Best,

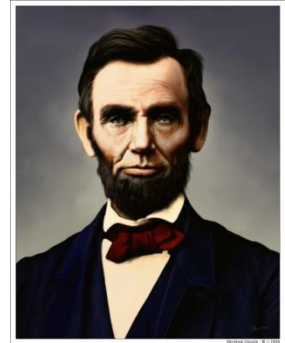


Cynthia



Democracy: Keeping the Faith and Finding Perspective

On the 150th Anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, it is good to remember what Abraham Lincoln said in this speech about democracy, especially in light of the current disappointment in our government. Lincoln understood what David Runciman calls “Democracy’s Dual Dangers,” (The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Chronicle Review, November 18, 2013). Runciman reviews the history of democracy in America, finding “American democracy is going through one of its periodic bouts of self-loathing. The public disapproves of the performance of all the branches of government, even the Supreme Court. Approval ratings for Congress are so low it is tempting to wonder about the sanity of the small number of people who still express confidence in it. The recent shutdown in Washington provoked a furious round of critical commentary from academics to pundits across the political spectrum. There is near unanimity: This is no way to run a government.”



Allen Guelzo’s “Lincoln’s Sound Bite: Have Faith in Democracy,” urges us to reread the Gettysburg Address, first given on November 19, 1863, to see how Lincoln’s 270 word speech had great clarity about democracy and its strength. Writing that “the Civil War was testing whether or not democracies are inherently unstable – what Lincoln said, ‘whether that nation or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure,’” Guelzo reminds us that while today “many take democracy for granted as the endpoint of political development,” that there was no such conviction in 1863. At that time the French Revolution had failed and democratic uprisings in Europe and Russia were crushed. The American Civil War “gave monarchs further reason to rejoice.” It fell upon Lincoln to convince the naysayers “that democracy’s sun had not set after all.”

Says Guelzo, “Looking out over the semicircular rows of graves, Lincoln saw in them a transcendence that few people, then or now, have been willing to concede to liberal democracy. And he saw something all could borrow, a renewed dedication to popular self-government, ‘that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion.’ This would point to a renewal, a new birth, not of freedom from sin but political freedom. The genius of the address ... is in the new birth it gave to those who had become discouraged and wearied by democracy’s follies, and in the reminder that democracy’s survival rested ultimately in the hands of citizens who saw something in democracy worth dying for. We could use that reminder again today.”



Runciman agrees “there is nothing new about this outburst of disgust with the workings of democracy. There is no decade from the past century when it is not possible to find an extended debate among commentators and intellectuals in the democratic West about the inadequacies of democratic politics. The history of modern democracy is a tale of steady success accompanied by the constant drumbeat of anticipated failure.” Runciman shares that it was Alexander de Tocqueville who observed that “underneath the chaotic surface, American democracy was quite stable. Citizens’ discontent coincided with an underlying faith that democratic politics would see them right in the end.”

And it was Tocqueville who sheds great light on our current situation. Runciman says, “Tocqueville had two fears for democracy. First, he believed that the restless impatience of democracy would lead it to become intolerant and impulsive. Second, he thought that the evidence of democracy’s long-term advantages would lead democratic societies to become complacent about the risks they run. Underlying faith in democracy, the precondition for its functioning at all, generates unwarranted optimism.”

Says Runciman, “The present predicament of American democracy is a reflection of those twin fears. On the one hand, there is plenty of impatience and intolerance, revealed in the furious claims both political parties make to speak for the silent majority. At the same time, there is a glib, unspoken assurance that democracy in America is secure and nothing can replace it. The underlying faith in the durability of the system is what allows America’s angriest politicians to bluster. Democracies lurch from complacency to fury and back again.”



Democracy: 5 Ways You Can Make it More Meaningful (and Be Grateful for It!)



Abraham Lincoln, referring to the Declaration of Independence, said “It gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance.” In “Democracy: 5 Ways You Can Make it More Meaningful,” (Millennial Leadership, July 3, 2013) we see how that desire for an equal chance through democracy can lead us to better solutions and better citizenship. Here are the five ways:

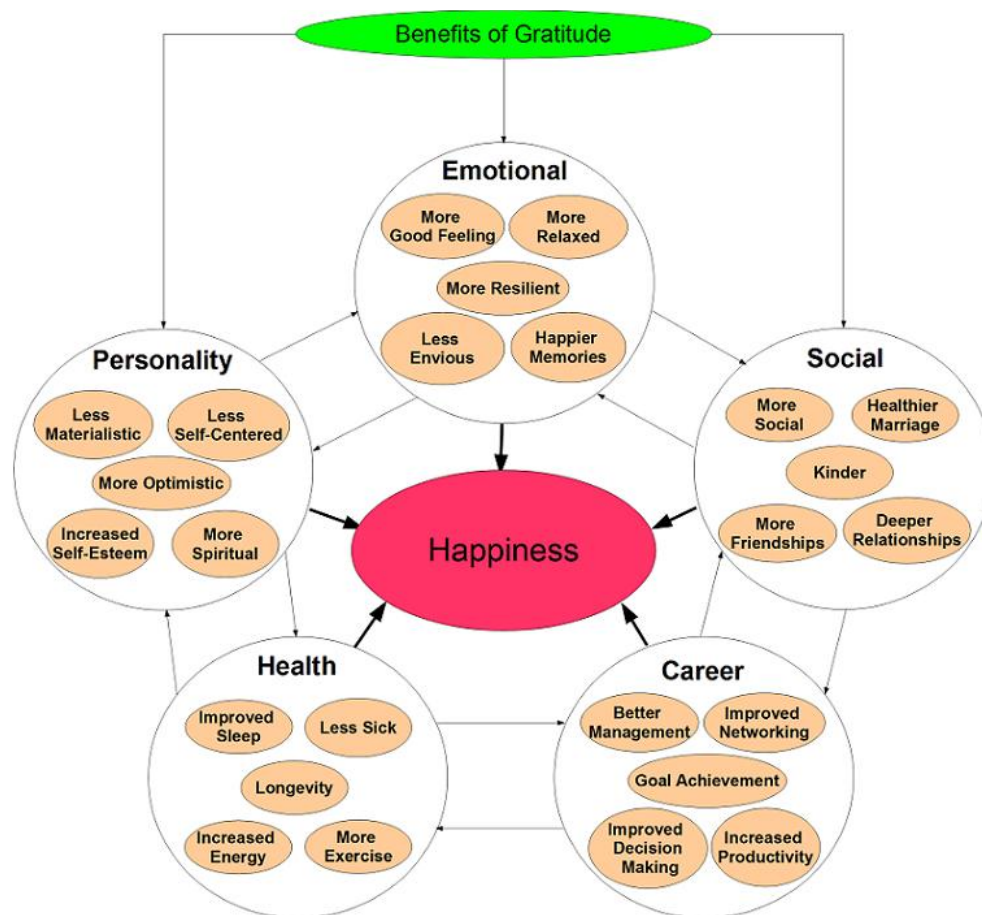
1. “Contribute to make your community better – Participate in your neighborhood, school, church club, etc. on the local level. Get involved.
2. Consider our horizon – Look to the future and envision what you want your community, government, and mission to look like in 100 years. Think and work ahead for future generations.
3. Do the simple things – Like voting. If you don’t vote, you are letting a small group dictate your future. It is your role in democracy to be an informed voter.
4. Do the hard things – Democracy takes all generations. Make the effort, stand up for others, have the courage of your convictions, and find common ground.
5. Exhibit gratitude and civility – To engage, we must connect, understand and work in a spirit of thankfulness and respect. In all our interactions, we need to embrace civility and empathy. Democracy is too important to waste away in petty arguments or gotcha statements.”



As Franklin D. Roosevelt warned, “Never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.”

The Many Benefits of Gratitude

In “The 31 Benefits of Gratitude You Didn’t Know About: How Gratitude Can Change Your Life,” by Amit Amin (<http://happierhuman.com/benefits-of-gratitude/>) the amazing benefits are revealed, based on more than 40 scientific studies. We will share four and encourage you to go to the article for the full read.



1. Gratitude makes us happier.

A five-minute a day gratitude journal can increase your long-term well-being by more than 10 percent.^{a1,a2,a3} That’s 2.5x the impact of winning more than \$1,000,000 in the lottery!^{a4} How does a free five minute activity do what \$1,000,000+ can’t? Gratitude improves our health, relationships, emotions, personality, and career.

Sure, \$1,000,000 is pretty awesome, but because of hedonic adaptation we quickly get used to the money and stop having as much fun and happiness as we did at first.

2. Gratitude makes people like us.

Gratitude generates social capital – in two studies with 243 total participants, those who were 10% more grateful than average had 17.5% more social capital.^{b1}

Gratitude makes us nicer, more trusting, more social, and more appreciative. As a result, it helps us make more friends, deepen our existing relationships, and improve our marriage.^{b2}

3. Gratitude makes us healthier.

Check it out:

Benefits at a Glance

Results ¹	Study	Date
Keeping a gratitude journal caused participants to report 16% fewer physical symptoms, 19% more time spent exercising, 10% less physical pain, 8% more sleep, and 25% increased sleep quality.	Counting Blessings Versus Burdens	2003
The emotions of appreciation and gratitude shown to induce the relaxation response.	The Grateful Heart	2004
A gratitude visit reduced depressive symptoms by 35% for several weeks; a gratitude journal lowered depressive symptoms by 30%+ for as long as the practice was continued.	Positive Psychology Progress	2005
Patients with hypertension were instructed to count their blessings once a week. There was a significant decrease in their systolic blood pressure.	Gratitude: Effects on Perspectives and Blood Pressure	2007
Gratitude correlated with improved sleep quality ($r = .29$), less time required to fall asleep ($r = .20$), and increased sleep duration ($r = .14$).	Gratitude Influences Sleep Through the Mechanism of Pre-Sleep Cognitions	2009
Levels of gratitude significantly correlated with vitality and energy.	Multiple Studies	Many

4. Gratitude boosts our career.

Gratitude makes you a more effective manager,^{c1,c2} helps you network, increases your decision making capabilities, increases your productivity, and helps you get mentors and proteges.^{b1} As a result, gratitude helps you achieve your career goals, as well as making your workplace a more friendly and enjoyable place to be.^{a2, b2}

To connect this article to NBLC's purpose of convening leading employers, let's take a moment to reflect on the importance of gratitude in the workplace. An oft-cited problem in the American workforce is the absence of consistent and meaningful recognition for a job well done. Studies suggest that as many as 65% of Americans don't receive recognition in the workplace.^{c3} In light of the benefits of gratitude on overall well-being, it is stunning and disappointing that the power of recognition in creating mutual gratitude between workers and their employers is so commonly squandered. As we celebrate Thanksgiving 2013, we urge you to take a moment to give thanks for the hard work and positive results around you. Thank your direct reports, thank your boss, and thank yourself!

References

Members in the News

BioMarin's Latest Discovery Could Mean a Leap for Rare Disease Patients

A few steps stand between BioMarin Pharmaceutical Inc. and another rare disease drug approval.

Securitas Security Services USA Earns Military-Friendly Employer Title

Securitas Security Services USA, Inc. announced today that it has earned the 2014 Military Friendly Employer® title by Victory Media, publisher of G.I. Jobs and Military Spouse.

Redwood Credit Union Collects for Philippines Typhoon Relief

The \$2.3 billion Redwood Credit Union in Santa Rosa, Calif., said its 18 branches have been designated as American Red Cross collection sites for relief for Philippines storm victims and their families.

PG&E Ranked Among Top 100 Military-Friendly Employers

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) has been designated as a 2014 Top-100 Military Friendly Employer® by Victory Media, publisher of G.I. Jobs Magazine.

Medtronic Responds to Super Typhoon Haiyan Relief Efforts

Medtronic announced today a grant of \$100,000 to the Philippines Red Cross to support relief efforts in the areas affected by the Super Typhoon Haiyan on November 8.

Comcast Offers Free Calls to Philippines, Free Filipino Channel

In the devastating aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, Comcast Corp. Wednesday announced that it is offering free calls to the Philippines to its 10.5 million Xfinity Voice residential customers.

Burr Pilger Mayer Opens St. Helena Office

The San Francisco-based accounting and consulting firm Burr Pilger Mayer, Inc. has opened an office at 1432 Main St., the former location of Crush, Joel Gott Wines and Napa Valley Think Tank.

Lucas Arts Center is the Clear Favorite for the Presidio Trust

The powers at the Presidio Trust are trying to swing a deal that would allow "Star Wars" creator George Lucas to build his museum at Crissy Field while making room elsewhere in the park for a pair of competing proposals, sources say.

Midstate Construction Lands College of Marin Performing Arts Center Project

Marin Community College District and Midstate Construction recently completed the College of Marin Performing Arts Building Modernization project in Kentfield.

Sonoma State University Hires Zarin Mehta to Join the Green Music Center (GMC)

Zarin Mehta to join Green Music Center (GMC) at Sonoma State University

Read more online at www.northbayleadership.org/news



Who We Are

Over twenty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 44 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call

707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org