



CSU Alumni
Association

[UPDATE MY INFORMATION](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

[ABOUT](#)

[CONTACT](#)

[EVENTS & TRAVEL +](#)

[STAY CONNECTED +](#)

[GET ENGAGED +](#)

[STUDENTS +](#)

[SPIRIT +](#)

[VOLUNTEERS](#)

HAVING AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE



HAVING AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

DECEMBER 15, 2020

In December's virtual Women's Leadership Lunch Series, Certified Speaking Professional Lisa Ryan, BBA '95, MBA '98, discussed strategies for remaining grateful in challenging times.

Ryan says gratitude is not just a good idea, it's essential to life. She recommends taking one to two minutes a day to implement one of the following three tips. Start with the goal of 30-days to get into the habit.

- 1 **Keep a morning gratitude journal.** Each morning, write down three to five sentences beginning with the phrase "I am grateful for..." On bad days when things aren't going well, look back at old entries to remind yourself of the good in your life.
- 2 **Keep a wins journal.** Each night before bed, write down five positive things that happened that day.
- 3 **Practice the ABCs of gratitude.** Go through the alphabet and focus on people, events and things you're thankful for that start with each letter. She calls it a miracle, drug-free way to fall asleep.

Ryan recommends keeping a journal without dates. That way, if you ever miss a day or fall out of the habit, you can just pick it back up and not worry about how much time has passed.

"[Research shows] that people who have a gratitude practice are awake less time before they fall asleep, they sleep more soundly and they awaken more refreshed. So what's the moral of that story? Count your blessings, not sheep," Ryan said.

Four more ways to express appreciation

During the 30-day challenge, Ryan also recommends implementing one or more of the following ways to express appreciation:

- 1 Verbally express gratitude to people, especially people who aren't thanked often, such as your coffee cashier at the drive-through window.
- 2 Write a letter of appreciation for someone because they are important to you.
- 3 Write a thank you note to someone that did something nice for you.
- 4 Meditate or reflect on the power of gratitude.

IT'S SHOWTIME

Ryan uses the acronym "SHOW" to illustrate four areas that can be improved by implementing her gratitude challenge.

S: Self

Ryan says having an attitude of gratitude rewires your brain so you look at things more positively, even in challenging times.

H: Health

"We take our health for granted until we don't have it," said Ryan.

She said five minutes spent in anger reduces the effectiveness of your immune system for six hours, but those same five minutes spent in compassion elevates your immune system for six hours.

She also showed how an attitude of gratitude helps your heart beat much more smoothly and evenly, as opposed to the fast, jagged heartbeats of a person experiencing stress.

To reduce stress, Ryan recommends the 4-7-8 method: breathe in for four seconds, hold for seven seconds, release for eight seconds. Repeat at least five times.

O: Relationships with others

Ryan says, if you can say something nice about someone, do so.

- Put kind notes to your spouse or kids in their lunches.
- Send a text to a friend to keep in touch.
- Follow the Platinum Rule: make connections by treating others the way they want to be treated.

To help remain grateful even during this pandemic, Ryan says to reflect on the positive benefits of this time. Are you working from home? Are you traveling less (or not at all)? Are you spending more time with your children? Are you enjoying Zoom calls with faraway friends and family members?

W: Wealth or workplace

In the workplace, Ryan encourages compassion, empathy and the sharing of ideas, not just about work but understanding on a personal level how people are doing and asking how you can support them. She also says to acknowledge excellence and let people know you appreciate them.

Ryan hopes that by the end of the 30 days, people will choose to continue the practice. But if you ever stop, you can always pick it back up.

"It doesn't matter how much time has passed."

Viking Pride