

## **Episode 016: Gratitude - Thoughts to Actions**

Welcome to Lean Leadership for Ops Managers, the podcast for leaders in Ops Management who want to spark improvement, foster engagement, and boost problem solving - AND still get their day job done. Here's your host, Leadership Trainer, Lean Enthusiast, and Spy Thriller Junkie, Jamie V. Parker.

Well, happy Thanksgiving. If you're listening to this episode the day it's published, then you know that tomorrow is Thanksgiving holiday in the US. And I want to start out by expressing my gratitude to some of the listeners who shared their review of the podcast. First up, a listener named Call Me A She said, "Practical and personal. Love Jamie's energy, her stories, and the practical application of the podcast. You can hear her care and the love for her work of continuous improvement coming through the speakers. If you're a manager, you need to take 15 minutes every week to listen." Thank you, Call Me A She.

All right, we have another one by the listener by the handle 13A 145 who said, "Real and inspiring. Jamie explains our role in creating and promoting a culture of continuous improvement through quick antidotes, fun stories, and simple actions. The content is relevant to any leader or emerging leader who is interested in taking small manageable steps toward personal growth and leadership style change. The episodes are short, and she always leaves you smiling and excited to try something new." Really appreciate those words, 13A 145.

All right, thank you so much for taking the time to share your podcast experience with others. You are truly day makers. And if you're out there, Call Me A She or 13A 145, I would love to share a Podcast Posse gift pack with you. So if you're listening, just shoot me a note and connect, and I will get something in the mail to you.

Now, I am grateful for all of the listeners and supporters who tune in each week. Thank you for showing up and for sharing the podcast with others. And today, I'm talking a little more about gratitude and being a day maker in leadership. Let's dive in.

I imagine you've been hearing a lot about gratitude this month of November. Perhaps you're even doing a little bit extra. Maybe you're journaling. Or maybe you joined a gratitude challenge where you're posting about someone or something you're grateful for every day this month. And because we're all about gratitude in the month of November, we've already been reminded this month that gratitude actually changes your brain. It's neuroscience and biology. And with consistent practice, it improves mood, increases optimism, and reduces stress.

Now, there's a proverb. I don't know the origin. I actually tried to find the origin and I couldn't find it, but there's a proverb that says, "Gratitude can transform common days into Thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings." Yes, yes! And we get that, right? This is the power of gratitude. And gratitude definitely has a role to play in leadership because it can change how you show up. So often, our natural state is to see the problems, to see what's not working, to see the

## Episode 016: Gratitude - Thoughts to Actions

negative stuff that needs to be corrected. It's normal, because in our management roles, we have a responsibility to right the wrong and to improve. So bringing gratitude into our daily practice can help us balance that out so that we can see and appreciate the positive, so that we can see and appreciate the progress.

So personally, for example, I'm using a self journal as a combination journal plus planner. I use it for goal setting, and for managing top priorities, and for reflection on how the day and week went. It's kind of like an all in one combo. Now, each day has a dedicated page, and on it, there's a space for three points of gratitude. So I try to start my day with that each day, listing out three things or people I'm grateful for. Now, to be completely transparent, sometimes I don't get to this until lunchtime, and every now and then, I get all the way through the day without doing it. So I'm trying to do it every day. My goal is in the morning. Sometimes I don't get to it till later in the day, and every now and then I skip it. And I can tell you that I can tell the difference. When I consistently start my day, then I can tell a difference in how I show up.

No, your gratitude practice doesn't have to mirror mine. There might be a different practice that you use. The key, though, is that when we bring more gratitude into our lives, into our minds, it actually can shift how we lead people. It improves our mood, it increases optimism, and it helps us find the good in others. So step one is kind of that gratitude mindset where we're bringing gratitude into our thoughts. Today, I also want to talk though, about how we can shift from gratitude as an internal thought to an external practice.

Now, of course, we can do things like reinforcing feedback for recognition. So if you missed that, you can go back and hear all about that in the podcast episodes, number five through eight. But I want to take the act of gratitude to another level, not just saying thank you, but really combining it with kindness. And that idea is to be a day maker. To do something for someone where they literally respond or feel internally "Wow, you just made my day."

One of my coaches issued this challenge to me recently, and her challenge was to make someone's day, every day for a month. And there was a group of us doing this challenge together. And when we first got started, I'm going to be honest and tell you I was a little bit intimidated seeing the amazing things my friends were doing for others, like big time, awesome, amazing things. And when I started out, I started doing things like sending a dozen cupcakes to a client, or sending flowers to a podcast supporter, or buying these super awesome, glow in the dark candy kits from The Inventing Room, and sending them to my niece and to welcome my new neighbors who had kids. By the way, really awesome kits. I'm going to put the link in the show notes. Love The Inventing Room, and very excited about the things that they're doing.

So here I was, I was sending cupcakes, sending flowers, buying these really cool gifts. And at least once in the first week, I heard those words literally, "You totally made my day." Then here's what happened. Someone made my day. And maybe not in the way you were expecting it, definitely not in the way I was

## **Episode 016: Gratitude - Thoughts to Actions**

expecting it. I was at the grocery store at the deli counter, and it's this long deli counter. And I was waiting, and I was waiting, and then one of the workers, one of the team members walked up to another woman who was also waiting. The other woman pointed at me and told the team member that I was there first. Now, I have no idea if I was or not. I didn't notice who got there first. And I was fine waiting. I wasn't in a big hurry or anything. But when she did that, it made my day. I know not everyone would. And I smiled and I literally and physically felt my body shift in that moment, and it felt good. And that's when I realized that being a day maker doesn't require a grand gesture or spending money. It can also be in the little things, too.

So in my month of being a day maker every single day, I added in things like sending a handwritten card to a woman in a group that I met because I admire her and I'm really thankful and grateful for the things that she's done. I love getting things in my mailbox when people take the time to handwrite something and send it to me, because I know it means they were truly thinking about me, they invested time. I also sent an unsolicited testimonial to the team member who produces this podcast. It would totally make my day to get an unsolicited testimonial. I mean, I'm actually uncomfortable asking for them. I actually avoid the ask and don't ask for them as frequently as I should because I feel uncomfortable with it. Having someone give one without the ask, day maker!

And then also instead of just liking posts for my friends' free training challenges, you know, all these things I fully support in their programs, I actually didn't just like them. I shared them and added in my comments about why they're so awesome. And for Sam Morgan's new video series CI in Five, I sent an email to my entire community bragging on him and suggesting they check it out. Because I know how awesome it is when people share and recommend my work to their network and I wanted to make someone's day by doing that for them without them having to prompt or asked me. In fact, unsolicited testimonials and my work getting shared is probably more meaningful to me than receiving flowers or cupcakes, though I do like flowers and cupcakes too.

Here's the point. You can and should be a day maker too. You can make your own day by adopting a gratitude practice. It will change your mood and rewire your brain, total day maker. And you can be a day maker for others.

So, here's your next step. This time, there are actually two, your two next steps. Step one, reflect back on how gratitude has been a part of your life and practice so far in November. What do you want to keep? What do you want to stop? What do you want to start or do differently? In other words, how do you take gratitude beyond the month of November and make it part of your everyday?

And then step to be a day maker. I am going to challenge you right now to be a day maker. Every day for the next week, do something specific to make someone's day. And remember, it doesn't have to be expensive to do it.

### **Episode 016: Gratitude - Thoughts to Actions**

Finally, thank you again, for sharing a little part of the world with me. May gratitude transform your common days into Thanksgiving, turn your routine job into joy, and change your ordinary opportunities into blessings. Until next time.

If you're an executive who is leading a team of Operations Managers, and you see that your improvement culture and journey is stalled, or slowed because you haven't quite integrated Lean thinking into the everyday management and leadership, then let's talk. We can hop on the phone for a quick 20-discussion. No sales pitch, just an initial conversation. Schedule A call by going to [processplusresults.com](http://processplusresults.com) and then clicking the "Schedule a Call" button.