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## Showing gratitude should be a daily practice

*Ed Brenegar Real life leadership*

**Question:** Over the past few weeks, two of my friends have been let go from their jobs. They are having a hard time dealing with the sudden loss of income and are not sure what they should do. I am not worried about them finding jobs. I'm more worried about their attitudes — they feel sorry for themselves.

**Answer:** My recommendation is that they begin to say thanks every day. Yes, that's right: Say thanks even when it's far easier to wallow in self-pity. Saying thanks is an act of gratitude that every business leader should practice every day. To say thanks is to recognize that many of the good things we have in our lives have come to us from other people. By saying thanks, we are preparing ourselves to discover the good things the future holds for us, even if we're out of work at the moment.

To say thanks shows our appreciation for employees' work and customers' loyalty. Appreciation and gratitude are fundamental attributes of every healthy relationship. Saying thanks puts us in a frame of mind to identify opportunities when they come our way. This is what your friends need to realize.

Many places have employee-of-the-month programs. Why not transform this simple idea into something more powerful: Have a thanks-of-the-month recognition for every employee. Thank all employees for something that they did during the previous month.

Recognition inspires a grateful response. What we want to do is create an environment where thanks and appreciation are always present. As we thank employees in genuine and authentic ways, they realize that we care for them as people. It gives them confidence, and in return they begin to express thanks to others.

Thanking our customers tells them that we value their business. Also, genuine and authentic expressions of thanks open up the relationship to possibilities that we may not have seen before. Business opportunities are to be found through being a person of gratitude.

Saying thanks isn't a marketing strategy. However, when we say thanks from a genuine attitude of gratitude, we strengthen our relationship with clients and customers. We open up avenues of communication for exploring how our business relationships can be more mutually beneficial.

Expressing gratitude is not just about how we feel about other people. It is about how we feel about ourselves. To say thanks takes us out of ourselves to focus on other people. We see that business and professional life is not about us, but about the difference we make. Try saying thanks every day.

This is the opinion of Ed Brenegar, president of the Community of Leadership, a leadership development and transition planning consultancy. He writes a blog at <http://edbrenegar.typepad.com>. Send questions to him at [ed@edbrenegar.com](mailto:ed@edbrenegar.com).

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