

Happy New Year 2025!

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I think we can all agree that in the last few years we have experienced major life-changing challenges. As a result, there has been so much division and self-righteousness that it is palpable. I hear so many people describe feeling overloaded, some even describing their lives as overwhelming, and the research is clear that stress is a major contributor to poor health. I don't know about you, but when my schedule gets jammed and my daily to-do list keeps increasing, I look for ways to cut back – cut time, cut tasks, cut nonsense, and sometimes cut people off. Having said that, I know when people don't value my time, I feel used or taken advantage of. Maybe “unappreciated” would be a better way to describe that feeling. Knowing this, I think we could all agree that one of the greatest deficits in our world today is kindness.

I've been thinking of ways to intentionally show kindness. It's odd, but when I take the time to show genuine kindness, it helps me reset. But just saying I'm just going to be



more kind is... well, cheesy. For me, that kind of resolution usually lasts a week or two. So, I've been thinking of a practical way to implement kindness. It centers around intentionally expressing appreciation. How many times do people do things for us, and we unintentionally take the act for granted? I was listening to a podcast and the speaker was sharing his experience in a hospital. He had major heart surgery, and he felt so thankful for the nurses that took care of him. He shared with them how thankful he was for their care. Then he then went on to share how touched the nurses were that someone would actually take time to show appreci-

ation and thank them in a heartfelt way. His words brought some of them to tears.

And once again, it hit me ... the words we use to the people around us are powerful. To show appreciation gives dignity, purpose, and value to someone who may be struggling through a difficult day. It validates who they are and what they think. By the way, we don't have to agree with what they think, but showing appreciation opens doors instead of closing them. How easy it is for me to show my appreciation to my patients for trusting their care to me, thanking them for taking an interest in the

wellness field, and taking personal responsibility for their own health.

Here's another example... I've noticed then when I'm talking to customer service people on the phone, if I interrupt the conversation in a heartfelt way and thank them for taking time to help me resolve this issue, the whole tone of the conversation changes. Instead of me complaining, I'm inserting life into the conversation. And the real game changer is to show appreciation for the people closest to us.

Let's take it to another level. Because when we intentionally say or do the things that infuse life into someone else, we are infused with life as well. And increasing our life quotient is the

secret to optimal health. Adopting little habits like appreciation can have powerful effects on those around us and the very cells in our own body. Think about what would happen to this country if each of us showed daily appreciation and thanksgiving for what we have and the people around us.

I hope this discussion fans the flames of healing in our families, our communities... our world. You may have heard me say little things that can make a big difference. As we start a new year, we can all agree showing appreciation and kindness can have ripple effects that touch people in ways we can't imagine. Happy New Year.