

Checklist: **Twelve Ways to Boost Your Gratitude**



By: Star Sargent Dargin

Practice is repetitive work. It creates behaviors and habits of gratitude that eventually become so ingrained that you are not aware or cannot see them. They become unconscious habits. When a team or organization's gratitude muscle gets stronger, it's the culture that changes. We know cultures of gratitude are more engaged and innovate.

Gratitude is the growth fertilizer for fulfilling, positive, and meaningful lives and businesses. It takes the chaotic, stressful, and overwhelming aspects of business life and puts it all in into context, so we can smile and lean into it with creativity and possibilities.

How you practice gratitude only matters if it works. It is an art and science to determine what works and is best for an individual and a team. Starting is more important than figuring out the perfect plan or way to practice. It's recommended that you can adapt and change what you to do to craft a finely chiseled gratitude muscle.

A solid foundation and practice of gratitude becomes the lubrication to transformation in difficult times. In easier times it makes things, well, easier. It's simple and easy to do once. It takes so little time and costs so little, and can make all the difference. It's harder to build a strong gratitude muscle, it requires practice.

A practice requires consistency, discipline, and can at times be uncomfortable. The best muscle-building exercises push and challenge us enough to get to the next level, so we are sore the next day. From studies, we know that unless the person is motivated, practice does not happen. Making it a habit helps because doing it happens without thought. Committing to 30 days is generally enough to make it a habit. Getting clear on your motivation, being accountable, being consistent, and having social support all aid in building the gratitude habit.

As with any skill to get better you must practice, and part of practicing is sometimes experiencing failure. You must fail to succeed said both Einstein and Michael Jordan. *Michael missed 9,000 shots, lost 300 games, and 26 times he missed the game winning shot.* Daily practice is recommended. Even ten minutes of gratitude can improve a day.

To get you started or build on a practice of gratitude you already have we offer twelve categories of ideas.

The stronger your gratitude muscle grows, the more it will be incorporated it into your life and work.

Twelve Ways to Boost Your Gratitude

1. Write it

Morning or night or both, list 10 things you are grateful for, or write in detail three things you are grateful for and why. A variation on this is the gratitude container or box. Write in detail one thing you are grateful for on any paper you have around, cards, shopping list, receipts, newspapers drop it in a jar or box or any container. When needed, pull one out to read. Once a week send a note to a person you are grateful for. Days I do not have time to write, I speak out loud as I commute or to myself if on public transportation and do not want to risk being called crazy.

2. See it

Find pictures that bring you a sense of calm and peace and place them where you can see them often. On Pinterest I have gratitude board of pictures and quotes that quickly move me to a place of awe and gratitude. Create an office space or place that moves you to gratitude. I keep lots of pictures, quotes, and a shadow box that make me smile.

3. Touch it

Stand on your feet, feel a breeze in the air, a soft furry animal, what feelings create gratitude and how can you keep them close. Examples from clients: wooden pen, a piece of jewelry, a rock. The oddest one a sleek silver melon baller. Don't ask.

4. Game it

Try counting each day how many times you say or write thank you or show appreciation. Can you beat yesterday's number? How often do people express gratitude or say thank you? How many people are you grateful for, do they know it? Have you told them? Take the People Challenge: For each person you interact with can you always have one thing you verbalize about them that you are grateful for? For bonus points, how about people you despise, dislike, find the most repulsive, what are you grateful for about them?

5. Watch it

Watch a movie, TV show, or documentary. On YouTube, watch Brené Brown or TED talks, videos that embody gratitude. Here are some movies my Facebook friends say make them feel grateful: *It is a Wonderful Life*, *Blindside*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Good Will Hunting*, *Pay It Forward*, *The Intouchables*, *A League of Their Own*, *Harold and Maude*, *Forest Gump*.

6. Listen to it

What songs make you feel grateful? I have a whole playlist of them, I call it Whot, Whot! Every time I hear it I smile. Here is a sampling of songs my Facebook friends say make them feel grateful: *Celebration (Kool & The Gang)*, *What a Wonderful World (Louie Armstrong)*, *I Feel Good (James Brown)*, *Good Vibrations (Beach Boys)*, *Don't Worry, Be Happy (Bobby McFerrin)*.

Twelve Ways to Boost Your Gratitude

7. Read It

Fiction or Nonfiction books, blogs, poems, lyrics. Read about research on gratitude. Biographies, for example, *Night* by Elie Wiesel is hard to read but it always makes me feel grateful. Chicken Soup stories, there are over 250 Chicken Soup titles, www.chickensoup.com. Lessor known and often compared to the Chicken Soup books is: *Epiphany: True Stories of Sudden Insight to Inspire, Encourage, and Transform*, by Elise Ballard.

8. Move to it

Dance, walk, run. Stroll in nature. Walk a Grace Trail, your own or the one explained in Anne Jolles' book, *Grace Trail: Find Your Footing and Move Toward the Life You Were Meant to Live*. As you walk the Grace Trail, use Jolles' questions to ask yourself about Grace. Grace stands for G: What am I Grateful for? R: What do I need to Release? A: What is calling out for Acceptance, C: What is my next Challenge? E: What can I Embrace as possible.

9. Meditate

By yourself or try guided meditations. I use a free app called Insight Timer. My friend John likes the app Gratitude Mediation, by Cathy McDonald. Search on gratitude and you will find plenty. One of my favorites mediations is one by Jon Zabbat-Zinn called "Healing Lake Meditation."

10. Volunteer

Give your time to what you believe in, those less fortunate than yourself. My first experience with volunteering was in high school, I answered phones for two years with a drug and suicide hotline. It was life enriching, educational, and made me so grateful for what I had taken for granted: food, shelter, education, and a family.

11. Do without

Stop using something that makes your life easier. If you drive a car, take public transportation. Give yourself a weekly food budget that is half of what you normally spend and stick to it. Stop doing or using something you love to do for a short amount of time: reading, wine, ice cream, TV, walking, social media. Doing without makes you grateful for them.

12. Socialize it

Create a Facebook game with friends to list 10 things you are grateful for. Instead of a book group have a grateful group. Make it a tradition for every time you meet a friend or family you say what you are grateful for. Before a meal, say what you are grateful for.



Summary of Gratitude Ideas

Idea	Already Do	To Try
Write It		
See It		
Touch It		
Game It		
Watch It		
Listen to It		
Read It		
Move to It		
Meditate		
Volunteer		
Do Without		
Socialize It		



Summary of Gratitude Ideas

Gratitude is not a transformation program, nor a magic wand, it starts with one person and gains momentum as more people practice it.

~ Star Dargin



A strong gratitude muscle allows us to shift to gratitude faster and more consciously, rather than waste energy and time (can be years) on fear, hurt, and anger which create associated behaviors like blaming, belittling, gossiping, and defensiveness.

~ Star Dargin

Your Next Steps with Star

Gratitude is not fluff nor a cure-all, and there is huge value and benefits short term and long term to individuals, leaders, teams, and organizations. It can be transformational. We'd love to keep the conversation going and spread gratitude by helping individuals and teams strengthen their gratitude muscle. It's a simple concept and easy to do. Start by assessing where you are and building your gratitude practice and seeing benefits in one or more of these areas:

- Learn to handle dysfunctional teams or organizations where bad behaviors are present, like blaming, yelling, and unresolved conflict.
- Build confidence as individual, manager and leader
- Enjoy and learn from the daily work you already do, despite a challenging individual or work environment.
- Reduce anxiety and frustration by using gratitude.
- Coach individuals or teams to unstick, stuck situations using the GLAD tool.
- Explore more possibilities in problem-solving when you learn how to shift to gratitude using the Three-Step Gratitude Process
- Build or create you or your teams customized gratitude practice, to build a stronger gratitude muscle faster.
- Enhance your leadership brand to being more collaborative.
- Learn how to use an approach of gratitude to ease difficult or challenging situations.
- Learn how to develop positive teams and cultures that engage everyone.
- Use a tool that will expose more innovative solutions and risk-taking that leads to bottom-line business improvements.

Teams that have a culture of gratitude are more positive, produce more, are engaged, and create innovate solutions. Leaders who master gratitude are healthier and able to handle complexity, difficulty better.

For assistance creating, implementing, and managing your personal leadership or team gratitude plans, contact Star Dargin. Browse our web and join our community. Sign up for the newsletter and receive extra gratitude bonuses.

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About Star Sargent Dargin



Star Dargin has been coaching and teaching since the year 2000. Prior to that she had an 18-year career in the corporate world, starting as a software engineer then quickly promoted to Director of Engineering. As a director, she managed hundreds of professionals and at one point had a bestselling software product that produced over 500 Million in yearly revenue. She's worked with hundreds of clients and organizations from state and federal government, like NASA, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to high-tech companies like TEL, Kronos, and many others.

Star is a highly interactive nationally recognized presenter and workshop leader specializing in building strong, successful, and grateful leaders who lead from the middle of businesses.

Star has developed an inspiring and facilitative approach that helps leaders find the best possible way to see, tackle the challenges, and grow in a way that is actionable and authentic. She helps leaders build their brand of leadership, with gratitude being the foundation.

She's a lifelong learner, reader, and reviewer of books. Her family is heavily invested in sports and music. She actively coaches her two grown sons and calls them her petri dish, some of their stories appear in her books and talks.

Star Dargin, PCC, CPCC, has been inspiring and changing lives for decades. She's proud of her ability as a coach and is asked frequently about her career change from engineering to coaching, two seemingly different occupations. They are not different in her mind. She incorporates both in making intangibles tangible, measurable, and achievable. She loves hearing and connecting with folks from her past whom she helped make a difference.

Whether she's delivering a keynote speech or workshop, her straightforward, common-sense approach always yields positive results.

