

# T he Art of Appreciation

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“I can live for two months on a good compliment.”  
*Mark Twain*

Each one of us needs to feel appreciated. It is our human nature to appreciate recognition for our accomplishments and achievements.

Strong and successful families, groups, and organizations are the ones that express a great deal of appreciation through actions as well as words.

**Remember to** say “please,” “thank you,” “I appreciate your helping very much,” “you look handsome.” Our compliments and gestures let others know they are special. These positive psychological strokes help the other person be more self-confident. Each person believes “I’m OK and you’re OK.”

It is so easy to take each other for granted. In the hurry of responsibilities and the pressure of getting things done, we often forget the importance of letting people know how much we truly appreciate them. A young teenager, sharing what she liked most about her parents, said, “I like it when they do something special just for me. Not just at Christmas or for my birthday, but at a time when it’s unexpected. Then it is really a surprise and makes me feel so special.”

Volunteers, employees, and other members of various groups that unexpected forms of appreciation, gratitude, or recognition makes them feel good about themselves and their efforts in this particular area of their life.

How long has it been since you told your spouse or child, “Hey, thanks for being my partner (child). I appreciate having you here with me.” Positive compliments can promote healing when there is hurt or conflict in relationships. It does wonders.

How long has it been since you have taken the time to write something special and slip it in the lunchbox, under the napkin, in a yearbook, or under an agenda?

Have you written and mailed a “thinking of you” card or a note of appreciation to someone in the last two weeks? If not, make it a new habit to mail at least two to four each month. Thank people for the little as well as the big things they do. It takes so little time, and the rewards are great.

A gift selected to match the interests of someone is another way to say “you’re special.” Remember, “It’s not the biggest things with all the pomp and show, it’s the little special things people do that make you and them grow.”

The knowledge that people care about each other goes a long way to help build stronger families and groups. The need is present in all people. Don’t put it off. Take time today to let them know you care. To become good at the art of appreciation, practice each day. You will then know you have added sunshine to another’s life each and every day.

People, like plants, need loving care. Remember to stop and smell the flowers each day, but even better, plant some flowers each day for others to smell.

## Ways to Promote Belonging

Each of us needs to be a part of a group or a family. Groups, whether families or organizations, can be strengthened by cultivating some expressions of appreciation.

A little appreciation goes a long way toward making people feel like they are part of the team, and giving them an incentive to do their best work.

Expressing appreciation should not be limited to holidays, special occasions, or annual achievement ceremonies. Appreciation holds us together. It is the glue that bonds us and makes us glad for our place in a group or family.

## Spread Some Appreciation

- Smile and call people by their name.
- Leave candy treats with a thank-you note.
- Send a note and say, “You are worth a million!”
- Send humorous cards during hectic times.
- Give a candle, with a note that says, “You light up our club (family).”
- Give a glue stick and attach the following note, “You’re the glue that bonds us together.”
- Give a needle and thread and the following note, “You keep our meetings in stitches.”
- Give a nail file and note saying, “You seem to know how to smooth out the rough spots.”
- Do an anonymous good deed.

## Remember:

Do one thing each day for someone else...make a phone call, write a note, give a compliment, share something of yourself. These actions become “booster shots” for the individuals who receive them. We take children to immunization clinics to receive shots to protect them from the mumps, polio, etc. We can help immunize people against the negative aspects of their lives with our own version of booster shots.

List three people who could benefit from a “booster shot.” Beside that person’s name, jot down what action you will take. Write a deadline for doing your good deeds.

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