

Marshall Foreword

Gratitude Book with Chester & Adrian

I have flown 11 million miles on American Airlines alone, not to mention 1 million on British Airways. The airplane is a fascinating place to watch people become agitated over factors they cannot hope to impact. One trigger that makes a lot of people crazy is the announcement that the airplane is going to be late.

Every time I hear that particular announcement, I remember a picture in my library—a picture of me on a volunteer trip to Africa with the Red Cross when I was about 30 years old. With me are many starving children whose arms are being measured. If their arms were too big they did not eat. If their arms were too small they did not eat. Their arms had to be just the right size, meaning they are not too hungry to survive and not too well fed so as not to need food. Their arm size determined if they would eat that day.

I will never forget that experience. It reminds me daily of how fortunate I am. When I feel “justifiably” upset, I remember those beautiful children. I repeat this mantra over and over in my mind: “Never complain because the airplane is late. There are people in the world who have real problems. They have problems you cannot even begin to imagine. Be grateful. You are a very lucky man. Never complain because the airplane is late.”

I hope someday that this story helps you turn a moment of pain and anger into a moment of gratitude and joy.

Lots of people struggle with a lack of gratitude. And everyone I’ve ever met—whether a janitor or a billionaire—wants a happy life. No matter who you are, you can easily look for happiness in the wrong place. The great Western disease is, “I’ll be happy *when*.” When I make a certain amount of money, get an award, or complete some task I’ll be happy.

What we can all learn is how vital gratitude is for our happiness. The most wise and happy people I have met—Thich Nhat Hanh, the Dalai Lama, and others—talk about, and

practice, deep gratitude. What I notice when I talk with them is how freely they express it. Allowing yourself to feel deeply grateful is how you can do something bold. Be happy now. Not later.

As you'll see in this amazing new book from Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton, gratitude is a mental state that a) you can most easily decide to feel, b) has the most immediate effect on improving your wellbeing, and c) is going to have an remarkable impact on your ability to lead other people. The challenge is to remember to do it!

It's important to create triggers in your work and in your life to remember to focus on gratitude. That's what my friends Adrian and Chester introduce in this book. Their lessons are fun to read, on-point, and relevant for every manager, parent, coach, spouse or partner to be able to put gratitude to work in their work and their lives.

The key to a happy life isn't what people think. It's not wealth, fame, achievement, or even relationships. It's putting gratitude at the center of everything you do.

Life is good.

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