

6 Things to Be Thankful For at Work

by: [Darcy Eikenberg, PCC](#)

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US Thanksgiving is just around the corner, marked by turkey trotting, pie demolishing, and hopefully, thanks giving.

Before you unplug and focus on all the things you're thankful for among your family and friends, it's time to take a minute and also recognize the things you can be thankful for at work.

And I just don't mean having a job.

That's fine to be thankful for, but there's much, much more.

So here's my list of the six things to be thankful for at work.

1. The problems that create your job

The only reason a job—any job—exists is to solve a set of problems.



The cashier at Panera exists to solve the problem of how customers' orders and cash get taken (for that reason, it may be the most important job there).

The IT expert exists to solve the problem of what happens when non-techy people spill coffee in their keyboards, among other user errors.

The vice president exists to lead and make decisions around a larger, more complex set of problems and direct people on solving them.

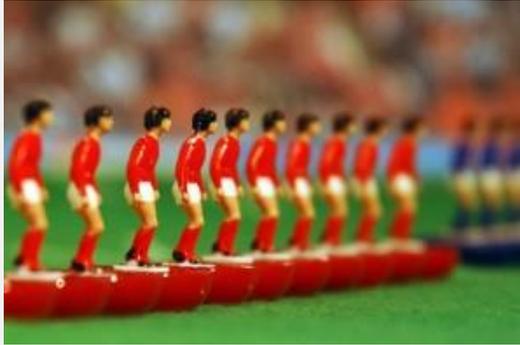
No problems, no job.

The problem of getting information to your friends and relatives around the world goes away when you have Facebook, email, and Skype—and so go thousands of postal service jobs, too. The problem of making it easier for customers to withdraw money from their account fades when you introduce the ATM—and reduce teller roles. And when the problems are not clearly defined and measured, such as in the value of leading and managing people, those jobs disappear, too.

So be grateful for the problems that create your job. You can still wish them away, but their presence is your present.

2. Your colleagues

It's great to have friends at work. Studies have shown that having someone you care about at work is a key contributor to your satisfaction and engagement in the organization.



Human beings are social animals, needing some level of connection with others. (Some of you are party animals, but that's an entirely different post.)

Be thankful for the colleagues around you that really make your days bright. For extra added grateful gravy, take a minute and tell them thanks:

- *"Thanks for supporting me."*
- *"Thanks for your great attitude."*
- *"Thanks for listening when I rant."*
- *"I'm not really sure what you do, Bob, but thanks for being there." <grin>*

Don't assume they know. If you feel it, share it.

And of course, there are the colleagues who challenge and annoy us, too. Invest a minute and appreciate their unique role in your worklife. After all, the haters make you appreciate the lovers all the more.

3. Your superpowers

Even if you haven't discovered them fully yet, know there is something special and unique about you that you bring to your work, no matter what you do.

You know it. I know it.

(And yes, I wrote a book on it.)

4. Your emotions



I believe emotion puts us in motion. So, rather than hating your emotions at work, being embarrassed by them, or apologizing for them, recognize and appreciate them for what they are—big, flashing, body-shaped signs sending out signals about what's really going on for you.

It's outdated advice to believe that we should bypass our emotions in the workplace. In fact, our hearts, guts and bodies are often trying to tell us what we're feeling long before our brains register anything that our mouths can put into words.

Paying attention to your emotions can be a huge source of practical, real-life data about what you need to do next. Say thanks to your emotions for being your powerful information station.

5. Your competitors

Yes, even though there may be days when you just wish they'd go away, your competitors can push you, challenge you, and scare you to try new things—things you may not have done otherwise.

Competitors are a great source of data about other ways to do things and different choices to make. Plus, they continue to create a new set of problems that reinforce the need for your job. Thank them often.

6. Yourself

Don't sit down at the holiday table without first saying thanks to the person who can do the most for you at work.



That's you.

Yes, you—not your leader, your manager, or your mom.

You are the only one who can get clear on what's most powerful and amazing about you.

You are the only one who can build your own confidence and recognize that you make a difference.

You are the only one who can take control, taking action everyday toward creating the life at work that you want.

And if you haven't done a great job of that this year, it's not too late. Create your long-term vision. Get career clear. Talk to a colleague or a coach.

Don't give in to the end-of-year darkness that can settle around you when you're not happy with your life at work. Get moving to shine a light on the future.

Because we need you now, more than ever. And we're so thankful for you.