

4 Reasons to be Grateful for What You Have and Thankful for Your Job

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It's that time of year again. **That time that we are reminded to be thankful.** For some of us, we actually have to think about this. Have you ever sat at the table at Thanksgiving and listened to guests fumble over words, after pregnant pauses, when it's their turn to say what they are thankful for? It's so easy for us to make lists of what we want and need, **but when we have to say what we are thankful for, we panic and begin sweating when it's our turn.** Hmmmm, family...health...yeah, that's it. Okay, next.

Need...now this is a word that has lost its meaning in the 2000's. Heck, probably back in the eighties. Need used to mean *can't do without*. I find myself saying things like, I need the new iphone and then quickly realize that I don't need it. I want it. We spend a lot of our time focusing on what we "need" and want, and **very little time being thankful for all that we have.** Until this time of year, of course, when consumerism reminds us to be thankful. You don't need a calendar to know it's the holiday season. And, Thanksgiving is that time of the year (sadly the only time for many of us) that we take time to be thankful. Even if it only means a quick prayer of thankfulness before wolfing down a sacrificed turkey smothered in gravy and racing out of our in-laws before apple pie to make it to the Black Friday sales that keep getting pushed back so that I'm wondering if next year I'll be shopping in my bikini with a sarong thrown over it as I haul it from the beach in August.

Many of us have become spoiled and forget how lucky we truly are. I have a friend who we may as well call Debbie Downer. She says things like, “With my luck, I’ll get a parking ticket.” No, Debbie. It won’t be your luck. It will be because the meter expired or you didn’t read the signs correctly and parked where you aren’t supposed to. It has nothing to do with luck. A seagull pooped on her at the beach this summer, and she said, I have the worst luck when a nearby beachgoer said, “it’s a sign of good luck.” Well, Debbie then said, “just my luck that my good luck is being crapped on.” I said, “Debbie, it landed on your bikini top. Here, it’s gone,” I said, wiping it off with my hand to make a point. “See, all gone,” I said. “Bad luck would’ve been if it landed in your hair,” I added, feeling I hadn’t quite made my point yet, even though my hand was covered in poop.

Debbie loves to tell me all about her misfortunes, which I often see as saving graces. Like the time she got lost and was late for a meeting. She ran out of gas, driving around aimlessly in the middle of nowhere, and a very nice man stopped and helped her. He told her to wait while he went and got her some gas, which he did. Then he gave her directions to where she was going, and she miraculously made it to the meeting, only arriving about five minutes late. “Can you believe my luck?” she asked me with her usual scowl. “Only I would get lost and be late for an important meeting.” **Debbie just doesn’t get it.** I tried to point out to her that she was lucky that a nice man stopped to help her. Lucky he went and got gas for her. Lucky he gave her good directions, and lucky she was only five minutes late and didn’t miss the meeting entirely. But, Debbie was already halfway through another story of her bad luck, and I was just thankful that she was getting a job transfer across country.

The next time you have the urge to complain remind yourself of Debbie, and all the things you have to be grateful for, *and* the many reasons you have to be thankful about your job:

1. **You have a job!** There are a lot of people looking for jobs right now. A lot of qualified people who can’t even get interviews. There’s fierce competition for jobs, so if you have one, be grateful!
2. **Work colleagues**, more often than not, become great friends. Some of my very best friends are those I used to work with. Although there may be one or two bad apples in the bunch, look at the bigger picture. Have you ever needed support outside of the office? **Were your co-workers there to help?** Whether it was covering a shift for you, cheering you on when you ran the marathon, throwing you a baby shower, donating \$5 to your kid’s fundraiser, or simply being someone you could confide in, co-workers can be like second family. **Appreciate your co-workers and be thankful for them.**
3. **The competition.** No, I’m not high on too much Halloween candy and not thinking straight. Be thankful for your competition because they push you to work harder. They make you be the best you can be.
4. **The benefits/perks:** Do you have health insurance through your job? A gym membership? 401(K)? Free coffee? Are there work mixers and parties? You may not even realize how many great perks your job comes with until you actually think about it.

Focus on what you have to be thankful for, and likely you won't spend so much time worrying about what you don't have, and complaining about what sucks (like Debbie does). Also, **try to make being thankful a part of your life**, not something you do just once a year. For most of us, we have a lot to be thankful and grateful for. Happy Thanksgiving!