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## BEING THANKFUL

HANNAH RODGERS

Gratitude isn't just an idea, it's a daily practice that should be applied consistently. Most people tend to show gratefulness during the holidays, but often return to their old habits after the New Year. Practicing gratitude is a vital component to thoroughly enjoying your everyday life. Humans are creatures of habit, and we have been conditioned to focus on all the "bad" things in our life. We naturally tend to replay negative situations in our minds repeatedly. Nowadays, someone scolding you can make you lose focus and ruin your entire day.

Learning to practice gratitude shifts your mentality. Happify, a great website for daily gratitude reminders, helps to change your mentality in your quest towards gratitude. They claim that changing your mindset will give you more positive emotions, make you feel more alert, allow you to sleep better, and provide you with the mind space to display more compassion and kindness. Along with

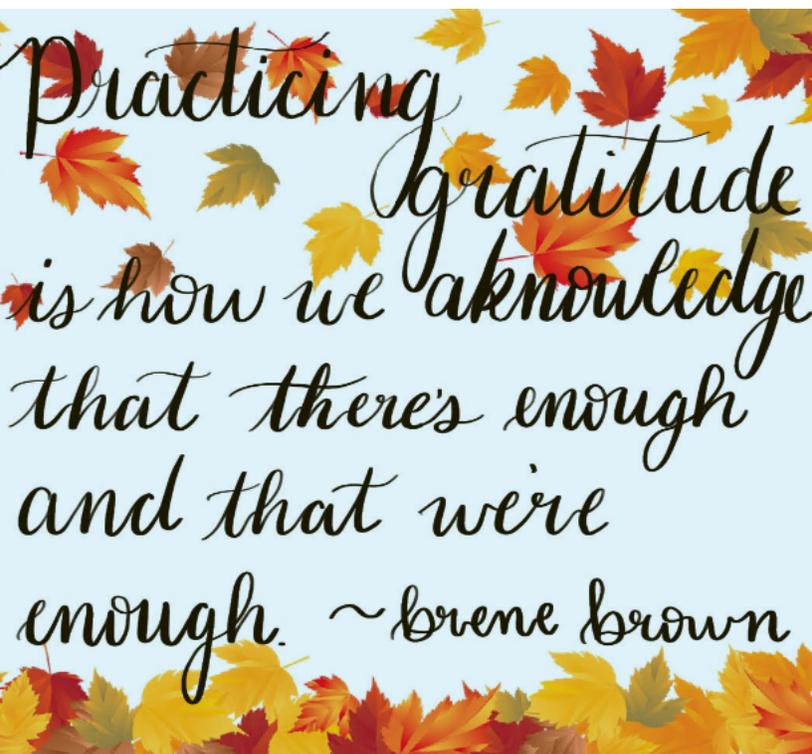
Happify, I have found that the following tips can help to incorporate gratitude into your daily life:

**BE SPECIFIC ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR.** Instead of expressing "I am grateful for my job" think about a specific aspect or situation that made you grateful. For me that would look like, "I am grateful for the client that listened to me explain heart worm disease and decided to test their dog and get on preventatives."

**EXPRESS IT WHEN YOU FEEL IT!** At my work, we all try to express gratitude daily because of how emotionally tiresome it can be to work in Veterinary Medicine. We take the time to thank our coworkers when they help us when we are busy by answering the phone, grabbing something we forgot to bring to surgery, or even helping restrain an animal. This also helps create the trickle-down effect, where if you are more grateful to others it will, in effect, lead to those around you being more grateful!

**TAKE A MINUTE OR TWO EVERYDAY TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR.** This might look like doing a meditation, or just sitting for a minute and writing it down if you don't enjoy meditation. The important thing is to make it a habit. The more often you express gratitude and write down what you are grateful for, the easier it gets for you to focus on the positive instead of the things that can ruin them.

Since I have begun expressing gratitude, it truly has helped me to let go of the negative situations that could have otherwise upset me or ruin my day. I now know that there is far more to be grateful for than be upset about. The gratitude we express during the holidays is a great start. Try extending that gratitude past the holidays by making it a New Years resolution, and you just might find that your life changes for the better.





## A TREASURED THANKSGIVING

LILLIAN JESSEN

Thanksgiving is a special time of year for me and my family. One Thanksgiving that particularly stands out to me occurred in 2011. For that Thanksgiving, we went down to LaGrange, Georgia to visit my aunt Cathy and my uncle Timmy, who is my mom's brother. Even though we lived in Utah, we decided to drive instead of taking a flight. It took us 4 days of straight driving, but we made it to Georgia the day before Thanksgiving.

Our arrival was a celebration since we had not seen Cathy and Timmy in a very long time. Even though it was the day before Thanksgiving, they had already started making a big Southern Thanksgiving. My mom and I both jumped into helping out by prepping the turkey to be boiled before baking it in the oven. While doing this, we started to talk about Thanksgivings of the past and all of the funny things that happened. Because my aunt is originally from Georgia, she was also teaching us all about Southern food and how to make it. What was really special about this pre-Thanksgiving Day, however, was that I got to meet my cousins Caitlin, Scott, and Mike, whom I had never got to meet before.

When it was finally Thanksgiving Day, we got to meet some of my uncle and aunt's friends. Everyone who was there was me and my mom, my cousins, my uncle and aunt, and their friends. We all enjoyed the big Southern Thanksgiving, which included delicious items such as the boiled turkey we helped with the day prior, green beans with bacon, squash casserole, and a red velvet cake. We were sad to leave the next day, but we had to have enough time to drive back home in time for school. My uncle softened the sadness by reminding me to remember the happy times

that we share, rather than the dwelling on the feeling of sadness from leaving.

I am especially grateful and thankful for the Thanksgiving I was able to share with my aunt and uncle in 2011. Not only were we able to see family that we had not seen in a long time, we were able to safely drive to Georgia and back home. Thanksgiving time will always bring a smile on my face, as it is a special time for me and my family.



## THANK YOUR INSTRUCTORS!

ROCCO PASQUARELLO

One of the challenges people have at times is showing gratitude. When someone invests quality time to help us, what is our attitude or response? Are we thankful or do we feel like owed it to us and that a thank you response is not necessary?

During some point in our lives, we have all been given help. Perhaps someone changed a flat tire, a co-worker helped with the completion of a major work project, or a parent provided valuable wisdom in a difficult situation. We receive help almost every day



strengthen as a writer and succeed with my future assignments.

My first written test was about email versus standard mail and which option is better. This paper was challenging to me because I had the most difficult time figuring out how to write which option was in fact better. Thankfully, the person who grades the paper gave me three opportunities to write the paper over again before giving me a final grade. Even though I managed to get a passing grade on the paper, I was frustrated because I felt like I had failed. To remedy this, I called Ms. Rianna to talk over the exam. She was kind enough to break down where mistakes were made and provided me some pointers on where I could improve in my writing. When it came time to write papers about the children's short story, The Four Seasons, and the travel magazine article, *Venice, Italy: Elegance Lies Ahead*, the improvement I made was largely due to the help I received from Ms. Rianna. Her tips for writing a well-developed story helped to strengthen my writing skills, which was reflected when it came to my grades.

Through all the endless calls I made, all of which consisted of an array of questions, Ms. Rianna was always there to provide feedback, guidance, direction, and encouragement at every step of the way. She is truly an exceptional instructor. She never got weary or tired of me calling and asking for help, which I am beyond thankful for. Overall, Ms. Rianna helped me to learn how to be an effective writer.

To all fellow students, I implore you to take the time to appreciate your instructors. They put in the diligent time and effort so that we can reap the benefits of their knowledge and succeed in school. Why not give them a shout out to show them that you recognize their efforts and appreciate their help?

from the people around us. Even the lovely, dedicated, and hard-working instructors at Penn Foster help us as students. They spend countless hours tediously helping students grasp the information presented in their courses so that their students can succeed.

Just over two years ago, I enrolled with Penn Foster in their Freelance Writer program. Embarking on the tremendous learning journey into the world of freelance writing, I quickly found that the knowledge I was gaining was in large part due from the exceptional instructors I had. In fact, there was one particular instructor that helped me the most.

Ms. Rianna Karalunas, who was one the English instructors during my time in the Freelance Writer program, is someone I am forever grateful for. If I ever encountered a struggle in my program, I could always call and talk with Ms. Rianna. She helped to guide me in the right direction numerous times. In fact, there were three instances in particular that I can confidently say Ms. Rianna's wisdom was priceless. In fact, the help she provided me the first time I called helped me



## GETTING OVER THE HOLIDAY BLUES

JAMIE FUDA

It can be easily agreed by most that cheerful voices, gorgeous twinkling lights with ornaments sparkling under them, savory food, celebration, and excitement are just some of the things that make the holidays wonderful. From the first bite of turkey, to the unwrapping of the last gift, and through the clock striking midnight on New Year's; the holiday season evokes the feeling of excitement and fun. After all of that joyous fun fades, however, it can be so easy to feel a sense of sadness. Even the merriest of people's mood can be dragged down by the stress from going back to work, class, or any other responsibility. That is why the term, "holiday blues," is something you often hear.

Symptoms of the "holiday blues" can include irritability, trouble concentrating, and socially withdrawing. If you get the "holiday blues," there are numerous things that you can do to prevent it from affecting your school and work flow. Keeping active, being self-assured, maintaining a healthy balance, taking care of yourself, and staying realistic about what you can do are few that can help

you from falling into the depression trap which often plagues us during the holiday season. It is possible to bounce back from seasonal depression, so stay strong.

Procrastination is a huge hindrance with our mindset of flowing back into the swing of things after a holiday break. If you find yourself struggling to be productive after the holidays, considering the following can help...

**MAKE A LIST.** What is most important? What can really wait? What needs done as soon as possible?

**ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS.** Put your phone on silent, if possible. Limit television time, and limit availability. Do whatever you need to do to keep yourself on track.

**REWARD YOURSELF.** Met a deadline? Finish an assignment? Make sure you build some fun into your schedule to reward yourself for getting things done.

Pulling away from the distraction of procrastination is not an easy habit to break, but you can get through it with diligence. Focus on getting your diploma and do not entertain thought of giving up. Keep in mind that you cannot move forward if you are standing still!



## MAKING HOLIDAYS SAFE WITH PETS

KAREN SANTOROSKI

The holidays are fast approaching, and many of us pet parents would like to include our furry friends in all the festivities. As we prepare for the holiday season, there are many things to keep in mind when it comes to our pet's eating habits and normal routines. Holiday festivities can become overwhelming for them, so it is important to provide a safe, healthy, and fun environment for our furry friends to enjoy the festivities.

Here are a few things to help keep your pet out of the vet's office and safe at home during the holidays.

### HAVE A PET RETREAT:

- Set up a quiet, dimly-lit room as your pet's retreat.
- Include your pet's favorite bed, blankets, and toys in their retreat.
- Check on your pet periodically to ensure they're doing well.

### BE CAUTIOUS DURING HOLIDAY PARTIES:

- As your guests are coming and going, make sure your pets are properly secured to avoid the door dasher!
- Allow your dog to slowly meet your guests, especially children. If your dog growls, move him to his quiet, retreat room.
- Flowers and plants such as ferns, hydrangeas, and amaryllis, for example, are toxic to pets. Be sure to keep them out of reach from your fur friends.
- Watch your pet very carefully around lit candles.

### HOLIDAY FOODS CAN BE TOXIC TO PETS:

- Turkey and chicken bones can cause internal damage, so be careful not to let your pet get ahold of them.
- Toxic foods include garlic, onions, grapes, raisins, chocolate, and candy (especially sugar-free).
- Bread and yeast can cause serious gastrointestinal complications.
- Safe alternatives for your pets can be a specially formulated dog or cat treat with turkey and pumpkin flavors, or a vet-approved holiday meal.
- Keep holiday meals out of reach from your pets. Plates left unattended and open garbage cans can be easily accessed by our furry friends. Appoint a dedicated person to keep an eye on leftovers or your lovable counter surfer!
- Even pet-safe foods fed in excess can lead to pancreatitis, an inflammation of the pancreas due to an increase in fatty foods. Keep your pet healthy by feeding it responsibly!



## STICK TO YOUR PET'S NORMAL ROUTINE:

- Keep a checklist of your pet's needs during this busy time of the year so that you don't forget to take care of them.
- Enlist all family members to be involved in your pet's care to make it easier.
- Meals, medications, walks, and playtime is important to our furry friends and should be routine, regardless of your busy schedule.

## BE CAMERA-READY:

Does your pet love to dress up? Some pets love wearing sweaters and costumes. However, if your pet doesn't like to dress up then you shouldn't force it, as it will only create unwanted anxiety. A great family picture can be had without a pet costume, and your pet will thank you!

- Be careful of costumes with small parts and buttons that can become a choking hazard.
- Never leave your pet alone in a costume, as they can become stuck or possibly get hurt.
- Alternatives to costumes are holiday themed collars and harnesses.



## AMBASSADOR INTERVIEW: NATHAN RICE

CHEYANNE HUNTER

The Student Ambassador program is open to student applications year round, which means that we are constantly welcoming new Student Ambassadors into the program. Back in September of this year, we welcomed a little over 30 new Student Ambassadors. This month we will get to know one of those new Ambassadors, Nathan Rice, a little more.

## WHAT PROGRAM ARE YOU IN AND HOW FAR INTO THE PROGRAM ARE YOU?

"I am in the High School program, and am 92% done with it. I plan to be finished at the beginning of the new year. I am currently doing my electives, geared toward allied health."

## WHY DID YOU ENROLL IN PENN FOSTER?

"My Mom saw it as a great opportunity to broaden my high school education. We also liked that Penn Foster has fantastic college programs for further educational growth. She felt she had succeeded to teach me all she could through homeschooling, making an online education the obvious next step."

## HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN AT PENN FOSTER?

"Overall, my experience with Penn Foster has been nothing but exceptional. I love being able to talk with professors about various career opportunities, as well as always having questions welcomed for when I need help."

## WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT BEING A PENN FOSTER STUDENT?

"The flexibility is a huge upside. I enjoy being able to complete my studies wherever I am. I can take my laptop and textbooks everywhere with me, and have even at times done school on my phone."

## WHY DID YOU APPLY TO BECOME A STUDENT AMBASSADOR?

"In truth, I wasn't sure what to expect out of becoming Student Ambassador, but I applied anyway and am very glad I did. I appreciate all the help the other

Ambassadors have given, and hope to continue to learn and offer guidance through being a Student Ambassador.”

### WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT BEING A STUDENT AMBASSADOR?

“My favorite thing about becoming an Ambassador is being able to help students wherever they are, both physically and educationally. I have been given an opportunity to help and support students. The skills I get from the program will also help me far beyond High School.”

### WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU'RE THANKFUL FOR?

“I'm very thankful for my mom and dad for being with me every step of the way. I'm also thankful for my Pastor and First Lady, who I know always keep me in their prayers. I'm also very thankful for my friends and family, and the opportunities for me to help others. I must mention, as well, that I am grateful for my personal fan club who told me, 'I don't know what it will be for, but when they interview you mention us'.”

### IS THERE ANY ADVICE YOU WOULD LIKE TO GIVE TO STUDENTS?

“Open your eyes, take a short walk, smell the crisp fall air, or look at the beautiful snow (if you're lucky or unlucky enough to have any this year). Take it all in—even if it's raining or gloomy—and think over what has been given to you. Be thankful that the sun rises another day for you to breath and do all of the things that you enjoy doing. And after you are done thanking and enjoying nature, think about how much better you could make the world by being you. Then get to studying.”

### IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE STUDENTS TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?

“My family stays active, we go hiking and take walks frequently. We have an adorable 10 year old America Eskimo named Adira, and I plan to one day be a nurse anesthetist. I play the guitar and drums, and I find joy in being an advocate for students. I hope to be able to answer, or find someone who is able to answer, any questions I am given by students pertaining to school.”



### WANT TO CONNECT WITH NATHAN?

Nathan is available to help you with your school questions and to mentor you towards success! Feel free to connect with him at the following places...

[The Student Community](#)

[Instagram](#)