

Gr(attitude)

AUTHOR(S): Mina Tzoukermann

SUMMARY: In a world where we are hard-wired towards negativity bias, how do we shift our attitudes towards gratitude? In this session, we will break down what negativity bias is, what authentic gratitude truly means, and what it looks like to practice it. We will also explore the ways we can bring embodied gratitude into our camp settings this summer.

GOALS:

- To understand the meaning of gratitude
- To understand the obstacles that affect our ability to embody gratitude
- To inspire them to create a culture of gratitude in their own lives and at their camps this summer

AUDIENCE: No limits, open

TIMING: 45 min

MATERIALS: blank paper, writing utensils, texts below

Need these quotes printed out: (can all be on one page, whatever's easiest)

“Gratitude can be defined as a heartfelt appreciation for the blessings, experiences, and people in our lives. It involves acknowledging and expressing gratitude for the positive aspects and moments, cultivating a sense of thankfulness and contentment. Gratitude is an attitude that allows us to shift our focus toward the abundance and beauty that exists around us. (from <https://johnbradley1.medium.com/gratitude-and-personal-authenticity-honoring-your-true-self-through-appreciation-73e9b3485421>)

“On most days, when we deal with challenges, difficult people, deadlines, stress, and the normal daily grind, gratitude slips through our fingers like sand. In our difficult moments, when we come up for air, we tend to only see what is missing, what isn't working, what is annoying, frustrating, disappointing. We fail to see the good right in front of us.” (from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/cultivating-culture-gratitude-pari-namazie/>)

“What stops us from feeling gratitude?”

The consumer trap of the never-ending wanting

We fall into a consumer trap of wanting, believing we never have enough and that more is better. This creates a lack mentality in us. When we think of ourselves and our lives, all we can see is what is missing. We somehow think, when we get just that one thing, more money, a better job title, a bigger house, we will finally be satisfied. But no amount of money, no job title, will ever be enough; well, yes maybe for a week, a month, but as soon as one desire is

fulfilled, another will emerge. This turns into a never-ending cycle of dissatisfaction, making it hard for us to enjoy or appreciate what we have right now. This creates an immense amount of suffering for us.

Comparing ourselves to others

Then there is the psychology of social comparison. We are constantly comparing ourselves to others. We compare our bodies, how much money we have, cars, home, updates on smart phones, the list goes on. Psychology social comparison theory means our mind makes comparisons as a way of evaluating ourselves. Comparison helps us understand what we are good at and what we are not good at. If we deliberately place our attention on what we have, rather than on what someone else has, we transition from comparison and envy to gratitude and contentment. We need to understand that the path to happiness is not the greener pastures ahead, it is the earth beneath our feet right now.

Managing our expectations

Each time our expectations are not met, we are disappointed and any gratitude we might have had crumbles. But if we take a moment to reflect on those disappointments and failures maybe we can reframe them and think of what I learnt, how I grew through the experience. Instead of focusing on the negative, taking stock from what positive came from it, is a powerful moment of reflection.

There is a symbiotic relationship between gratitude and wonderment. It is a matter of perspective. It is not our circumstances that create gratitude but rather our perception of our circumstances that can make the difference. Gratitude is not something that just happens, it is a conscious choice and something we need to apply, repeat deliberately and daily. But you will find, as you continue to focus on finding things to be grateful for, you will feel a transformation in the way we see ourselves and our lives, turning our failures into learning opportunities, our hardships into wisdom. Our pain into healing, we see the world with more humility and appreciation, and wonder.”

(from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/cultivating-culture-gratitude-pari-namazie/>)

SET-UP: Circle (chairs or floor)

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – *Introductions: Names, State something you are grateful for.*

- 00:05-00:20 – *Sharing definitions and discussion.*
- 00:20-00:25 – *Solo reflection period.*
- 00:25-00:35 – *Share back with partner and collaborative brainstorm.*
- 00:35-00:40 – *Large group share back.*
- 00:40-00:45 – *Gratitude prayer and collective intention setting.*

SESSION OUTLINE

- 00:00-00:05 – *Introductions: Names, State something you are grateful for.*
- 00:05-00:20: *Sharing definitions and discussion.*
-Go over gratitude definition. Have someone read quote aloud:
“Gratitude can be defined as a heartfelt appreciation for the blessings, experiences, and people in our lives. It involves acknowledging and expressing gratitude for the positive aspects and moments, cultivating a sense of thankfulness and contentment. Gratitude is an attitude that allows us to shift our focus toward the abundance and beauty that exists around us. (from <https://johnbradley1.medium.com/gratitude-and-personal-authenticity-honoring-your-true-self-through-appreciation-73e9b3485421>)

-*What is negativity bias in the context of gratitude? Have someone read quote aloud:*
“On most days, when we deal with challenges, difficult people, deadlines, stress, and the normal daily grind, gratitude slips through our fingers like sand. In our difficult moments, when we come up for air, we tend to only see what is missing, what isn’t working, what is annoying, frustrating, disappointing. We fail to see the good right in front of us.” (from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/cultivating-culture-gratitude-pari-namazie/>)

And this quote:

“What stops us from feeling gratitude?”

The consumer trap of the never-ending wanting

We fall into a consumer trap of wanting, believing we never have enough and that more is better. This creates a lack mentality in us. When we think of ourselves and our lives, all we can see is what is missing. We somehow think, when we get just that one thing, more money, a better job title, a bigger house, we will finally be satisfied. But no amount of money, no job title, will ever be enough; well, yes maybe for a week, a month, but as soon as one desire is fulfilled, another will emerge. This turns into a never-ending cycle of dissatisfaction, making it hard for us to enjoy or appreciate what we have right now. This creates an immense amount of suffering for us.

Comparing ourselves to others

Then there is the psychology of social comparison. We are constantly comparing ourselves to others. We compare our bodies, how much money we have, cars, home, updates on smart phones, the list goes on. Psychology social comparison theory means our mind makes comparisons as a way of evaluating ourselves. Comparison helps us understand what we are good at and what we are not good at. If we deliberately place our attention on what we have, rather than on what someone else has, we transition from comparison and envy to gratitude and contentment. We need to understand that the path to happiness is not the greener pastures ahead, it is the earth beneath our feet right now.

Managing our expectations

Each time our expectations are not met, we are disappointed and any gratitude we might have had crumbles. But if we take a moment to reflect on those disappointments and failures maybe we can reframe them and think of what I learnt, how I grew through the experience. Instead of focusing on the negative, taking stock from what positive came from it, is a powerful moment of reflection.

There is a symbiotic relationship between gratitude and wonderment. It is a matter of perspective. It is not our circumstances that create gratitude but rather our perception of our circumstances that can make the difference. Gratitude is not something that just happens, it is a conscious choice and something we need to apply, repeat deliberately and daily. But you will find, as you continue to focus on finding things to be grateful for, you will feel a transformation in the way we see ourselves and our lives, turning our failures into learning opportunities, our hardships into wisdom. Our pain into healing, we see the world with more humility and appreciation, and wonder.”

-Ask: What comes up for you after hearing these quotes? Does any of it resonate with you?

- 00:20-00:25 – Solo reflection period. Hand out paper/pens to participants and have them answer these questions:
 - What are ways you practice gratitude in your day-to-day life?
 - If you don't have a regular gratitude practice, brainstorm some potential practices you could incorporate into your life.
- 00:25-00:35 – Have participants get into partners and share what they wrote. Then, have them brainstorm together how they can embody gratitude while at their camps this summer.
- 00:35-00:40 – Get back into large group and have partners share back their collaborative brainstorm to whole group.
- 00:40-00:45 – End with a gratitude prayer and set a communal intention to embody gratitude for the rest of cornerstone and their camps this summer.

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

Encourage them to bring back these ideas of gratitude to their camps. Let's be intentional about cultivating a culture of gratitude among staff this summer at our camps!