

Appreciations

esther derby
associates, inc.



Esther Derby
Servant Leader

I'm passionate about creating work environments that truly enable and support your success. Feel free to call or email me for a complimentary mini consultation to explore potential opportunities to increase your capacity and support the success of your agile initiative. Just tell me what you think the issue is, and we'll start from there.

Genuine appreciation can transform many situations.

Every year brings the possibility for improvement and change. As we start this new year, I offer you one simple practice that can brighten a day and boost positivity at work.

A simple expression of appreciation can make a world of difference. I like to use this form, which I learned from the work of Virginia Satir:

(Name of person), I appreciate you for (contribution, action, quality).

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A couple of years ago I led a year-long project with a distributed team—no two members were in the same timezone. We relied on phone calls to get our business done.

I started every call with appreciations. Each of us felt valued. We knew that our team mates noticed our contributions. When we did have conflicts, we had that grounding to come back to.

The following year, we rotated leadership, and appreciations were dropped. Our meetings felt brusque and impersonal. My team mates seemed grumpier and less

inclined to give the benefit of the doubt. Same group of people, one small change in meeting protocol.

Some people tell me they feel awkward offering appreciations. Like anything new, it takes practice to feel comfortable. Here are a few guidelines to help start this helpful practice.

Be authentic. Pavlov proved that it's possible to shape canine behavior by providing a reward for a desired response. People, however are not canines, and they are quick to recognize manipulation for what it is. So, say something you really mean, even if it seems like a small thing to you. The fact that you noticed may have an outsized impact for the receiver.

Be subtle. Most people don't need or want someone to gush over every accomplishment. A word in private will let people know that you do notice and care.

Appreciate frequently. Don't wait for a big event. Notice and comment on small, day-to-day things.

Appreciate the person, not just the work. Most people like to hear "You did a good job." But a comment on the quality of work may feel like an evaluation. Let

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people know you appreciate them for who they are and what they do.

Don't wait. When a friend of mine handed in her resignation, her boss told her she was the best project manager he'd ever worked with. "Why'd he wait until I quit to tell me?" she fumed later. "Maybe if he'd let me know

he noticed what I did for the company I'd still be there."

Don't forget to appreciate yourself. Many people find it easier to appreciate others than to appreciate themselves. Take time to notice and appreciate *you*.