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**"I have never known a person of ability to be ungrateful."**

» **Goethe**



## It's Not About the Turkey

Earlier this week, I was asked by a banker friend and customer to speak to his team about the importance of having a thankful mindset. With Thanksgiving around the corner, I found myself reminiscing.

Thanksgiving was the favorite holiday of my youth. My uncles and aunts each hosted a different holiday gathering in their homes.

Thanksgiving was the one in which everyone came to our home.

I have fond memories of food cooking constantly for two days. Card tables were scattered everywhere to eat at and later play games upon.

My dad's turkey carving process and carving tool layout made the kitchen seem like an operating room.

It was the relaxed holiday. We enjoyed our large extended family being in one place.

And my dad and uncles fell asleep (sitting up) on the living room couches after lunch...every...single...year.



## Patience and Humor

I'm as guilty as the next person when it comes to moaning when some pandemic protocols and edicts just seem to make no sense.

My family is tired of hearing me ask, "Who thought this was a good idea?" over the past few months.

They've threatened to get me a tee-shirt with that question printed on it to save time.

Usually, you can ascertain what folks are trying to do. And their intentions are often well-intentioned, if not especially effective.

My wife recently attended a homecoming game. Seating was limited and fans had to have an electronic ticket beforehand.

There were no paper tickets issued. Unfortunately, the online system was a bit difficult to use.

So, the woman scanning tickets at the gate was grabbing people's phones, punching a few icons on them, and handing them back.

I'm thankful to have those memories. They still bring smiles.

Today, it too often seems that Thanksgiving is the speed bump between Halloween and Christmas.

Many of us blow by the holiday that is about stopping to be thankful for the blessings in our lives. (Hey, it's right there in the name.)

I'd humbly suggest that is a recurring issue.

In our daily lives, we often blow right on through our days, seldom stopping to be thankful in the moment.

Stop most people and ask them what is making them annoyed or angry right now, and they have answers on the tips of their tongues.

That stuff...we're thinking about. We readily call it up.

But ask the same people what are things that they are thankful for...and the process is a little slower.

Sure, when you give them a little time to think about it, they can usually give you a list.

Tellingly, once they start their list, it tends to get longer and longer.

Consciously listing the things you are thankful for tends to uncover a longer list than most folks initially realized they have.

That list, however, frequently gets buried beneath even minor annoyances and complaints that pile up on us.

If we aren't careful, that's all we see.

I acknowledge that few years in memory have made it more challenging for many folks to have thankful thoughts running through their minds.

There was no telling how many dozens of phones she handled and handed back to people.

If you were designing a possible cross-contamination exercise, you would have a hard time designing a more efficient and effective program for it.

Folks walked away holding their now Petri dish phones looking for ways to sanitize them.

That person meant well. She was trying to do the right thing while doing the absolute wrong thing.

Everyone has their own funny stories these days about protocols that make you pause.

The "Mr. Miyagi" training exercises we go through in restaurants - Mask on. Mask off. - could have been a Seinfeld episode back in the day.

Empathy for the people involved in ongoing, frequently-changing standards is more important than ever.

That is as true for the folks enforcing the rules as it is for the folks trying to follow the rules.

I believe that one of the more troubling aspects of the past few months has been the mental fatigue brought on by uncertainty and confusion.

Fuses get short.

Nerves become frayed.

When they do, it doesn't mean someone is a bad person.

It means they are a person. We all are.

We need to remember that fact with our customers, co-workers, supervisors, and ourselves.

There will always be absurdities in life.

I'd suggest that is one of the reasons those thoughts are more important now than ever.

Are our challenges real? Absolutely.

But so are our blessings and our opportunities.

Be thankful.

Some are frustrating. Some are funny.

Many are both.

Strive to find the humor present in the absurd and to share that outlook with others.

Remember that patience and humor are contagious, as well.

**"Work is life's greatest therapy."**

» **Mack McIngvale**

*Dave Martin, author of The In-Store Advantage, has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.*

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