

## The Power of Acknowledgment - Skills Call - Because Acknowledgment is a Skill.

No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others.  
The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude.  
— Alfred North Whitehead.

Why is acknowledgment important? How do you feel when you're acknowledged?

*Good, appreciated, confident. Makes us want to do more of that. That thing that that caused us to be acknowledged in the first place.*

According to a recent survey by Michelle McQuaid, one of the world's foremost leaders in positive psychology intervention in the workplace, 65 percent of the American workforce would prefer a better boss to a pay raise. Only 35 percent say a pay raise would make them happy.

**The 7 Principles of Acknowledgment** are an excerpt from *The Power of Acknowledgment*, by Judith W. Umlas. ©2006 IIL Publishing, New York.

1. **The world is full of people who deserve to be acknowledged.** It will be easier to acknowledge those you care most about if you start by practicing your acknowledgment skills on people you don't know very well, or even know at all. Then you will begin making the world a happier place.
2. **Acknowledgment builds intimacy and creates powerful interactions.** Acknowledge the people around you directly and fully, especially those with whom you are in an intimate relationship. What is it about your spouse, your daughter, your uncle, your oldest colleague or subordinate that you want to acknowledge? Look for ways to say how much you value them, and then be prepared for miracles!
3. **Acknowledgment neutralizes, defuses, deactivates and reduces the effect of jealousy and envy!** Acknowledge those you are jealous of, for the very attributes you envy. Watch the envy diminish and the relationship grow stronger as you grow to accept valuable input from the person you were envying.
4. **Recognizing good work leads to high energy, great feelings, high-quality performance and terrific results.** Not acknowledging good work causes lethargy, resentment, sorrow and withdrawal. Recognize and acknowledge good work, wherever you find it. It's not true that people only work hard if they worry whether you value them. Quite the opposite!
5. **Truthful, heartfelt and deserved acknowledgment always makes a difference, sometimes a profound one, in a person's life and work.** Rarely given acknowledgments have no more value than frequent ones. Sincere praise should not be withheld due to fear of diminishing returns, of appearing inappropriate or out of embarrassment. These obstacles can and should be overcome in order for you and your recipients to reap the tremendous rewards.
6. **It is likely that acknowledgment can improve the emotional and physical health of both the giver and the receiver.** There is already substantial scientific evidence that gratitude and forgiveness help well-being, alertness and energy, diminish stress and feelings of negativity, actually boosting the immune system. It is reported that they can even reduce the risk of stroke and heart failure. This research leads us to believe that acknowledging others has similar effects.
7. **Practice different ways of getting through to the people you want to acknowledge.** Develop an acknowledgment repertoire that will give you the tools to reach out to the people in your life in the different ways that will be the most meaningful to each situation and each person.

What makes a powerful acknowledgment?

**Be specific.** "Great job!" is even better when followed up with specific details about WHY it was a great job. What can we acknowledge about others? Expertise, intelligence, kindness, persistence, good work, contributions to a team effort, skill level.

Conversely, what intangible quality can you observe and acknowledge?

**Be sincere.** Powerful acknowledgment is not *flattery*. (Definition: excessive and insincere praise, especially that

given to further one's own interests)

**Be proactive.** Actively look for things to acknowledgment. What we focus on is what's going to increase. What behavior/results do you want to increase in your family, friends, colleagues, subordinates?

What prevents us from acknowledging others? What structures of knowing do we have around acknowledging/thanking others?

#### The Three Myths of Acknowledgment

1. Too much waters it down, makes it worth less.
2. Worrying about whether you value them makes them work harder.
3. A rare acknowledgment is treasured more.