

DEVIANT THINKING PODCAST

Episode 05: The Not So Typical Episode On Gratitude



Transcript

See show notes at: www.deviantthinking.com/podcast/005

00:01 Welcome back to the Deviant Thinking podcast. I'm your host, Jennifer Thompson and today and always we'll explore career advice that breaks the rules. As always, I am super excited to have you back and in this episode I am so excited to share with you the not so typical episode on gratitude when this episode posts, it will be Thanksgiving in the United States and I seriously considered maybe just skipping this week and you know, giving you all a break. But then I thought, why not take the opportunity to talk about gratitude and how gratitude can truly affect your career. What I know is that people who have gratitude and are gracious get further ahead in their career. And I know that when my clients come to me that often they come to me out of frustration and they're feeling anything but gratitude towards their current employer and their current situation.

01:08 So I wanted to take a little bit of a twist on today's topic and really not approach it from the Pollyanna approach of, Oh, be grateful for everything that's out there, because the reality of it is is sometimes things just stink and it's not something you can put a smile on and go on with no problem. So let's explore how do we get to grateful, especially if we're in that point of frustration this time of year, especially as we head towards year end, there is a lot of opportunity for frustration and our jobs and in our lives and sometimes again, it's not that one should just step over these frustrations. I actually think the worst advice you can give to someone as is kind of dismissing it and saying, Oh, it'll be okay. Oh, you've lost your job, you'll find something new. Oh, you didn't get a good review at the end of the year.

02:10 No worries. You'll pick up and do better next year. That's really trivializing this and that's not the way we feel inside. It is actually a big deal to each of us and if we have that

Episode 5: www.deviantthinking.com/podcast/005

frustration going on, it is really hard to be grateful again, this time of year I find many clients coming to me because of that frustration. They've worked hard all year. They've looked forward to a bonus. They've looked forward to a good review, they've looked forward to being appreciated and sometimes that just doesn't happen. And I'm here to tell you that to truly end up in, be grateful. Sometimes you have to get mad first, you have to get mad, you have to get sad, you have to get frustrated and really allow yourself those feelings. My daughter when she was younger, was a swimmer and she was a pretty darn good swimmer, but occasionally she'd have a really bad race and when she got out of the water, most of the coaches would pat her on the back and say, Oh, Abby, you'll have a, you know, you're a good swimmer, you'll do fine next time.

03:23 It's no big deal and it would just make her madder and we are so privileged to have had a really awesome coach. That awesome coach's name is Eric and Eric, if you're listening, I want you to know that we did hear you. And it really has changed my life and the life of, of a lot of my clients. Because what Eric did for Abby was he let her be mad. He validated her feelings. So when Abby would get out of the water, when Eric was coaching and she'd have a bad swim, she'd go right up to him and she'd be just furious. She'd be mad at herself. She'd be disappointed. She'd be frustrated, possibly at an official, not thinking that she, you know, if she had disqualified from a race thinking she didn't get a good call and he would look at her and he'd say, you know what, Abby?

04:12 Your right. It stinks. Wow. Right? When does a coach say that to a kid? And he would say that to her, you know what? You have a right to be really frustrated right now. If I were you, I'd be frustrated. I'd be sad. So he was really hearing her. And then when he did next, I think was absolutely brilliant. He said, Abby, why don't you go into the locker room and why don't you go and be mad? Be as mad as you need to be for the next 10 minutes. If you need to throw your towel on the floor, jump up and down on it. Go take a hot shower and let out a good scream. Whatever it is that you need to do, because you know what? You're right. That race, it wasn't your best and you have a right to be frustrated.

05:04 Then when you're done with all of that, why don't you come back out here and we'll talk about your next race. Wow. What brilliant advice. This is something that I now use every day and I hear I'm really genuinely grateful to coach Eric for sharing this with our family because it really does make a difference. Abby felt heard, she felt validated and then she felt like she could truly express all of those emotions and what I find so often is that I have a client coming to me and maybe they were laid off from a job or just downright fired. They're mad, they're hurt, and all they've heard from everyone around them is, Oh, don't worry. You're really smart. You'll have no problem. You'll get another job, and they aren't allowing themselves to really feel the frustration. So it's one of the first things that we do together as I, we do talk about, well, how does this feel?

06:08 And they really own it. They own the sadness, they own the frustration, they own the anger, they own being mad, being upset at someone else for possibly taking away their livelihood and their families prosperity by this decision, right? They get all of those

feelings out and we often talk about how long do they need to be mad and for different people it is different timeframes. So I want to, I'll give you that perspective as well to allow yourself, if you have a situation right now that's really frustrating, how do you figure out what's the timeline that you need to go through that you can get over it? For many of my clients, once they own this frustration, they can actually work through it really quickly. A lot of times they say, you know what? I'm going to give it one week and I'm going to be mad for the next week and I'm going to talk about how crappy this is and I'm going to tell my friends that it really sucks to have this going on and I'm gonna own this frustration because I know once they do that, then they can move on to gratitude.

07:22 They can start to come back and look at what, what's the positive in this? What was positive about their last role? What did they learn? How did, how were they able to grow? But there's no way they can see that goodness until they get over the frustration. So just want to back up a little bit and I want to highlight what I'm trying to say here. What I'm sharing is that while gratitude is your ultimate goal. And gratitude is actually really healthy for us. But gratitude can only come after we've dealt with the frustration. I see it over and over again. If I have clients that have not dealt with the frustration, that frustration follows them into their next position and they don't perform as well. Or even worse, they don't even get the next position because they go into the interview and kind of they've tamped everything down.

08:26 And I always feel like when you're kind of suppressing any of that, it just leaks out the sides. So if you haven't gotten healthy about how you feel about your last role and how that ended, it makes it really hard to look at the next role and how you can be really successful. So a couple things about gratitude that I want to share and I've done a little research on this and want to share. It's a really great book on, and it's by Robert A. Emmons who's a professor of positive psychology at the University of California Davis. And his book is called Gratitude Works. It's a 21 day program for creating emotional prosperity. And what I love is that anytime you're reading a book from the school of positive psychology, it is well-researched and well-documented. It's not just pop psychology. It really, they take the time to do that research and make sure that their hypothesis is can really be validated.

09:31 Okay. Now all of you say hypothesis is a group of times and please understand that wasn't the easiest word to say. Now, a couple of things. Digging into gratitude in the school of positive psychology, what other clinical trials, and I love the results of it, indicate that the practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person's life and career. It can lower blood pressure, it can improve immune function. It promotes happiness and well being and spurs acts of helpfulness generosity and cooperation. All fabulous things that we need in our life. It, there are things that help us just be happier, but then they also really help us do better. You know, I know when clients can go into a job interview or even into their job and a daily basis and show up with gratitude. We like to be around people who show gratitude and appreciation and people who show those things.

10:36 They go up the ladder. They are the ones who are successful. So it's worth taking the time to learn, to be gratuitous and learn to enjoy the practice of gratitude. So what is gratitude? Gratitude is looking at the things around us and truly being happy for them. Finding some silver lining in all of them and, and understanding that for ourselves and really taking the moment to appreciate them in our lives. And sometimes the things that, that often are the hardest for us long term are the things we can appreciate most. And again, that's part of that moment of it's okay to be frustrated right now with something as long as you can turn it around and be appreciative. I know for myself, I was very frustrated when I was leaving corporate America. I was burnt out, I was tired. We had gone through a layoff, a restructure, really a whole group of different kind of shifts in the working environment that we had.

11:53 And I was, I was frustrated and I was not very, very grateful. And I was going, as I was going through this, I've reached out for some advice, um, to a past boss that had been there, who had also left the company. And as I talked to her, you know, we were talking about how to leave, how to leave with grace and dignity and to feel good about things. And at the time I really wanted none of that. I really wanted to just say tough, tough with all of this. Forget it. I'm out of here. I'm putting in my resignation, let me walk out the, out the door. But she really gave me some great advice and she said, take your two weeks, take your two weeks and meet with the people who actually influenced you and taught you things while you're here and tell them thank you.

12:48 Tell people that you're leaving and let them know you'll be surprised what happens. And I thought this was quite absurd advice and I do feel lucky that I actually was able to own this timing. So I want to respect people who don't get to own this timing. But I did get to choose and I listened to her and I said, okay. So day one of my two week notice, I sent a note out to the teams that I had worked with telling them that I was there for, you know, 10 more days and I would like to meet with some of them and that I appreciated working with them and I was moving on to the next thing. Well, one, I was shocked the number of emails that I've received telling me how it, how other people felt about working with me, floored me. I got emails from all corners of the company with genuine gratitude from them of having known me.

13:51 I had people say, Oh, I'm so sorry that you're leaving the company. I had always wanted to be on your team. I heard you were a great manager. I had other people write back that they were just saddened to hear me go, that I was always a champion for great ideas. It was honestly, it was a beautiful outpouring that I will never forget and I took the time and I actually copied and pasted every one of those emails and I made myself a document that shared all of this kind of the gratitude that was coming back at me. And even to this day, if I get really, really stressed or I question if I'm good at doing something, I will take out this document and read it and it still makes me teary eyed. So it was well worth that and to learn to accept that gratitude from others.

14:43 Then the second part, that of advice that she gave me and in saying that I should go and thank the people who had influenced me, that was one of the most powerful

exercises I had ever done. So even though I was frustrated, even though I was mad at the company for kind of where they were and what they were doing, I still took that time and I went and thanked those people who had influenced me. One, it made me understand and appreciate how much time people had spent with me and how much I really had learned from them. And I know from others that it really made them feel good because how many times do we take the time to tell other people how they have influenced our lives and how they have made a positive impact. So by the time my two weeks was up, my very last day, I was feeling pretty darn good about my decision and about all of the wonderful things that I had learned in this organization and the people that had crossed my path and I had learned from, and I can remember my last day in the last few hours, I decided to walk around the floor and I'm just walking around checking to see had I missed anybody that I kind of wanted to say goodbye to.

16:08 And one of the directors, a vice president found me kind of walking around the floor and she said, what? You know, Hey Jenn, isn't this your last day? I said, yep, absolutely is my last day. And she's like, well kinda like, why are you still here? What are you doing? And I was like, you know, I decided to take a victory lap and just take one more lap around here and say goodbye to everybody. And she gave me the biggest high five and said, I like it that well. I noted today that set me up for success. So I am grateful to Lisa who gave me that great advice to stick it out, to be thankful to share my experience with others because it really has made a difference. I can now talk about my past employer with such heartfelt gratitude that I really do mean. And I don't know if I could have had that experience without taking that time.

17:04 So that's a one way to look at your career and how do you express gratitude, especially in a situation that's shifting and changing. Really do think about that. You know, if you didn't get the chance like I did to choose to take my two weeks notice and do that, you can do that in other ways. You know, take and write emails to the people that you previously worked with and tell them what a wonderful impact that they've had on your life and be genuine. Like this isn't a time to blow smoke. This is a time to really look at it and genuinely say, thank you for contributing to my career. When you do that one, it lifts your spirit. You're going to feel better about things two, more than likely they're going to come back and they're going to tell you wonderful things about you and when you're in this situation, you need a psychological boost so that gratitude goes in both directions.

17:58 It can really help boost that attitude for yourself and get you in a great spot so you can move on to that next part of your career. There's other ways to do it as well. Reach out on LinkedIn. Ask to set up a coffee. You know, again, don't, don't decide you're the victim of any of this. Decide that you really can move forward and you can own the story and the narrative about things that are stressful and maybe weren't exactly the plan that you had for things. Since we go through this, I want to also share now that we've talked about having things not work so well and then how to flip it into gratitude. There is a formula for gratitude and it's a little different, I think, than most of us envision. You know it when we look at gratitude, yes, it's, it is looking for the good things in life, but I'd like to


re-frame it a little bit as as a two part look at gratitude and I pick these two parts because it's not just about the thing that you're grateful for, it's also about your contribution that allowed this to happen.

19:11 And again, I'm thinking about your career and those moments of where things are hard, where you've gotten a bad review, where you've been fired or laid off, where you haven't gotten that bonus that you were hoping to get, right? So you want to be, you feel a little out of control at that point. At least that's the way I feel. I'll say that. And I don't like to feel out of control. And I think most of us don't. So when we look at gratitude and we want to know how to put that forward, we want to know our own contribution to it. So kind of for today, my thought process is if you, if things are going well for you or things are not going so well for you, I want you to think about today and what went well, what went well for you today and why.

20:03 And when you look at this, why, I want you to consider what you contributed to the why. So if it's as something as simple as, Oh, I'm grateful for the sweet potato pie, right? I am living in the South now. So sweet potato pie is something I am regularly grateful for. But if I look at that and I say, Oh, I'm grateful for sweet potato pie, well what about that? Why? Why am I grateful to, what did I have to contribute to it? It can be something as simple as I'm grateful that for sweet potato pie and I'm glad I chose that for dessert or I'm glad I made that for the family or I'm glad I grew sweet potatoes this summer so that I could make a beautiful sweet potato pie. So I want you to notice what's happening here. So while you're grateful for something, you're also owning that responsibility as well.

21:05 And that helps us all have a really wonderful sense of control. In the same sense, you know, if you want to look at at something bigger than sweet potato pot. And while I'm super, super grateful for sweet potato pie, maybe I'm, you know, grateful for this podcast. I'm grateful for this podcast and I'm really proud that I had the guts to start to produce a podcast. That was a really scary thing for me. And now I'm really grateful for this. I'm grateful for this as a way to reach out to my clients and to help people with their careers and nothing makes me happier every week than to put this podcast together. And I would have never imagined that. But I also know that the why is I took the first step to make it happen. So I hope you think this is a little bit of a twist on gratitude and just to kind of recap and understand that this isn't the Pollyanna approach to gratitude.

22:10 One, own the frustration own the frustrations that you have. Understand that everything is not always easy. Understand that you have a right to be mad, sad, ticked off, want to kick things, feel fearful, feel like shameful sometimes. Feel like you were maybe dealt a bad hand. All of those things. Feel those frustrations, but give yourself a time limit with it. Decide, I'm going to feel that frustration. I'm going to be okay with being mad for a certain amount of time and then I'm going to get over it. The second part of the formula, when you have those prostrations, then find genuinely the things that you can be happy for. Even if you've had a hard part of your career, there's still something new you've learned how to bad boss. Well, maybe the thing you can be grateful for,



and I know I am. I had one, one bad boss and I'm really grateful that I had that bad boss because now I can look and understand what it's like for other people to have bad bosses.

23:14 I'd honestly not had a bad boss until that one, and I was just shocked that this is the way things could go down. So now I can truly understand when I have a client that comes to me and says that she has a boss that's frustrating her. So you can even find the good in something that's truly frustrating. But again, give yourself that time to be mad. Then focus on what's what is good and what you can be grateful and then use the formula of what went well and why and own your piece of it. Own what you contributed to making things good. Well, that wraps us up on today's podcast. Again, I really want to highlight the book Gratitude Works by Robert A. Emmons, and I suggest if you love great books like I do, I am a big fan of Scribed. Don't know what Scribed is.

24:11 Scribed is an online service that's like Netflix, but for books and audio books and they're unlimited folks. I can't get enough of it. I'm absolutely addicted to this service and highly, highly recommend. In today's show notes, there is a link both to Dr. Emmons book on Gratitude Works and also a link to Scribed. It is an affiliate link. Um, and if you click that link, you get two months of Scribed for free. Yay. Two months of free books and audio books. And again, no limit and it's out there for you and I hope you enjoy it. For those of you in the United States. Happy Thanksgiving and I look forward to our next podcast.