Beyond Thank You
with Christopher Littfield

THE ART OF RECOGNITION

Handouts & Additional Resources



www.beyondthankyou.com

Hello Everyone!

It was great to meet you all. Thank you to the organizers and everyone else for all the work behind the scenes to make this event possible. I hope you left with a few insights and a few smiles. Below, you will find a PDF copy of my slides, a few handouts, and resources I thought you might enjoy.

If you have any questions about any of the materials or want to talk through a situation at work, my contact information is below. Please reach out anytime!

Again, it was great to meet you all and I look forward to staying in touch.

Best,
Chris

Contact Information
chris@beyondthankyou.com
www.beyondthankyou.com



Please feel free to connect on LinkedIn



Build Cultures

where **people feel valued**, **work feels easier**, and **change happens together.**

Check out our action-packed **keynotes** and **learning experiences** that lead to meaningful dialogue and lasting culture change.

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Free Team Assessment



Team Relationship Building Self-Assessment

Beyond Thank You

Use the questions below to reflect on how you're doing at building and maintaining relationships on your team. Without overthinking, rate your general experience. What do you notice?

How often do you laugh and play together as a team? 1 (Never) – 10 (Often)

How often do you do things to learn and grow together? 1 (Never) – 10 (Often)

How well do you feel you know your team members? 1 (Not at all) – 10 (I know them well)

If you are feeling burned out, sick, or have a personal issue, how safe do you feel to tell your colleagues? 1 (Not Safe at All) – 10 (Completely Safe)

If you make a mistake, how comfortable do you feel admitting it to your colleagues? 1 (Not Comfortable) – 10 (Completely Comfortable)

If you feel frustrated with a colleague, how comfortable do you feel asking them to speak with you? 1 (Not Comfortable) – 10 (Completely Comfortable)

If you are struggling with a task, how comfortable do you feel asking for help? 1 (Not Comfortable) – 10 (Completely Comfortable)

When conflict arises on the team, we most often... 1 (Avoid the issue) – 10 (Address it head on)

How often do you and your colleagues celebrate and express appreciation for each other? 1 (Never) – 10 (Often)

How valued do you feel by your team? 1 (Not Valued) – 10 (Fully Valued)

Add up your scores to get a total out of 100. Then, refer to the right column to interpret your results.

WHAT IS YOUR SCORE TELLING YOU?

75+: Keep it Up!

Keep laughing, learning, and growing together as a team. It seems like you have a strong culture—now make sure your team feels the same. Have each team member take the assessment and compare responses. Use the results to celebrate what's working and choose one or two areas to keep growing together.

50–74: Step it Up!

Time to inject a little more fun and reflection into your work together. Don't worry about how it might be perceived—just try something! Activities to consider:

- Pulse Checks
- Question of the Day
- Team Shout-Outs & Small Victories

As a leader, this is also a great time to schedule one-on-one meetings using the Stay Conversation questions.

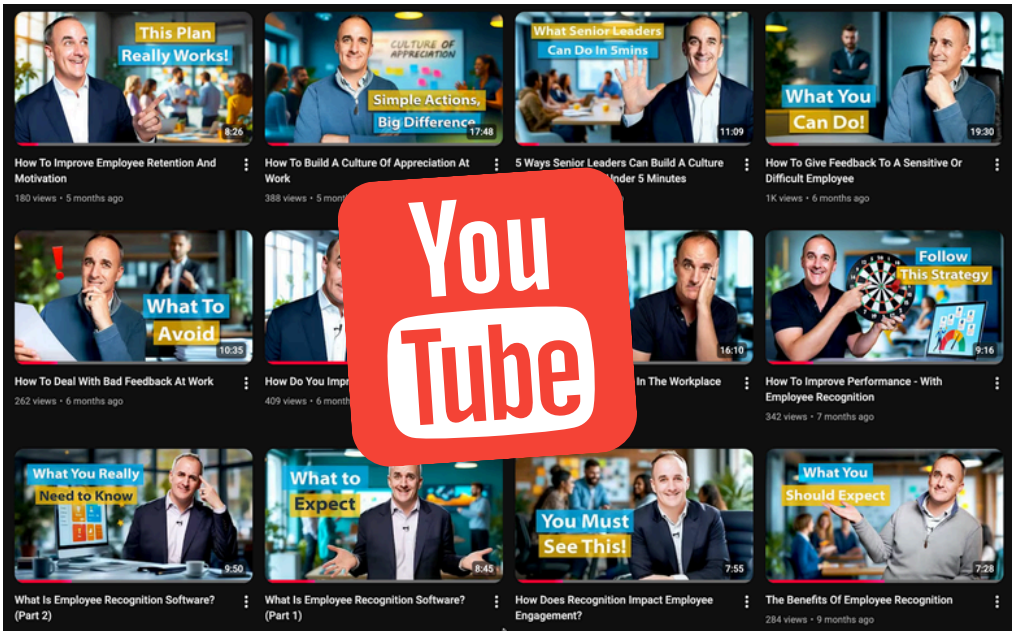
Below 50: Start it Up!

This score suggests there's work ahead. You may want additional support—and we're here to help. Doing nothing is likely what got you here. If you want to shift things, you need to start somewhere. Try this:

- Schedule a one-on-one check-in with each team member.
- Acknowledge: "I haven't done enough to build our culture—and I want to change that."
- Ask: "What's working well?"
- Ask: "What's one thing I could do to improve our team culture?"

Start small. In your next team meeting, try asking a trivia question or "question of the day" to begin building emotional safety.

Additional Learning



Recognition Phrase Bank

Beyond Thank You

Expressing our appreciation and recognizing others is one of the most powerful tools we have to build and maintain strong relationships at work. But let's be honest—sometimes it's hard to know what to say or how to say it. Use these phrases as a starting point to help you put gratitude into words and make it easier to recognize the people around you in meaningful, genuine ways.

Based on my HBR article "How to Give and Receive Compliments at Work"
Published October 12th 2019

Be Authentic

Start the Conversation

- I've been thinking about this since last week and didn't want to let it go unsaid.
- You probably didn't even realize how much that meant to me.
- This stood out to me and I want you to know why.
- I don't say this lightly, but I felt compelled to share it.
- I normally just keep moving, but this deserves a pause.
- You didn't ask for recognition, but you've earned it.
- It may seem like a small thing, but it really stayed with me.
- This moment reminded me of why I respect your leadership.
- You didn't have to do that—and that's exactly why it mattered.
- I didn't want to miss the chance to acknowledge this.

BE SPECIFIC

What exactly did you observe or experience?

- You asked a hard question that helped everyone think deeper.
- Your follow-up email summarized everything clearly and helped us all move forward.
- You stayed calm and focused when things got chaotic.
- Your slide deck made a complex idea so easy to grasp.
- You took the time to listen to everyone before offering your view.
- You noticed a detail that the rest of us completely missed.
- You brought energy to that meeting when it was starting to fall flat.
- You made our new team members feel welcome right away.
- You handled a last-minute request without showing any stress.
- You spoke up when it mattered, even though it wasn't easy.

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PROCESS

Focus on the Process, not just the Result: What did it take to do what they did?

- I know how many late nights you pulled to make this work.
- You handled competing priorities with such care and focus.
- You thought through every scenario before making a call.
- You showed real patience and empathy throughout the whole process.
- You made space for other voices and ideas, even under pressure.
- Your steady approach kept things on track when they could've fallen apart.
- You invested time in coaching others when you were already stretched.
- You made the effort to understand all sides before responding.
- You took ownership from start to finish.
- You showed up with full presence, even when things were tough.

SHARE THE IMPACT

How did their actions, attitude or behaviors affect you, the team, or the bigger picture?

- Because of what you did, I felt like I could trust the process.
- You helped build momentum when we needed it most.
- You made people feel seen and included.
- Your approach helped shift the tone of the whole meeting.
- That one decision you made created clarity for everyone.
- You gave me a new perspective I hadn't considered.
- Your support helped me get through a tough week.
- You made it easier for others to contribute their best.
- Your leadership gave me confidence to take risks.
- The team is stronger because of your influence.

CLOSING YOUR MESSAGE

How to wrap up with sincerity and clarity:

- Thank you again—I truly appreciate it.
- Just wanted you to know how much that meant to me.
- I'm really grateful, even if I don't always say it.
- It's a joy to work with you. Thank you.
- That made a real difference for me—thank you.
- I hope you know how much you're appreciated.
- Just wanted to recognize you for that—thank you.
- I'm lucky to have you as a colleague.
- Thanks for being someone I can count on.

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Reflective Recognition

You don't see 98.3% of what people do every day so ask!

Beyond Thank You

Excerpt from my HBR article "A Better Way to Recognize Your Employees" "
Published October 25th 2022

Reflective Recognition

An inquiry-based approach where an individual or group are invited to reflect and share what they are proud of and why. In my work, I found that most people don't want to be recognized for the results, but often for the effort and process that it took to produce them. The challenge, which has been amplified with remote work, is that others often don't understand what it takes to make something happen unless we ask. We don't see the long hours, managing remote schooling, and creative and problem solving that takes place behind the scenes.

In your next in-person or virtual meeting, I encourage you to give Reflective Recognition a try, using the below:

Start with an Invitation to Share

"We haven't spoken in a while. What have you been working on? What are you proud of?
"I have been struggling with this client for a month, but just finally figured out X ..."

Use Positive Probing to draw their attention to their own effort and progress

"How were you able to do what you did? What did it take to make it happen?"
"I was trying everything, with no luck, then I realized...."

Reflect Back and Recognize them for what they share

"I love how you were able to be so bold, and quickly try something new. It clearly paid off! Thank you for all the hours and thought you put into making this happen. Would you be willing to share this with the team next week? There is much for everyone to learn from this."

Give it a try in your next one to one or even try it with a family member, it may just make someone's day!

Note: People are not used to talking about what they are proud of, but I have found that if you ask a few times, and they realize you really want to hear, after a minute they start to open up. If you do this process every few meetings, they will come prepared to share.

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Appreciation Rituals

Send positive signals by recognizing and celebrating wins with others. Here are four things to try

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Small Victories

Help your people step away from their never-ending to-do list and get present to what they are accomplishing each week with a "Small Victories or Weekly Wins" practice. Every Thursday, make a quick post to your team chat or Facebook group for everyone to share at least one "Small Victory." Maybe you called a client you have been avoiding, finished a report, onboarded a new team member, submitted your taxes, or went for a run! It can be work or personal, but the point is to create a space where people get present and feel safe to share their progress!

Shout Outs

Carve out time in any team or company meeting for people to express appreciation for one another. Open it up by saying. Who wants to give a shout-out to someone on their team or another who has helped them out or done great work?"People may be too shy to speak the first time, but after a few seconds, someone will jump in—and then another and another. If you're meeting remotely, invite people to share in the chat. If you make this a standard part of your meetings, people will come ready to share.

3W Weekly Debrief

Wrap up your week with a little celebration and connection using the 3W Weekly Debrief. Have everyone go around and share one Win, one Wall, and one Plan for the weekend.

Win – Small Win
Wall – Challenge You're Facing
Weekend – Plans for the Weekend

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Team Gratitude Practice

Initiate a team gratitude practice by starting a “What’s Good Wednesday “or “Thankful Thursday.” Each week, post a question in Workplace and invite your teammates to reflect. Answer the question yourself first to help encourage others to do the same. Below are some questions to help get you started:

Gratitude Prompts

- Who are the people I am grateful for in my life right now and why?
- What has happened in the last week that I am grateful for?
- What small pleasure do I experience each day, but do so without thinking?
- What experiences have I had recently that I appreciate?
- What have I gotten to learn recently that has helped me grow?
- What opportunities do I currently have that I am grateful for?
- What physical abilities do I have but take for granted?
- What material possessions am I grateful for having and why?
- What did I see today or over the last month that was beautiful?
- Who at work am I happy to see each day and why?
- Who is someone on my team I am grateful I get to work with and why?
- Who is someone on another team I am grateful I get to work with and why?
- Who is a person that I don’t speak to often, but, if I lost them tomorrow, it would be devastating? (Take this as a cue to reach out today!)
- What am I better at today than I was a year ago?
- Who is a person that challenges me to be better?
- What opportunities do other people in my life have that I am grateful for?

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Appreciation Through Understanding Exchange

Beyond Thank You

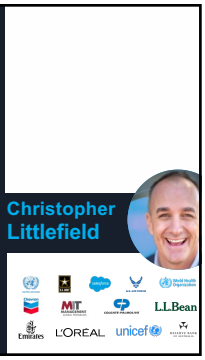
One of the most powerful ways to help people feel valued and appreciated is to make sure they feel truly understood—for who they are, what they contribute, and what it takes to do their job each day.
Take a few minutes to reflect on the questions below, then meet with one or two colleagues to share and discuss your answers. These conversations can happen in a team meeting, over coffee, or in a quick one-on-one.

The more we understand each other, the easier it is to build trust, avoid misunderstandings, and create workplaces where everyone can thrive.

- What do you enjoy most about your work?
- What does it take to do your job that nobody sees?
- The people you work best with understand what about you?
- What matters most to you right now - at work and at home?
- What is one thing you want to get better at in the year ahead?
- Anything else you want to share?

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The Art of Recognition



1

Agenda

- Rethinking Appreciation & Recognition
- Why It Is Key to Our Culture
- How We Build a Culture of Appreciation & Maintain It
- Tips & Tools

2

The Heart of the Matter

People need to know we appreciate and value who they are, what they contribute, and what it takes to do their job each day.

3

Connection Before Content

4

Addressing The Terminology Problem

Rewards and Awards are not Recognition, but a Delivery Tools for Recognition

Appreciate the Person

Acknowledge the Circumstances

Recognize the Effort/Progress

Reward the Results

Award the Stand Out Results

Goal
Our People Feel Valued

Christopher Littlefield

5

Feeling Valued

I feel like my input matters, I am growing, and what I do and who I am makes a difference

VS.

Feeling Compensated

I feel the pay, benefits, perks make my investment of time and energy worth while

McKinsey & Company

Up to **55 percent of employee engagement** is driven by **nonfinancial recognition**—which serves as the **biggest driver of employee experience.**

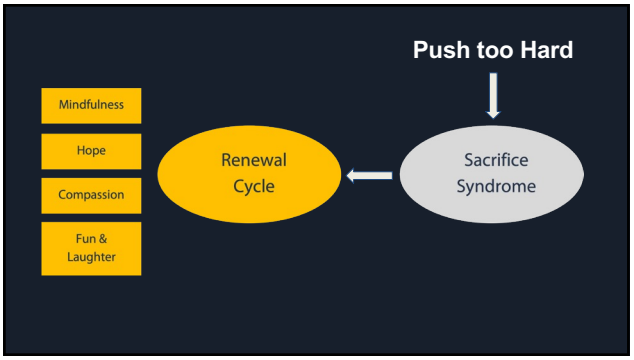
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How Appreciation & Recognition Empower Our Personal Engagement and Resilience

7



8



9

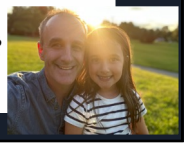


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The Fantastic 5 Reflection!

1. What is one thing I accomplished?
2. Who is one person I helped or supported?
3. What is one memorable moment?
4. What is one way I grew?
5. What is one thing I am proud of?

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1,882,131 Employees - 82k Work Units - 73 Countries

- 22% higher profitability
- 41% lower absenteeism
- 20% higher productivity
- 10% higher customer ratings
- 59% lower turnover (in low-turnover organizations)
- 24% lower turnover (in high-turnover organizations)

1. Do you know what is expected of you at work?
2. Do you have the materials and equipment to do your work right?
3. At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?
4. In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5. Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages your development?
7. At work, do your opinions seem to count?
8. Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?
9. Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?
10. Do you have a best friend at work?
11. In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?
12. In the last year, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?

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Managers Account for

70%

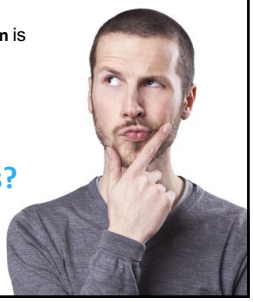
Variance in Employee Engagement

13

Question:

If the numbers tell us that **recognition** is **fundamental** to the **engagement** and **retention** of **top talent** and the **profitability** of our organizations…

Why Don't Managers Recognize Employees?



14

It takes less than a second to say

Thank You,

and less than a minute to make it meaningful!

15

What do Employees Want for Day to Day Efforts?

Deloitte Study: 16,000 Employees from 4000 companies 100+ Countries

According to the study:

54% Verbal Thank You
31% Written Thank You
7% Celebration
7% Gift

16

Associations:

88% of people associate being acknowledged with being valued.

17

Associations:

Nearly **70%** of people associated embarrassment and discomfort with the process.

18

Hidden Associations to Recognition

Proud

What did I do wrong?

Relieved

Awkward

Angry

Kiss @%#*!

More responsibility!

Are they hitting on me!

Are you kidding me!



Respected

People think I don't deserve it.

About time

Favoritism

Jerk

Happy

Suspicious

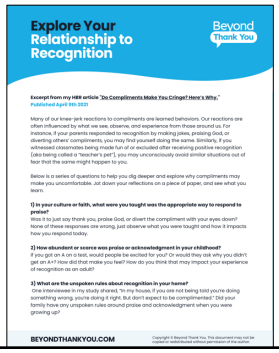
What do they want from me?

What if I can't produce the same result in the future!

19

Reflect:

How do your background and beliefs shape your reaction to being recognized?



20

Ineffective Practices

Inauthentic Recognition & Manipulation Break Down Trust!



Butter Them Up Technique:
Compliment
followed by Request



Sandwich Feedback Model:
Compliment-Feedback-Compliment
"You're great, BUT…



Guilt Praise Technique:
I was a jerk, and instead of apologizing, I overcompensated w/ gifts & praise!

21

Diverting Acknowledgment

Our Unconscious Self-Protection Often Sabotages Connection

22

Accepting Compliments
Key Distinctions:

- Recognition is a gift. When we avoid, redirect, or divert, it is like someone offering you a gift and you throwing it back in their face.
- Recognition is often more about the giver than the receiver. When someone is complimenting you, they are sharing how your actions or behaviors impacted them.

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Methods



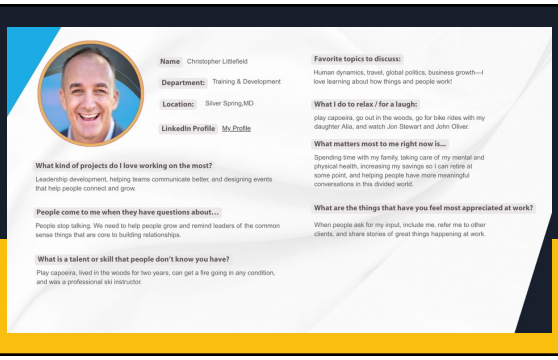
Christopher Littlefield

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Appreciate the Person
Every Day

- **Ask Questions** *("The Second Question")*
- **Intentional Remembering**
- **Practice Impact Awareness**
- **Notice Out Loud**

25



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Learning Mission



Appreciation Through Understanding Exchange

Beyond Thank You

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- What do you enjoy most about your work?
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Two Forms of Recognition





Giver shares how the individual or group's actions, behaviors, or attitudes impact them.

An inquiry based approach where an individual or group are invited to "Positively Probe," reflect and share what they are proud of and why.

28

What We Recognize Gets Repeated

92%

When recognized for a specific action, they're more likely to take that action again in the future.

Achievers
2020 Engagement and Retention Report

29

Recognize the Effort/Progress

Show people you see and value their daily creativity, contributions, and drive

Observation + Example + Impact + Thank you

Be Specific:
What did I experience or observe?

Focus on the Process, not just the Result:
What did it take to do what they did?

Share the Impact:
How did they impact me/the team?

Shine light on people doing something positive

30

What We Focus On Is What We See

Target Behaviors

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Know what we are looking for

What are the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of your best people?

What do they do specifically?	Why do you appreciate it?	How does it impact you/team/org?
What	Why	Impact

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- Thanks for being someone I can count on.

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	Alia	Alba	Alan
What You Appreciate	I really appreciate that you stayed after the meeting to help refine the presentation before it went to the client.	appreciate how you stepped in to support your colleague when they were juggling several deadlines this week.	I appreciate that you caught the error in the report before it was sent out.
Why You Appreciate It	You paid attention to the details and were willing to put in the extra effort to make sure our work reflected the quality we aim for.	You noticed someone needed help and offered support without being asked.	You took the time to double-check the details and made sure the information was accurate.
The Impact	Your input strengthened the message and helped the team feel confident going into the client conversation.	That helped the project stay on track and helps build the kind of culture where people look out for each other.	Because of that attention to detail, we avoided confusion and maintained credibility with the client.
	Thank you	Thank You	Thank you

"The Message Creates the Meaning"

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	Great	Good	OK
COMMUNICATION	Keeps everyone informed early, ensures understanding, and adapts tone for each audience (passengers, peers, supervisors).	Communicates clearly and politely during shifts or handovers.	Shares basic updates only when required.
ADAPTABILITY	Models positivity during disruptions, helps others re-focus, and finds quick solutions without complaint.	Adjusts calmly to schedule changes and stays productive.	Handles changes but shows visible frustration.
TEAMWORK	Proactively looks for ways to support teammates, keeps energy up, and recognizes others' efforts.	Offers help when asked or steps in during busy moments.	Completes own tasks but doesn't engage others.
ACCOUNTABILITY	Takes ownership from the start—anticipates needs, updates proactively, and follows through without reminders. Models reliability that others can depend on.	Delivers after being asked once and communicates when something might delay progress.	Delivers, but only after being reminded multiple times.

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Praise
What You Want More Of

Redirect
What you don't want

35



"It is less important what we say to others than what we empower them to say to us!"

-Dr. Mark Goulston

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Reflective Recognition (Inquiry Based)

You don't see 98% of what people do every day, so ask!

Invitation to Share:
"We haven't spoken in a while. What have you been working on? What are you proud of?"

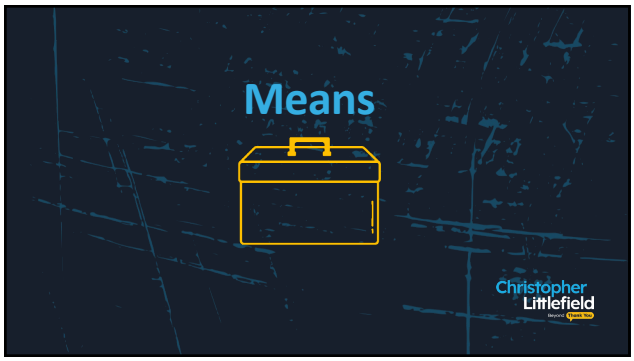
Positive Probing:
"How were you able to do what you did? What did it take to make it happen?"

Reflect & Recognize:
"I love how you... Thank You!"

Why Reflective Recognition?

- People get recognized for what matters to them.
- No preparation needed.
- You learn about each other.
- It costs nothing!
- It helps people temporarily get present to their own progress and accomplishments.

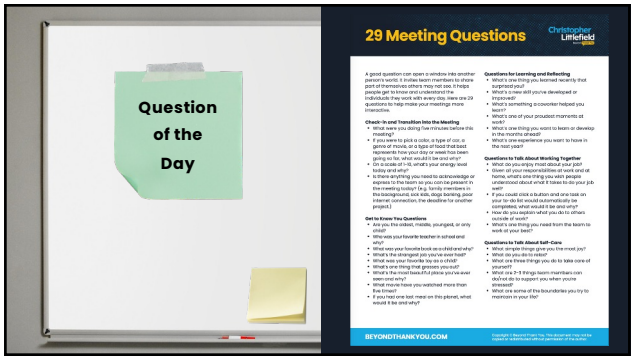
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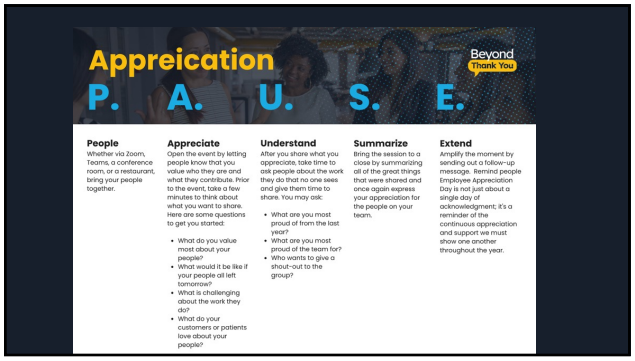
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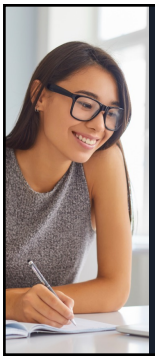
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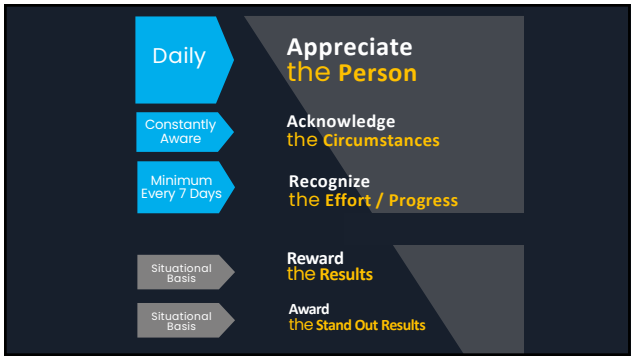
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Appreciation Prompts

- Today, thank a person in IT, HR, Maintenance, or Accounting.
- Today, thank someone on your team who flies under the radar, but always gets the job done.
- Today, thank someone who is going through some tough times (divorce, health/financial issues, problems with their parents/kids) and still shows up each day.
- Today, thank someone who has taken on a new role or task. recently and really stepped up to the occasion.
- Today, thank someone who always finds a way to show up on time.
- Today, thank someone who took feedback to heart and really took on improving their performance.
- Today, thank someone who has been covering multiple roles/functions as people are out or positions are empty.
- Today, thank someone who brings fun and laughter to your day.

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Today
16- Minutes

3-Minutes: Write a hand-written thank you note
3-Minutes: Schedule a one-on-one with the team member
3-Minutes: Try Reflective Recognition
3-Minute: In your calendar, block out 20 minutes next week to take three actions to make sure your people feel valued. Possible Label: "Connection Time"

"I am sorry, I realized today it has been way too long since I took the time to check in with you. Would you have time to meet on _____? I would love to just hear how things are going and get your input on a few things."

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General Follow Up
Start with Yourself

- Keep examining your relationship to recognition.
- Remember to stop diverting and start accepting compliments and help others do the same. Just say "thank you!"
- Phase the ineffective practices (Buttering up, Sandwiching, etc.) out of daily use. Work to create a culture of appreciation with your coworkers.
- Remember - if you are not building relationships they are breaking down! Do one thing every day to let people know you value them.

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Thank You

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