

# Growing Community Gratitude Workshop

Banff Public Library  
August 25, 2022

Grassroots Gratitude Mission:

To foster gratitude as the secret strength of community  
leadership

*BHAG: Grassroots Gratitude is a community leadership project that will influence an upsurge in positivity and confidence across Canada. One out of every five people will invest in their personal resiliency and leadership skills by paying attention, actively reflecting and writing about their lives, spending time in nature and finding more reasons to be grateful...*

Lorraine  
Widmer-Carson  
GRASSROOTS GRATITUDE



LORRAINE WIDMER-CARSON

# An ECOLOGY of GRATITUDE

WRITING YOUR WAY  
TO WHAT MATTERS



## Agenda... *Community Gratitude*

- ABC's – Accept Differences. Be Kind. Count your blessings
- AEoG = An Ecology of Gratitude: *Writing your way to what matters*
- Stand-up – Six breaths. Bounce and stretch. Be yourself.
- The back of your hand... write about it
- Introductions
- Why write in a journal?
- Barriers to writing
- Why gratitude?
- Habits and 21:90 Rule
- Thoughts. Words. Actions.
- Community Leadership. Adversity. Resilience.
- Counterfactuals. Contradictions.

# Ecology of Gratitude



Ecology: Defined as the  
study of relationships  
and flow of energy



Ecology of Thoughts:  
Beliefs, Emotions,  
Attitudes, Physiology



Ecology of Memory:  
Personal Experiences,  
Culture, Bias, Pain points

GRASSROOTS GRATITUDE

# Writing... *like the back of my hand*

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- Describe the back of your hand. 1 minute
- Gratitude for things your hands love to do, touch. Quick list. 1 minute
- Right here, right now – how are you feeling? 1 minute
- What do you need to do next? Quick list. 1 minute



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## Why a writing habit? Read AEoG p. 18, 19

- Mental flossing. Processing. Meditative. Reflective.
- To pay attention. Focus on small things.
- To centre yourself: 'Right here, right now.'
- To consider options: Do. Delay. Defer. Delete.
- To prioritize: Urgent? Less important? Timeline: Immediate. Near term. Long term.
- To plan needs and resources: Financial, emotional, social, physical
- To dream about BHAG's, vision, life purpose
- To be accountable to self and others
- To reconstruct day, track time, activitiesplace, moods, energy
- To build lists and monitor changes, grow in self-awareness and self-mastery

# Barriers to writing... why I can't write

- Fear of writing something that is hurtful
- Fear of words being read by others
- Messy handwriting
- Don't have anything to say
- Afraid of bumping up against uncomfortable memories. Big blocks.
- No time.
- No commitment.



# Writing... *why bother?*

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“The writerly life helps me to commit...” Gratitude  
Trifecta participant, August 2022

- Why do you want to write in a journal?
- What do you want to commit to? Identity connection?
- Feeling resistant? Write about your barriers.
- Then do a 180 and write “And, the reasons I want to write.”

Group Conversation:

- Reasons for keeping a journal
- Barriers to a daily commitment

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# Why Gratitude?

“Gratitude is a social contagion that needs no vaccination” Lorraine Widmer-Carson

- Stress reliever – numerous heart and health benefits
- A humanizing quality, grounds you in your ‘true self’
- Gratitude impacts your ecology – emotional, relational, spiritual, financial
- Relational, connects you to others – “the rhizome of humanity” Martin Seligman
- A pro-social motivator - energizer
- Being a little bit nicer to yourself and others builds your network and broadens your connections
- Knowing what you are grateful for, the things that are important to you, inspires BHAG’s, life purpose
- A character strength. Community leadership strength
- It’s relational, builds resilience. Helps you cope, get grounded and recalibrate. Helps reset priorities.



# New habits... can you make it easy? 14, 21, 90 or 111days...

“The palest ink is better than the best memory.”  
Chinese proverb

- Science of Gratitude – after 14 days of consistently keeping a gratitude list, you should notice some changes. What will you track? Sleep? Stress levels? Relationships? Physical Pain?
- The 21 – 90 Rule: Commit to a personal or professional goal for 21 straight days. After three weeks, the pursuit of that goal should have become a habit. Once you have established that habit, continue for another 90 days = 111 days of trying. Reset. Recalibrate.
- Make it easy. Decide for yourself – what’s easy? Write about it. Commit. Make time.



“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”  
Viktor Frankl

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“Watch your thoughts, for they become your words...” Lao Tzu. Read AEoG pp 102, 103

- Hold the BEAT
- BEAT = Belief. Emotion. Attitude. Thought.
- Negativity biases are protective.
- Thoughts can be coached
- Thoughts are not facts
- Emotions flush and pass
- Gratitude levels and normalizes emotions.
- Gratitude settles the mind.
- Internal Family Systems Theory – Richard C. Schwartz, Author of No Bad Parts



Counterfactuals. Ironies. Counter-intuitives.  
“Do I contradict myself? Very well...” Walt Whitman

“Silent gratitude isn’t much use to anyone” Gertrude Stein

- Can’t be grateful and resentful at the same time
- Can’t be simultaneously self-centred, feel isolated and feel grateful
- Gratitude is cultivated in private, works to maximum advantage when expressed publicly
- Gratitude serves us best not when things are going well, but in times of adversity
- Gratitude is like concrete. Once leveled, it helps steady our state of mind.
- It’s highly relational and our peers affect our state of mind
- Positive emotions serve us best, not when life is easy, but when things are wobbling. Positivity broadens our horizons and helps us recalibrate.
- Becoming more self-accepting, self-aware, makes us more compassionate, understanding others. See ourselves in others.
- Notes to self: where true self is: Calm. Clear. Compassionate. Confident. Connected. Courageous. Creative. Curious. (Richard Schwartz, Internal Family Systems Theory)
- How to cope? Write your way through. Read about Emodiversity AEoG Day 10



Fostering Gratitude as the secret strength of community leadership.

“Join me in imagining... AEoG pp 132 – 133

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Fact: We are hard wired for the negatives. Current culture is full of cynical, skeptical, toxic, competitive, self-centred behaviours.

How to foster gratitude?

- Start practicing. Buy a book and read it! Give a book to a friend. Make it social.
- Community of communities – we influence others. Try positivity. Micro-communities. Teams. Family.
- See yourself as in a leadership role
- Pay attention to your thoughts. Disconnect. Pause.
- Spend time in nature, savouring with wonder, awe.
- Write in detail. Names. Delight in the process.
- List your gratitudes in a journal. Remember to remember.
- Make gratitude public – celebrate. Say thank-you. Be authentic.
- Share grateful stories. Tell others. Write emails. Take it to work.

Vision:

Resilient, kind, creative and confident community leaders serve with grace and gratitude

Mission:

To foster gratitude as the secret strength of community leadership

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Want to grow more Community Gratitude and be part of this Grateful Leadership movement?

- Get writing – in your own way!
- Sign up for Grateful Updates  
[www.grassrootsgratitude.ca](http://www.grassrootsgratitude.ca)
- Insta: lorraine\_widmer\_carson
- Linked In, Facebook Lorraine Widmer-Carson
- Write a review of AEoG on Amazon
- And here's me – saying "Thank you"

**Lorraine Widmer-Carson**  
**Author, Educator**

**403 - 760 - 1802**  
**Banff, AB**  
**Treaty 7 Lands**

**grassrootsgratitude.ca**  
**lorraine@grassrootsgratitude.ca**

