

Study shows keeping gratitude journal reduces gossip, incivility in workplace

September 22 2020



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Researchers suggest employees should take a cue from Jimmy Fallon's Thank You Notes segment on The Tonight Show to improve workplace behavior. A recent University of Central Florida study suggests employees who keep a gratitude journal exhibit less rude behavior and mistreatment of others in the workplace.

"Gratitude interventions are exercises designed to increase your focus on the positive things in your life. One intervention involves writing down a list of things you are thankful for each day," says management Professor Shannon Taylor, who teamed up with fellow management Professor Maureen Ambrose and doctoral student Lauren Locklear for the study. "That simple action can change your outlook, your approach to work, and the way your co-workers see you."

Workplace mistreatment is widespread and can cost organizations millions of dollars each year. Bullying, gossip, and exclusion or ostracism have been shown to negatively impact physical health, job performance and job satisfaction. Mistreatment also hurts the bottom line, as it creates costs from productivity loss, employee turnover, and litigation.

"While organizations spend quite a bit of time and money to improve employee behavior, there are not a lot of known tools available to actually make the needed changes," Locklear said. "We found the [gratitude](#) journal is a simple, inexpensive intervention that can have a significant impact on changing employee behavior for the better."

For two weeks, study participants spent a few minutes a day jotting down the things, people and events they were grateful for—and as a result, their coworkers reported that they engaged in fewer rude, gossiping, and ostracizing behaviors.

"Gratitude exercises are becoming increasingly popular products to improve [employee](#) attitudes and well-being, and our study shows managers can also use them to foster more respectful [behavior](#) in their teams," Taylor says.

The study was recently published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Taylor, who joined UCF in 2012, has a doctorate in [organizational](#)

[behavior](#) from Louisiana State University and a bachelor's degree in finance from Bradley University. His areas of research include leadership and workplace mistreatment. Ambrose is the Gordon J. Barnett Professor of Business Ethics at UCF College of Business. Her research interests include organizational fairness, ethics and workplace deviance. Locklear studies [workplace](#) deviance and [mistreatment](#), as well as interventions in gratitude and mindfulness, and expects to graduate in the spring.

Provided by University of Central Florida

Citation: Study shows keeping gratitude journal reduces gossip, incivility in workplace (2020, September 22) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-09-gratitude-journal-gossip-incivility-workplace.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.