

---

# DEVELOPING GOOD BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT HABITS BY PRACTICING GRATITUDE

One of the most difficult aspects of business development coaching is building good habits in others. The challenges are many. In addition to the fact that a habit is uniquely individual and personal, the coach must overcome daily distractions their charge's face and sometimes a negative mindset regarding business development. Even the most simple and worthwhile habit- one for which motivation to adapt is already high for the person- can be a habit difficult to enforce on others. So, business development coaches must find ways to lower the obstacles to change and increase their motivation.

One way to do this is by practicing gratitude as part of the business development coaching process. Practicing gratitude has been shown to have numerous benefits. According to researchers at Harvard Medical School, "gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships,"

A psychologist from the University of Birmingham noted in 2013 that the "list of potential benefits is almost endless: fewer intellectual biases, more effective learning strategies, more helpfulness towards others, raised self-confidence, better work attitude, strengthened resiliency, less physical pain, improved health, and longevity."

An attitude of gratitude is career changing.

One of the more difficult habits to instill, but easily one of the most critical habits to develop, is the habit of reaching out to others. This process requires the lawyer to identify prospects, research the target, develop an outreach strategy, make the call and manage the conversation. To the introverted among us, this can be difficult.

A proven way to reap the benefits of gratitude therapy is through journaling. In clinical settings, patients are asked to write down three things that happened that day for which the patient is grateful. The significance of the event is not important. It is only important that the patient spends the time thinking through their day to identify specific events, activities, or interactions for which they feel some degree of gratitude. Finding three points of gratitude each day can quickly build momentum for a process and with it the habits of the process. Plus, after consistently doing this exercise for 30 days, patients report all the various and significant benefits of an attitude of gratitude.

Developing new business development habits also benefit from practicing gratitude. Forcing oneself to find meaningful developments in the process changes the mind's perspective on the process. Lawyers are trained and educated to find the problems and loop holes in situations and that mindset is rarely constrained to their legal work. The approach to new business processes is often to litigate the efficacy of the process using a Socratic inquiry to help them more fully understand the issue or process. This can create an adversarial, pessimistic mindset for the lawyer, especially in situations in which their comfort level was low to begin with.

For those struggling to develop good business development habits, gratitude can be an important tool to address the mental and emotional obstacles some lawyers face. To reap the technique's effectiveness, however, it must be practiced consistently as part of business development skills development process. By infusing positives into a process where negatives are typically catalogued, the mind begins to rewire itself and changes the mindset allowing better conditions for habits to develop.

Appreciation for an activity can be simple, discrete and insignificant, depending upon the lawyer's experience. They need only be recognition that is positive. The point is that actively thinking through each specific step of the process to identify the specific aspects for which the lawyer can be grateful, builds a positive and optimistic perspective of that activity and contributes to establishing it as a habit.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



*Eric Dewey, MBA is Principal of Group Dewey Consulting, a consulting group serving law firms and lawyers in marketing and business development training and coaching, lateral recruiting support, opportunities research, strategy, and practice management. Dewey has over 25 years of marketing and business development experience in professional services including as the chief marketing officer of four large law firms. He holds an MBA and two marketing certifications. He is co-author with ALM Legal intelligence of the seminal study, Surmounting the Lateral Hiring Challenge and writes the blog, Lawyer Up!*

*Eric can be reached at [eric@groupdewey.com](mailto:eric@groupdewey.com) or by calling his cell at 502.693.4731.*