



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

November 19, 2024

2024-2025 Board Members

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Past Pres Edwin Peacock

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Tish Atkins Charles

Dena Diorio

Stuart Hair

Jesse Hite

Virginia Owen

Membership John Cantrell

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Luther Moore



Gratitude in Action: A Thanksgiving Reflection

by **Elly Clary**

For contentment, health, business success, and becoming more aware, three Rotarians voiced their thanks. It was a memorable holiday program.

Tony Marciano recruited **David Anderson**, **Keith Nowokunski**, and **John Cantrell** to journal daily for 21 days about what they are thankful for. They also were to record positive experiences, perform random acts of kindness, exercise, and meditate or pray.

It's part of a program by Shawn Achor, author and corporate speaker, to help people achieve happiness that leads to success, rather than the other way around. In a video, Achor explained it this way:

"If you're positive in the present, you have the 'happiness advantage.' When your brain is positive, it performs significantly better than it does under negative stress. You can train your brain to become more positive."

Marciano is the long-time leader of Charlotte Rescue Mission, retired as president emeritus. He's practiced the Achor precepts since 2019.

Anderson, Nowokunski, and Cantrell voiced thanks for family, including wives, children, and grandchildren. Further, each is glad he found Rotary.

Anderson acknowledged the 21-day discipline made him realize "how truly fortunate I am to be living the life I'm living." He appreciates his good

health and contentment with his lot in life as well as those who helped him achieve it.

“I’m thankful for those acquaintances who gave me a leg up even though they did not know me very well,” he said.

Family was high on Nowokunski’s list as was his health and his dog who’s “a great listener, always happy, always optimistic and easy to please.” And for being able “to start a business out of nowhere and succeed,” he feels fortunate.

During his journaling, Nowokunski said, “I started telling people how grateful I am for the interactions I have with them.”

Journaling isn’t new to Cantrell, who said he’s done something similar for 15 years. He’s developed a challenge to think about others twice as much as himself. It’s helped him feel secure in facing mortality.

After speaking on the phone with a friend’s wife suffering from ALS, Cantrell felt guilty about bickering with his mother. He did something about it. “I picked up the phone and said, ‘Mom, I love you.’”

“I’m a better listener, I’m more humble...more supportive and more aware,” Cantrell said. He thanked Marciano for the opportunity to share his experiences.

“Tomorrow morning, if you wake up, you’ve got one thing to be thankful for,” Marciano summarized. “If you can stand up, you’ve got two things. If you can walk to the toilet, you’ve got three. You’ve only been awake for two minutes.”

If your breakfast was good, you have a positive journal entry, he continued. Hold a door open for somebody and you’ve got a random act of kindness.

After five years with Achor’s precepts, Marciano said, he can see more options, he’s reduced his obsessive-compulsive behavior and learned to be friendly with strangers. He commended the program to everyone.

Shawn Achor’s program, TEDxBloomington “The Happiness Advantage: Linking Positive Brains to Performance”, can be found here: https://youtu.be/GXy_kBVq1M?si=uYf-vmik3BKCsBtR

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

With slides: <https://vimeo.com/1033852802>

Without slides: <https://vimeo.com/1033853079>

The presenter’s introduction begins at approximately 15 minutes and 25 seconds.