

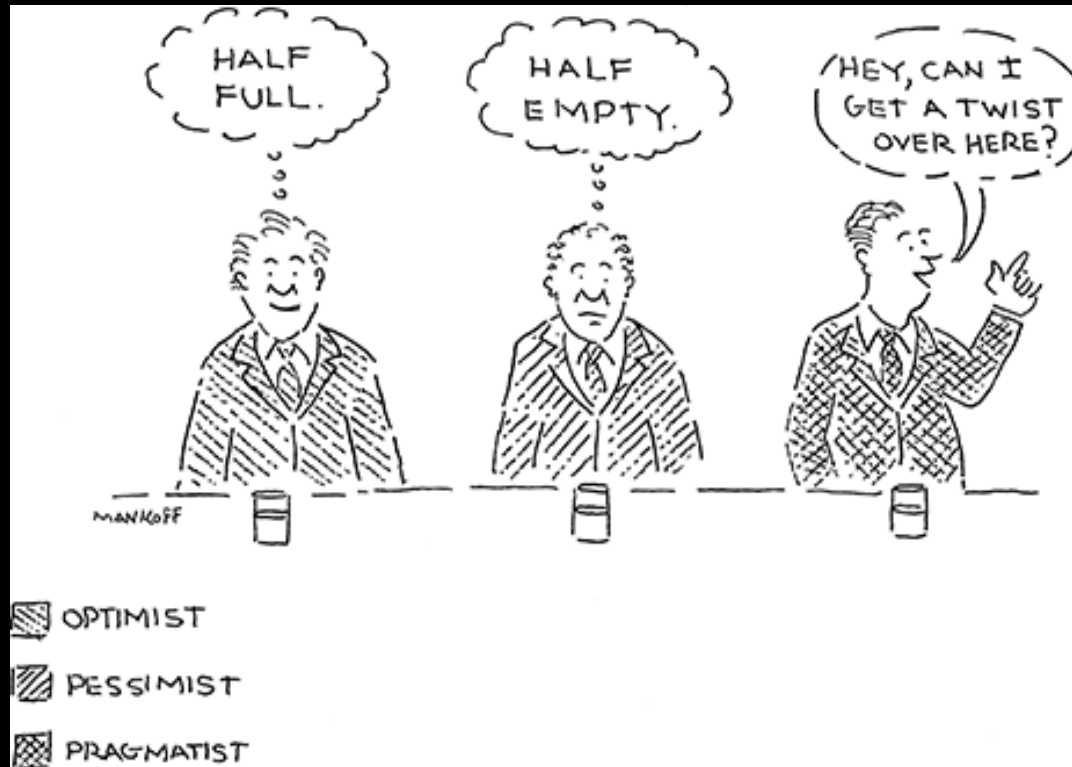


Greater
Good

Science
Center

<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

Positive Thinking for Cranky & Pessimists



On the Job

What makes people cranky at work?

STRESS

Here are five tips to help.

Tip #1: Get Up, Stand Up



Volunteering: Better than Drugs

- People in better mental and physical health more likely to volunteer *and...*
- Volunteer work improves mental and physical health
- Doing good deeds gives even the crankiest crank a shot of dopamine...
- Scientists call this the “helper’s high.”

“When we give back, it shifts the focus outside ourselves. It creates a sense of satisfaction that increases endorphins and therefore, a sense of well-being... Doing things for other people, thinking about other people, is like giving your brain a break from despair.”

– Jerilyn Ross, Anxiety Disorders
Association of America

Break into Groups

- Describe a volunteer or activist effort you were involved with. How did it make you feel?
- Describe a specific public issue you'd like to address.
- What small, concrete step can you take to make that happen? Strategize with others in your group.

Tip #2: Hug Someone You Hate



Why?

Because cultivating
positive relationships
with annoying people
reduces *your* stress!

Three Modest Suggestions

- Figure out what they need and give it to them (or compensate them if you can't)
- Try to forgive people who annoy you
- Lovingkindness (or “metta”) meditation

Metta-tation: Try Not to Laugh

- Say it with me: “May I be healthy and strong. May I be happy. May I be healthy.”
- To yourself, say the name of a person you love or just like a lot. Point the metta in the direction of that person.
- To yourself, say the name of someone you neither love nor hate. Give ‘em the metta.
- Now, visualize someone you hate. Open up a can of metta on their butt.
- Finally, shower the whole universe with metta-love.
- Remember: We are in Berkeley.

Your Brain on Metta

- Higher levels of left-prefrontal activity (joy)
- Stronger activity in right insula (empathy)
- Increased activity in regions of brain involved in planned movement (readiness to help)

Tip # 3: Count your breaths



What is mindfulness?

- Paying attention to what's happening...
- While it's happening...
- On purpose...
- Without judgment.

Let's try one minute of breathing in and out

Wasn't that absurd?

- It takes practice
- I urge you to attend the “Introduction to Mindfulness” workshop on Nov. 9
- You might also consider reading a book by Jon Kabat-Zinn called *Full Catastrophe Living*

Tip #4: Hug yourself (but don't, um, get carried away)



What the heck is “self-compassion”?

- It’s the practice of quieting the inner critic, replacing it with a voice of support, understanding, and care for oneself
- It’s not the same as self-esteem, self-pity, or self-indulgence—in fact, it’s often the opposite
- Research shows self-compassion makes us more compassionate toward others

Try this

- Talk to yourself as you would a best friend
- Put your hand on your heart, hug yourself
—it's OK to giggle
- Try Kristin Neff's mantra: This is a moment of suffering; suffering is part of life; may I be kind to myself in this moment; may I give myself the compassion I need

Tip #5: Say “thank you” early & often



What is “thank you”?

- An affirmation: there are good things in the world
- An affirmation of relationships
- A way of expressing power, which means...
- The only person less likely than your spouse to say “thank you” is your boss.

Benefits of Gratitude

- **Stronger immune systems and lower blood pressure**
- **Higher levels of positive emotions**
- **More joy, optimism, and happiness**
- **Acting with more generosity and compassion**
- **People like you more. Seriously.**

Introducing Thnx4.org

An online,
shareable gratitude
journal—and a
scientific tool for
understanding
gratitude



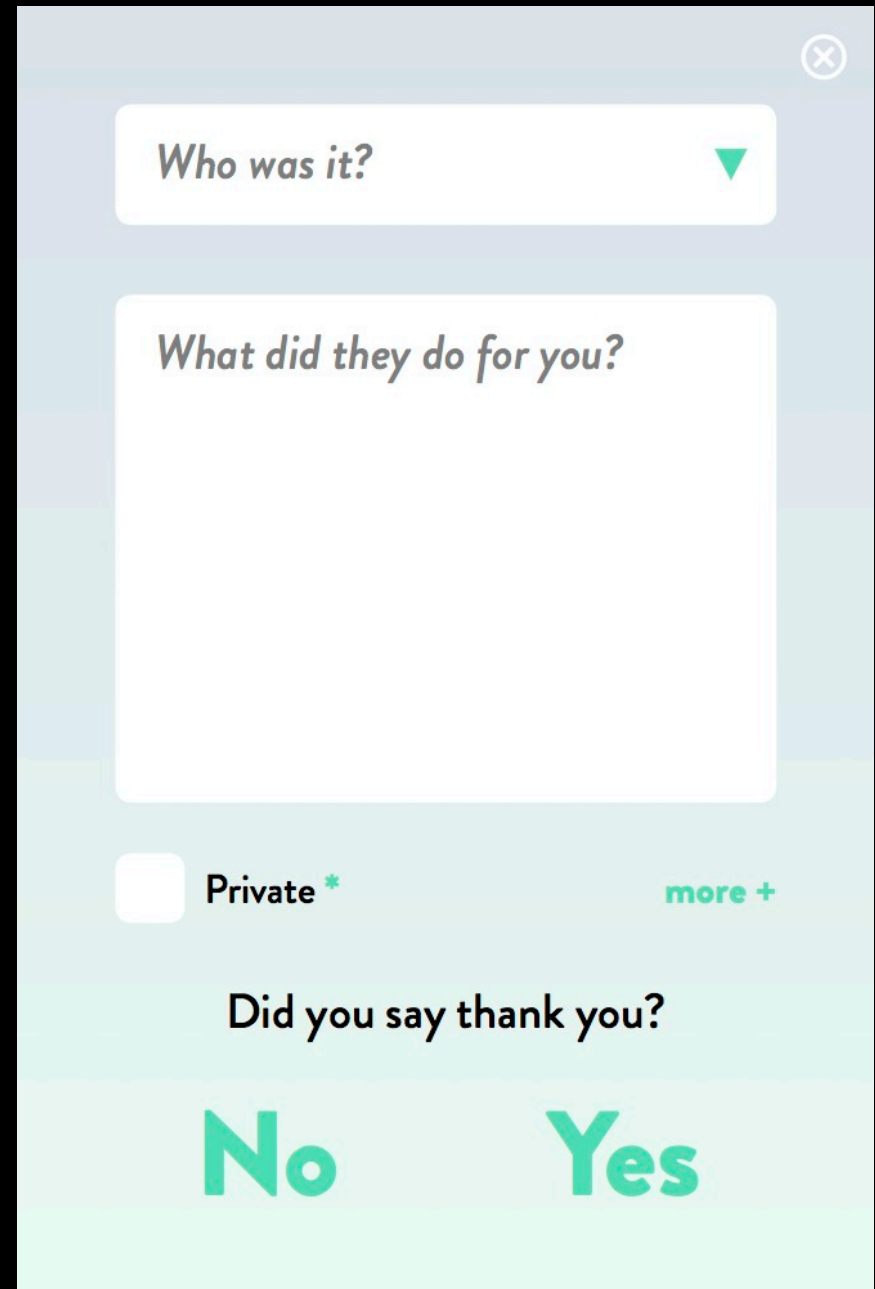
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Science Center

Take the 14-day gratitude challenge.
Thank the people in your life,
learn more about yourself, and add
to the growing body of research on
the benefits of gratitude.

Start!

[Learn more ↓](#)

You can thank
someone or
something,
and make it
public or
private



A screenshot of a mobile application interface for sending a thank-you message. The interface is light blue and features a close button (X) in the top right corner. Below the close button is a white rounded rectangle containing the text "Who was it?" followed by a teal downward-pointing triangle. Below this is a larger white rounded rectangle containing the text "What did they do for you?". At the bottom of the interface, there is a white rounded rectangle containing a white square checkbox, the text "Private *", and a teal "more +" link. Below this is the text "Did you say thank you?". At the very bottom, there are two large teal buttons labeled "No" and "Yes".

Who was it? ▼

What did they do for you?

Private * [more +](#)

Did you say thank you?

No Yes

You can say
thank you
directly
and/or
publicly

Share:



Not now

At the end, users will...

- Discover post-survey insights, including how 14 days of gratitude affected their state of mind
- Review their own gratitude entries and those from people in their community
- Get more gratitude tips

Cal Gratitude Challenge

- We launch the beta on November 1, 2012
- In anticipation of Thanksgiving, we're working with the UC Berkeley Tang Center to promote Thnx4 to the campus community
- After this test, we'll roll out to other campuses and communities.

The Bottom Line

- You can't control other people and you can't always control the circumstances you face at work
- But even the most pessimistic crank can take positive steps to make things better—and in the process reduce stress