

GRATITUDE VISIT PROCESS NOTE

2003-12-03

Judy and I have been functioning as co-coaches of each other's personal development for several years, reviewing each other's mission statements and our progress towards fulfilling them. For several months last year we met alternate Wednesdays, then about once a month. During the spring and fall of 2003, there were several stretches when Judy got too busy for us to meet. She also missed meetings of our monthly Dreamseekers lucid dreaming support group. She told us that she had experienced several colds that she couldn't shake. After another cancelled lunch due to illness, I was reluctant to invade her space and propose another meeting, but I had a hunch that some of her health problems might be stress-related, and that she might need the support she was perhaps avoiding.

The assignment of this exercise was coincident with my most recent invitation for a lunch meeting. Knowing that this meeting could be an ideal opportunity for a gratitude visit, and aware of tight assignment timelines for delivery and feedback to our pod, I wrote the letter on Tuesday night and delivered it Wednesday noon.

Instead of using our first moments to do our usual pleasantries of catching up on our respective personal and professional lives, I took the initiative and told her "I've got something special here for you. Would you please listen while I read it?"

"Sure," she said, likely anticipating some personal revelation on my part, or perhaps a draft of my latest article for publication. Instead I read her my gratitude letter. Tears of joy filled her eyes with each new phrase. Each appreciation was a statement of affirmation of attributes and skills that she knew she possessed and manifested frequently, yet to hear it ratified from another professional colleague and friend was so powerful, almost overwhelming. She thanked me deeply for the most precious gift she has received this year, and this on the heels of a momentous day when she had decided to resign from her very stressful contract in which her role was untenable due to political changes in her organization.

We then discussed more about this autumn of discontent, and possibilities of being rehired with a proper mandate and tools and budgets to assemble and lead a highly skilled project team to go beyond this logjam. Our position: for every door we close, several windows open, and many paths reveal themselves.

We left with her profound appreciation of our meeting. She felt that I had expressed her value so eloquently it added value to her perception of herself. I felt happy for the process we shared, and its timeliness in her life. I also felt like a good coach, but more than that, a true and steadfast friend. This time added value to my experience of being.