A person with long hair

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Self-Appreciation

and Your Career

October 24, 2021

Well hello Friends! I hope you guys had an amazing week.

This morning, I changed my mind about what I wanted to talk about today. Hey, I’m a Libra. That’s what we do. It’s about the whole scale thing. lol

But seriously, it’s kind of a big deal for me to do that and it’s not something I usually do because I spend a lot of time preparing for each episode. I do research, I prepare a script and then record and edit.

I invest a lot into each episode. It’s something I enjoy but when I choose to scrap a topic at the last minute that means I can’t just record and edit. I need to take the time to get immersed into a NEW topic, then prepare a NEW script and THEN record.

So, it’s kind of a thing.

But I think it’s important to be flexible. To listen to what my intuition is telling me about what would be best to share with all of you. So, when that inner voice pipes up, I listen.

Many times, a last-minute shift will be inspired by work I’m doing with my clients. And this week is no different.

This week something unusual happened. And that is, the same issue cropped up for ***three*** of my private coaching clients. The same issue. In the same week.

Now granted, the specific situation or the way each client experienced the issue was different but, in each instance, the root issue they were dealing with was the same. And their self-coaching and homework in between coaching sessions was the same.

But as I sent the last client their follow-up recap and homework, it made me think about how many people I’ve managed who’ve struggled with the same thing.

How many friends or colleagues?

And honestly, how often I struggled with it.

As I considered that, I realized how pervasive the issue actually ***is*** and how fundamental it is to helping enable the goals we have, the success we want and honestly, who we want to be in the world. So, I knew it was the thing I needed to talk about today. Because I intuitively believe it’s something most of us need to hear and consider how to put it into practice in our own lives.

So, in this episode, we’re going to talk about Self Appreciation. What it is. Why it’s important. And how to put it into practice.

So, let’s dive in.

First let’s look at a simple definition.

Self-Appreciation is about consciously acknowledging the things about yourself that you like or appreciate.

These can be traits, accomplishments, contributions, whatever.

Doesn’t really matter WHAT it is. The important thing is that YOU see it and appreciate it. AND, that you view it solely through the lens of YOU, meaning you don’t compare YOU with the things we appreciate and observe about others.

Self-Appreciation is about you and you alone.

There are lots of reasons this is important.

First and foremost because most of us aren’t taught to do this. We’re taught to notice what’s special are amazing about others and the importance of acknowledging that.

But very few of us take the time to view ourselves through the lens of appreciation.

Most of us aren’t taught to do that.

Most of us wait for people around us – our partner, our friends, our boss – to see and acknowledge the thing and when they don’t, we tell ourselves that it’s because it didn’t matter or that it wasn’t good enough or whatever.

And in fact, two of my clients pushed back hard when I brought it up. Both asked, “But if I really spend time appreciating myself and focusing on all the things I’ve done or am good at, doesn’t that make me self-centered?”

Some of you are probably wondering the same thing.

And the short answer is only if you do it all the time. If you’re constantly pre-occupied with yourself and your own affairs, then sure, you might be considered self-centered.

That’s not what we’re talking about here. We’re talking about periodically taking inventory of the things about yourself that you appreciate. Allowing yourself to SEE it. And the FEEL the amazement and the pride at having accomplished it.

That’s important because it’s foundational to having a healthy self-esteem and a positive and productive inner thought life.

And it’s especially important for people who have an active Inner Critic that’s constantly running on a negative internal thought loop, causing them to doubt themselves, their abilities, whatever. The best way to turn down the volume on that negative talk track is to turn UP the volume on the self-appreciation track. This creates new positive neural pathways that can replace that exhausting voice of self-doubt.

It’s also important for high achievers because the more we accomplish, the less we tend to see and appreciate those things. In fact, that’s what happened with one of my clients this past week. I had seen on this client’s social feeds that their business had won all kinds of awards.

Like national, high-profile awards. But what was interesting was that in session, my client never mentioned it. So, I brought it up and asked how they felt to have gone from idea to multi-million dollar and now national award-winning business in just a few years and their response was interesting.

They said, “Honestly? I just kept thinking that it wasn’t a gold.”

And then they talked about feeling guilty for even ***thinking*** that. Like they were afraid it seemed like they weren’t grateful for the win.

This is very common with high achievers. They just tick down the list, accomplishing goal after goal but never stopping to really appreciating having ACHIEVED it. Instead, they now view that goal through the lens of the person that achieved it instead of their PAST self who set out to achieve the goal.

Same with another of my clients. They just left a high-profile position and are getting ready to start another. And so, we were talking about the things they’ve achieved in their past role, their accomplishments, the things they’re most proud of. And this client couldn’t really name them and even asked “but if I spend my time thinking about that, doesn’t that make me self-centered or a narcissist?”

And of course, my answer was no. As I said earlier, this would only be true if you were totally preoccupied with yourself and what you’ve done. But taking the time to really SEE it and APPRECIATE it is about giving yourself credit. It’s about remembering who you were BEFORE you achieved the goal, what it took to achieve it – the grit, the resilience, the focus, the determination – and then to appreciate HAVING achieved it.

So how do you show yourself appreciation? Well, I’ll give you an exercise you can do in a minute but first I want to talk context.

I’ve found that the key to truly appreciating yourself is perspective. Then lens through which you view it.

You see when we set out to do something we’re one version of ourselves. The BEFORE version if you will. The person who’s set the goal and very much WANTS to accomplish it but who hasn’t yet done the work in order to have it.

But the challenge is that when we try to appreciate the achieving of the goal, we usually are doing that through the lens of who we’ve BECOME, the person who’s done the work to achieve it. So that’s why so many of us struggle, like my client recently did, with brushing it off or say, “I just kept thinking that it wasn’t a gold.”

That’s NOW you talking. You can’t see the wonder of having achieved it because you’re too busy thinking of all the ways you came up short.

The key to switching that up is perspective. As soon as you look at that accomplishment through the lens of PAST YOU, you feel the wonder of it. The amazement. The pride. And it’s no longer about the fact that maybe it wasn’t everything you wished it was. You allow yourself to see and really FEEL the amazement of having achieved it.

So earlier I promised an exercise you can do to put Self Appreciation into practice.

Just take out a pen and paper or open up a Google doc and decide what categories of things you want to focus on appreciating about yourself. It can be anything.

You as a leader.

You as a colleague.

You as a parent.

You as a business owner.

You as a friend.

You as a person.

You as a neighbor.

Whatever.

Select as many categories as you want.

And then under each category, list at least 10 things you appreciate about yourself. These can be traits that make you uniquely you, things you’ve achieved, things you’ve done. Big or small.

Keep writing until you come up with at least 10 but if you can think of more, keep going.

And then, once you’re done, look at the things you listed through the lens of 10 years ago you.

20 years ago you.

Channel that earlier energy. BEFORE you did those things. BEFORE you accomplished them.

Let yourself FEEL the wonder, the amazement.

That’s the key.

You can’t view those things through the lens of TODAY you and fully experience the appreciation. Because TODAY you has grown. NOW you’re ready to tackle the next list of things.

The things that 10 years from now you will think is so easy but that make TODAY you wonder whether it’s even possible.

I think this is important to do on the regular.

At least every six months or so.

Definitely once a year.

Or before a big change like a new job or the ending of a relationship or a child going off the college or leaving the next or whatever.

Allow yourself to SEE and fully appreciate having DONE the things you set out to do.

Or having BECOME more of who you wanted to be.

And I think that list can become go-to thoughts that you shift to in moments of crisis or self-doubt. When things seem hard or impossible, a list like this is an excellent go-to reminder that you CAN do hard things. You have DONE hard things. And it doesn’t matter if anyone else sees it or acknowledges it or whatever.

YOU see you.

YOU appreciate you.

And those new thoughts and feelings will inspire your next wave of big hard things.

And maybe even more than that, this Self Appreciation is really about self-acceptance.

I think Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism, sums it up best with this:

“Because one believes in oneself one doesn’t try to convince others. Because one is content with oneself, one doesn’t need others’ approval. When one accepts oneself, the whole world accepts us.”

So self appreciation is a foundational pillar of self esteem and confidence.

And I’ll leave you with one last thought. You might be thinking “well I don’t have anything special to really appreciate. I’m just a middle manager or a regular person or whatever.”

And if that’s you I want to say, you’re wrong.

It’s not about comparing who you are or what you’ve done with others. It’s about comparing who you are and what you’ve done with your younger SELF.

No matter where you’re at right now. No matter the struggle or the disappointment or the headwinds or whatever, we all have things we’ve done and achieved that should be recognized and acknowledged. We all deserve to FEEL the appreciation of ourselves for having gone on the journey thus far and for having stuck with the hard things and for having brought many of those over the finish line.

So, for this week, my wish for all of you is to take 30 minutes and show YOURSELF some appreciation.

That way you can FEEL and BELIEVE how amazing you really are.

Until next time, make it a great week my friends.