

Healthy Futures

News+Views

An Educational Newsletter Covering Eating Disorder Treatment and Other Mental Health Issues

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A new twist from the kids' table

HF team answers gratitude question

By Todd Elwood

This is going to be different.

As part of the marketing team for Healthy Futures, one of my tasks is to put together our newsletter, *News+Views*, each month. I enjoy the job – but even more so because I'm given free rein (for the most part) when it comes to creating the content.

When formulating story ideas for November's edition, Thanksgiving popped into my mind. And so did that age-old question, which everyone who's ever sat at the kids' table was forced to answer: "What are you thankful for?"

In addition to the dangling preposition at the end of it, I've never been a fan of the question. I see no harm in it, but by now it seems cliché. So much so, that the answers are usually predictable: "I'm thankful for my health, my friends and my family."

(Yawn).

Again, nothing wrong with it, but it's not particularly compelling for a newsletter.

So I decided to turn the question on its head. Instead of asking Healthy Futures team members what they're thankful for (or, for the language purists, "For what are you thankful?"), I asked them why others might be thankful for them.

Indeed, I expanded on that. The question became a two-parter:

"Why might the people close to you be thankful for you, and why might the world at large be thankful for you?"

Now we're getting somewhere, I thought.

My idea was met with, um, enthusiastic hesitation.

While the team members agreed that an accurate understanding of one's own qualities and skills is a sign of a healthy self esteem, saying those things out loud is a different ball of wax entirely.

Essentially, no one wanted to sound like a braggart.

After I assured them of the delicacy with which I intended to produce this newsletter, most agreed to answer.

And it came as no surprise to me that their answers were AMAZING. You'll find them on page 2.

We suggest you try this exercise yourself, whether you're sitting at the kids' table or the adult table.

Happy Thanksgiving from Healthy Futures!



The questions:

1: Why are those in your life thankful for you?

2: Why is the world at large thankful for you?



Tori Del Vecchio

1. Because I like to cook and feed them.
2. My passion for helping people.

Sheri Robenstine

1. I enjoy having fun, I'm really dependable as far as activities that we can do and they know they can count on me for doing things that are really important to them, and for having the knack for giving the perfect present and doing something that is really meaningful for them.
2. My ability to be honest and direct. One quality about me is I don't beat around the bush so I'm very honest as far as giving feedback that might be helpful.

Dr. J.R. Evans

1. My ability to be able to communicate with just about anybody. I feel like I'm able to find that one thing in a person to connect with that allows them to open up and be vulnerable, and it can be such an asset at times, especially in the work I do at Healthy Futures.
2. Hopefully I have brought joy to someone's life I am not even aware of and I think that is something I'm proud of, that people in this world can see me in a way that feels good to them.

Mia Elwood

1. Because I find things for them. I'm really good at finding shoes, things that are missing, books, anything that needs to be turned in and I'm great at organizing – so knowing what needs to be done when.
2. I think I can offer just me being in recovery and having walked the walk and being able to share that with the world, and being excited about recovery and the eating disorder recovery world, and I think that's what I come to share.

Jeanne Phillips

1. My friends would say that I am open, I'm available, I'm authentic, I'm honest, I'm caring, I'm nurturing and I'm dependable.
2. Because I take care of the homeless. I do volunteer work at the homeless shelter and so I think they're grateful for having me there and it fills my heart with joy to be able to fulfill that to them.

Kim Guenther

1. I'm fairly creative and I like to think outside of the box. And I think that, for the most part, that puts people at ease and they really enjoy that. I feel that I'm helpful to others. I enjoy people and I enjoy teaching people all the cool things on Pinterest.

2. I feel like maybe I'm making a teeny, teeny dent in those who struggle with eating disorders and if I can make a change in one person, that has a ripple effect all over the world.

Kelley Aungst

1. I like to help people understand how they can have a better quality of life through exercise and I feel like I've been able to help people of all ages. I hear back from them that their lifestyle has improved, so I think they're thankful for that.
2. I think I'm a wonderful, caring mother and I have three beautiful grandchildren and I know I'm a wonderful grandmother!

Kim DiRé

1. There's one thing I offer but it comes in two ways – it's manna – it's food for the soul. I feed people and when they come over I make sauces and lasagnas and these great recipes that've been passed through the generations. Plus I make them themed, so I make sure I have the tablecloths that match. I hope people enjoy that.
2. Almost all day long, intermittently, I offer prayer. I am praying from the time I get up, I pray throughout the day and I pray in the evening. It's a constant dia-

logue. No one knows what I'm doing, but boy, am I active in it! That's something I offer the world and I hope it helps.

Jessica Meinhart

1. My friends might say she is kind and caring and passionate about everything she does.
2. I contribute to the world in some small way by sharing what I've learned through my work, by doing what I've learned and passing it onto others to help them.

Kathi Freemann

1. The people around me are thankful to have me in their lives because I encourage them to be powerful. I think everybody should be powerful, and I'm glad to be at Healthy Futures because they spend their time making people feel empowered through education.
2. I believe in kindness. I think kindness is the most important thing you can offer the world.

Sam Kurkjian

1. I think people would say I'm a good listener because a lot of people in the world are just trying to tell you what they think and sometimes you just need someone to listen.
2. I provide some comic relief no matter where I go.