

Hello, this is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thank you for tuning in. Please click on our social media icons and let us have the benefit of your thinking in the comment section below.

I want to do a little bit of a movie review this week. My wife and I watched Ford v. Ferrari. It was a big box office smash and we saw it just recently. And man, it's a great movie. It really is. It's so exciting. I mean, it's got some tearful moments, it's got some funny moments, it's really, really, really a well-done movie. Well now why am I talking about a movie? This is kind of unusual for a Family Business Institute blog here, but it's a great movie, but I wanted to point out one thing that Carroll Shelby said that really, really struck me.

Now having seen the movie, it made me want to learn more about Carroll Shelby, and so there's a documentary on Netflix, I think, called Shelby American. And it also is fascinating. It's obviously a documentary, it's different from the movie, but I recommend them both. And really, just a fascinating guy and a typical, hard driven, American entrepreneur, just really an amazing person. So, one thing he said at the end of that documentary, he said two things: never give up, and always be grateful. Always think how grateful you should be, and I was really struck by that. Now the first part never give up, you've heard Winston Churchill say that, you've heard Jim Valvano say that. Everybody says never give up. It's the second part, always think how grateful you should be, that really struck me. I took a class one time, a self-awareness and learning class, and the leader of that class said that gratitude is the most noble emotion.

And I don't know if he's right or wrong, but it always stuck with me as something that was super interesting. Is gratitude the most noble emotion? I don't know, maybe it is. But one thing about gratitude and the expression of gratitude, it's not just an emotion, it's an act. It's something you have to consciously decide to do. And maybe the expression of gratitude and the act of expressing the gratitude is what makes it a noble emotion. I decided to do a little homework. There are at least seven ways that gratitude makes us better people, so let me just run down the list real quick.

Expressing gratitude strengthens the neural pathways that allow dopamine and serotonin to get into our bloodstream. And some people say that having that dopamine and serotonin released into the system is like what drug addicts feel when they get their fix. Really quite a compelling statement.

The second thing is, it improves mental strength, gives you a greater focus on your goals. By the way you can just Google, is gratitude beneficial, and you'll see dozens and dozens of articles that give you a lot more instances than this.

The third thing that gratitude does for us is it helps us change our behavior. So, there was a study among senior citizens, and it had to do with their exercise and eating habits, and they had the control group that didn't express gratitude, the other group did. And the gratitude expressing group did much better at hitting their exercise and nutrition goals than the other group.

The fourth thing, ripple effects. If you express gratitude, if you say thank you to people, they are more likely to go out and say thank you to other people. It's that pay it forward mentality.

Fifth, improved sleep. When you get to a certain age, sleep is a treasured and wonderful thing because it's hard to hold onto. And so, expressing gratitude has been demonstrated to improve the quality of sleep among people, and it reduces stress.

Number six, it reduces stress. For people running businesses, shedding stress is a critical thing. We can't carry all that around with us every day. We have to have a way to get rid of it, and expressing gratitude is one way to do so. And finally, expressing gratitude helps our self-esteem. When we can appreciate the accomplishments of other people, we began to get away from that toxic comparison thing that he has a better home than I do, or a better vacation home, or a bigger boat, or whatever it happens to be. We get away from that stuff, and we just appreciate the accomplishments of other people, and that allows us to appreciate ourselves a little bit more.

Now, if you want to practice gratitude, the top exercise is said to be keeping a gratitude journal, and it sounds fancy, a journal. I did this a long time ago, based on one of those old-time radio personalities named Earl Nightingale. And you just take a legal pad and you number one through 20 down the side and every day, either when you get up in the morning or before you go to bed at night... we had little kids, so it was better for me to do it first thing in the morning because I was the first one awake... and you write down 20 things that you're grateful for. And you'd be surprised, the first few, it just takes a minute to get into that groove. And then after that, man, it starts to flow, and you do it day by day by day.

And eventually I had several legal pads full of these things, and I would go back and read them. And it's really pretty amazing. So, I didn't have to number the paper every time, I had my assistant, just put it together in Excel and print it for me so it was right there. It worked great, and I really loved it. I'm not quite sure why I got away from it, but anyway, it is a good practice, and it definitely will either start your day on the right tone or end your day in the right way. So, watch the movie and the documentary Ford v. Ferrari, or Shelby American is the documentary, and let us know what you think in the comments below.

Thank you very much. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute.