

*Making a Modern Project Manager*¹

Cultivate Gratitude²

Yasmina Khelifi

What is gratitude?

The word 'gratitude' derives from the Latin *gratia*, which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness.

"Gratitude is associated with a personal benefit that was not intentionally sought after, deserved, or earned but rather because of the good intentions of another person" (Emmons & McCullough, 2004).

Gratitude is a way to express and communicate thankfulness to others.

Diplomas, hard work, opportunities, and networks can help you grow as a leader. But sometimes small gestures can make a big impact.

Why being grateful is important

Several research projects have proved that gratitude is associated with better health, positive emotions and building strong relationships.

How to cultivate gratitude

Here are 3 ways to cultivate gratitude in your project teams.

¹ Editor's note: This series of articles is for Gen X, Y and Z project professionals by a real project manager. The author Yasmina Khelifi is an actual project manager with a large multinational telecom in France while also an active PM professional, authoring articles, interviews and a popular LinkedIn blog as well as a podcast with a global audience. Also active in PMI France for many years, she has been an international correspondent for the PMWJ since 2021. We are delighted that she agreed to author a series of articles based on her personal experiences over the last decade.

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Say “thank you”

Many years ago, a colleague in another firm we work with was leaving the project. On the morning of our meeting, a British colleague brought a nice (paper) card and asked us to write a note for her. This was a simple, genuine, and powerful gesture. You don’t need to buy dinner in a luxury restaurant. You need to express gratitude with your heart.

In the day-to-day rush of a project, we ask different people to help us. Keep track of these friends.

Once the project is finished, say “thank you” to each of them individually and mention how they helped you. This will elevate their self-esteem and show their value, helping them become more self-aware of their strengths.

For example: *I am grateful for your insights when I didn’t know how to improve collaboration with A.*

Keep a gratitude journal

[The Greater Good Science Center](http://www.greatergood.berkeley.edu) at the University of California, Berkeley recommends regularly writing down 5 things you are grateful for. You need to be specific about why you are grateful. Focus more on people than things. Include unexpected events.

For example: *I am grateful I bumped into B in the hallway and she mentioned this great project management training.*

Thank someone every week

You can also initiate gratitude rituals in your project teams. It does not need to be big things.

For example: *I am grateful to have collaborated with you on product X and to have learned how to present a sales pitch.*

Gratitude is a gift.

Gratitude doesn't mean thanking people once a year. It is cultivated over time. Being a grateful leader isn't just a nice thing to do—it's a powerful lever for forging deeper human connections.

Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others. - Marcus Tullius Cicero

What best practices can you share for being grateful?

P:S: I am very grateful to David Pells, Managing Editor, for giving me the space and freedom to share my knowledge and for his dedication and devotion to share knowledge.

About the Author



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Yasmina Khelifi, PMP, PMI-ACP, PMI-PBA, is an experienced project manager in the telecom industry. Along with her 20-year career at [Orange S.A.](#) (the large French multinational telecommunications corporation), she sharpened her global leadership skills, delivering projects with major manufacturers and SIM makers. Yasmina strives for building collaborative bridges between people to make international projects successful. She relies on three pillars: project management skills, the languages she speaks, and a passion for sharing knowledge.

She is a PMP certification holder since 2013, a PMI-ACP and PMI-PBA certification holder since 2020. She is an active volunteer member at PMI France and PMI UAE,

and a member of PMI Germany Chapter. French-native, she can speak German, English, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and she is learning Arabic. Yasmina loves sharing her knowledge and experiences at work, in her volunteers' activities at PMI, and in projectmanagement.com as a regular blogger. She is also the host and co-founder of the podcast [Global Leaders Talk with Yasmina Khelifi](#) to help people in becoming better international leaders.

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