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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

# Seven Examples of When It Would Be Better to Simply Say “Thank You”

I often get the feeling that as a society we neglect to say “thank you” as often as we should. This includes me. I would even go as far as to say that I believe “thank you” is the most unappreciated and underutilized phrase in our vocabulary. The reality is that “thank you” is appropriate in almost all situations and is considered a better response than most of the things we say. It is, after all, only two words.

Let us consider 7 common situations where we tend to say all sorts of things, but should rather say “thank you” instead.

## **1. When you are receiving a compliment**

We tend to either devalue compliment statements or act overly humble. Internally, you might think this prevents you from

presenting as arrogant or smug but in reality it ruins the compliment you received.

The problem is that by deflecting the praise of genuine compliment, you do not acknowledge the person who was nice enough to simply say something. By simply saying “thank you” you will fully acknowledge the person who made the compliment and it allows you to enjoy the moment as well. It at least gives the complimenting person the satisfaction that the praise was justified.

**Example: “Your shirt looks great.”**

- Instead of: *“Oh this old thing? I have had it for years.”*
- Try saying: *“Thank you. I am glad you like it.”*

**Example: Wow! You really did well in that workout tonight!”**

- Instead of: *“Yeah, but I really could have done better in the last round.”*
- Try saying: *“Thank you. Tonight was a good workout.”*

**Example: “You nailed that presentation today!”**

- Instead of: *“Did I really? I was so nervous. I just hope everyone else also thinks so.”*
- Try saying: *“Thank you. I am grateful it turned out well.”*

There is something empowering about fully accepting a compliment. On the contrary, when you deflect praise you cannot really own it. When you say “thank you” you let the weight of the compliment sink in and become yours. Saying “thank you” gives your mind permission to be built up by the compliments you receive. It at least boosts your self-image and nobody can deny the strength of that.

Receiving compliments should be fun and enjoyable, yet often we ruin the experience. There is no need to sabotage compliments that come your way. Simple accept them with grace and enjoy the moment.

## **2. When you are running late.**

Being late is terrible. It is stressful for the person who is running late and it is disrespectful to the person who is waiting.

It might seem strange to thank someone for dealing with your hassle, but that is exactly the correct response. Most people stumble in the door and half-heartedly offer “Sorry. I am late.”

The problem is this response does not really indicate that you are concerned that you wasted other people’s time. Saying “Thank you” turns the tables and acknowledges the sacrifice the

other person(s) had to make by waiting. “Thank *you* for waiting”.

**Example: You walk into the meeting 15 minutes late.**

Instead of: “*So sorry I am late. Traffic was insane.*”

Try saying: “*Thank you for waiting for me, my apologies for the inconvenience.*”

When we make a mistake, someone else often makes a sacrifice. Our default response is to apologize for our failure, but the better approach is to praise the other parties’ patience and loyalty. Thank them for what they did despite your error.

**3. When you are comforting someone.**

When someone approaches you with bad news, it can be awkward. You want to be a good friend, but most people do not know what to say. I have been in this situation multiple times before. Often times, we think it is a good idea to add a silver lining to the problem. “Well, at least you have...”

We often fail to realize that it really does not matter if you do not know what to say. All you really need to do is be present

and thank the other person for trusting you enough to share the bad news with you.

**Example: your co-worker's mother passed away recently.**

Instead of: *“Well at least you have a lot of fond memories to hold onto.”*

Try saying: *“I know this is a really hard time for you. Thank you for sharing this with me.”*

**Example: Your best friend lost his job.**

Instead of: *“Well at least you have your health and there are lots of jobs you can apply for.”*

Try saying: *“I am here to support you whatever happens my friend. Thank you for sharing this with me.”*

Often we forget that in times of suffering, we do not need to hear words that ease the pain as much as we need someone to share our pain. When you do not know what to say, just say “thank you” and be there for support.

#### **4. When you are receiving helpful feedback.**

Feedback can be extremely helpful, but as result of our egos we often see it as criticism. Whether it is an unflattering performance review from your boss or an email from an unhappy customer, our default reaction is to become defensive. That is a pity as the more mature response would be to simply say “thank you” for the person having made the effort to share the issue with you, probably did so with the best of intentions and use the information to improve on that particular issue.

**Example: “The quality of your work is not good enough. I really expect of you to do better than this.”**

Instead of: *“You do not understand. Here is what really happened.”*

Try saying: *“Thank you for expecting more of me.”*

**Example: “I bought your product last week and it already broke. I am really unhappy with your service.”**

Instead of: *“How did you use it? We made it clear in the instructions that the product is not designed to work in certain conditions.”*

Try saying: *“Thank you for sharing the feedback. Please know that we are committed to improving our product. Can you share some more details about the issues you experienced?”*

Nobody likes to fail and less so be reprimanded about it, but the reality is that we need to respond to helpful feedback with a simple “thank you” and use it to become better.

### **5. When you are receiving unfair criticism.**

It often happens that we receive criticism that is not warranted at all. In fact, it might be plain vindictive and mean. One of the best approaches to deal with haters and naysayers is to just say “thank you” and move on. When you thank someone for criticizing you, it immediately neutralizes the power of their statements and defuses their intent with the uncalled for criticism. If it is not a big deal for you, it cannot grow into a larger argument.

**Example: “This might be good advice for beginners, but anyone who knows what they are doing will find this useless.”**

Instead of: *“Well, clearly, I wrote this for beginners. This might be a surprise, but not everything was written with you in mind.”*

Try saying: *“Thank you for your opinion, I will try to improve next time.”*

**Example: Your statement is the dumbest thing I have read all week.**

Instead of: *“You are an idiot. Let me tell you why...”*

Try saying: *“Thank you for the feedback. I still have a lot to learn.”*

Releasing the need to win every argument is a sign of maturity. Instead of engaging in arguments, win an argument by the way you live your life.

## **6. When someone gives you unsolicited advice.**

This often shows up in the gym. Everybody has an opinion about what your technique should look like. I think that most people are really just trying to be helpful, but hearing someone’s opinion about you when you did not ask for it can be annoying and more so under conditions of extreme physical exertion.

**Example: “You should really try and keep your chest more upright when you are doing your squats.”**

Instead of: *“Oh really? Since when are you doing your squats perfectly?”*

Try saying: *“Thank you for the help.”*

Deflecting the issue by pointing out others’ faults does not obviate your own. Try to thank people for offering self-awareness, even if it was unsolicited.

## **7. When you are not sure if you should thank someone.**

When in doubt just say thank you. There is no downside. Are you honestly worried about showing too much gratitude to the people in your life?

*“Should I send a thank you card in this situation?”* Yes, you should.

*“Should I tip him?”* If you do not, at least say thank you.

So after reading “thank you” for the thirtieth time in this article...let’s say “thank you” more often.