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Rarely do we say or express thanks to the many people that deserve it, even on Thanksgiving. Here's how to let those that impact your daily life know you're grateful on the biggest day of thanks in 2007

How to Thank the Giving

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CTW Features

Between preparing the turkey and pumpkin pie, and watching the football game on TV, it can be easy to forget the purpose of Thanksgiving. According to Mike Robbins, author of "Focus on the Good Stuff: The Power of Appreciation" (Jossey-Bass, 2007), the day can be more than just a nice holiday; it can be a time of reflection, connection and transformation. And it's not as hard as you think to bring back and share with others the true meaning of the holiday.

Robbins recommends after everyone sits down at the table for the Thanksgiving meal, go around the table and have everyone share things they are grateful for.

Betsy Storm of Chicago, Ill., started a similar tradition 20 years ago.

"After my divorce, I was looking for ways to start new traditions with my young children, then 4 and 7," she says. "At that time, our lives were in transition, and giving thanks for what we did have seemed like a really great idea."

Robbins says before, during or after your meal, pick someone to acknowledge and let him or her know how he or she has positively influenced your life. Then ask them to 'pay it forward' and acknowledge someone else in the group.

"Be sure to go around the whole table and include everyone," he says. "Most importantly, remember if the compliment is directed to you, say 'thank you' and move on. Don't blow it off or argue with the person if you disagree. That's being disrespectful."

Carolyn Smuts, Huntington Beach, Calif., and her extended family are doing something similar for her grandmother this holiday.

"This year we are putting together a 'book of memories' for my 85-year-old grandmother. Each family member has been asked to recount a favorite Thanksgiving memory or tradition. The book will be presented to her on Thanksgiving."

It may sound unusual, but Robbins says to take some time to reflect on yourself and your life.

"Ask yourself, 'what do I appreciate about myself?'" he says. "Write down your answers to this question or share them with others whom you trust. It's not an ego exercise, but an important thing to do. Not only can it help motivate yourself, but help you feel good about yourself as well. You can't feel good about others if you can't feel good about yourself."

Robbins says for this Thanksgiving holiday, be grateful and focus on the good stuff in your life. In addition, acknowledge the people around you, and appreciate yourself.

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