

THIS holiday season, there was something in the air that was even more inescapable than the scent of pumpkin spice: gratitude.

Oh dang, shots fired! (yes I really would annotate like this. I recommend it, it keeps it fun ☺)

In November, NPR issued a number of brief exhortations to cultivate gratitude, culminating in an hourlong special on the “science of gratitude,” narrated by Susan Sarandon. Writers in Time magazine, The New York Times and Scientific American recommended it as a surefire ticket to happiness and even better health. Robert Emmons, a psychology professor at the University of California, Davis, who studies the “science of gratitude,” argues that it leads to a stronger immune system and lower blood pressure, as well as “more joy and pleasure.”

Exhortation – strong word, stands out to me

This whole para is support for previous para i.e. advice for gratitude is everywhere

It’s good to express our thanks, of course, to those who deserve recognition. But this holiday gratitude is all about you, and how you can feel better.

Bam. Thesis of the whole thing.

Gratitude is hardly a fresh face on the self-improvement scene. By the turn of the century, Oprah Winfrey and other motivational figures were promoting an “attitude of gratitude.” Martin Seligman, the father of “positive psychology,” which is often enlisted to provide some sort of scientific basis for “positive thinking,” has been offering instruction in gratitude for more than a decade...

This paragraph = support for how gratitude has been a part of the “self-improvement” scene for a while.

Positive thinking was in part undone by its own silliness, glaringly displayed in the 2006 best seller “The Secret,” which announced that you could have anything, like the expensive necklace you’d been coveting, simply by “visualizing” it in your possession.

Evidence 1: “The Secret” and more importantly, the 2008 financial crash shows how ridic positive thinking can, which is closely linked to the gratitude movement.

The financial crash of 2008 further dimmed the luster of positive thinking, which had done so much to lure would-be homeowners and predatory mortgage lenders into a speculative frenzy. This left the self-improvement field open to more cautious stances, like mindfulness and resilience and — for those who could still muster it — gratitude.

Also, words like “silliness” maintain the sassiness from the beginning para. It’s up to you to decide whether or not the tone is effective (and explain why), but it’s still important to locate tone and what it sounds like

...Perhaps it’s no surprise that gratitude’s rise to self-help celebrity status owes a lot to the...John Templeton Foundation. At the start of this decade, the foundation...gave \$5.6 million to Dr. Emmons, the gratitude researcher. It also funded a \$3 million initiative called Expanding the Science and Practice of Gratitude through the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley, which co-produced the special that aired on NPR. The foundation does not fund projects to directly improve the lives of poor individuals, but it has spent a great deal, through efforts like these, to improve their attitudes.

Evidence 2: Effective how E. relates the foundation to aforementioned well-known media that have been spreading “exhortations” and dropping the info that JTF spend more resources re: improving attitudes than improving actual life situations

[Furthermore, it appears that] much of the gratitude advice involves no communication or interaction of any kind. Consider this, from a yoga instructor on CNN.com: “Cultivate your sense of gratitude by incorporating giving thanks into a personal morning ritual such as writing in a gratitude journal, repeating an affirmation or practicing a meditation. It could even

Evidence 3: Directly using gratitude advice from a well-known source to show how it only mentions “you.”

be as simple as writing what you give thanks for on a sticky note and posting it on your mirror or computer. To help you establish a daily routine, create a 'thankfulness' reminder on your phone or computer to pop up every morning and prompt you."

Who is interacting here? "You" and "you."

...Yet there is a need for more gratitude, especially from those who have a roof over their heads and food on their table. Only it should be a more vigorous and inclusive sort of gratitude than what is being urged on us now. Who picked the lettuce in the fields, processed the standing rib roast, drove these products to the stores, stacked them on the supermarket shelves and, of course, prepared them and brought them to the table? ...There are crowds, whole communities of actual people, many of them with aching backs and tenuous finances, who made the meal possible.

The real challenge of gratitude lies in figuring out how to express our debt to them, whether through generous tips or, say, by supporting their demands for decent pay and better working conditions. But now we're not talking about gratitude, we're talking about a far more muscular impulse — and this is, to use the old-fashioned term, "solidarity" — which may involve getting up off the yoga mat.

Isolating this sentence also serves to make this point well – something I'd mention in my essay

Evidence 4 (ish): Although this is more about how gratitude could be less selfish, by showing the contrast, E. makes the point that many in society haven't really haven't been focusing on expressing gratitude to those who make our lives easier. Something I would mention in my essay is how listing all the different jobs needed to put food on the table and reminding us that these jobs are done by "actual people" (as opposed to machines, which I think is the implication) is effective appeal to emotion.

