



The Gratitude Engine

Generating One Billion Acts of Gratitude



SuperThank's Storyteller Manual



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Table of Contents

What is SuperThank?.....	2
Why Gratitude?.....	3
SuperThank Storytelling Criteria	4
4 Steps to Creating a Successful SuperThank Story.....	5
SuperThank Storytelling Exercises	6
SuperThank Storytelling Tips	9
SuperThank Storytelling Event Task List & Deadlines	12
SuperThank Run of Show [Example]	14

If you have any questions, email us at info@superthank.org.



The Gratitude Engine

Generating One Billion Acts of Gratitude



What is SuperThank?

SuperThank is a human gratitude engine organized around the mission of growing communities that magnify and continue to amplify acts of radical gratitude for stuff that matters.

SuperThank, led by an all-volunteer team, facilitates the creation of gratitude networks to express gratitude on a superhuman scale for people who have done things to make our lives better.

SuperThank serves as a hub to say thanks and express gratitude in creative ways – from your desk, your cell phone, or even better, face-to-face.

To help us meet our mission to promote one billion acts of “radical community gratitude...for stuff that matters,” SuperThank launched a storytelling series and podcast that features stories of radical community gratitude.

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Why Gratitude?

Did you know that gratitude can make you happier? That's right! Gratitude is good for you. Researchers have studied the act of expressing and sharing gratitude and found that if you practice gratitude on a regular basis, you could benefit physically, psychologically and even socially.

The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley, studied more than one thousand people, from ages eight to 80, and found that people who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits including:

Physical

- Stronger immune systems
- Less bothered by aches and pains
- Lower blood pressure
- Exercise more and take better care of their health
- Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking

Psychological

- Higher levels of positive emotions
- More alert, alive, and awake
- More joy and pleasure
- More optimism and happiness

Social

- More helpful, generous, and compassionate
- More forgiving
- More outgoing
- Feel less lonely and isolated.

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SuperThank Storytelling Criteria

RADICAL	COMMUNITY	GRATITUDE
<p>Essential and /or Extraordinary conduct by the Thankee/s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How did they go above and beyond to improve their community? o Was their act game changing, creative or innovative? <p>Supersized thank(s) that amplifies expressed gratitude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How is the thank itself creative, interesting, innovative, attention - grabbing, game-changing? o Will it amplify the efforts and support for your thankee? o Will it be memorable? 	<p>Thankee(s) who served the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How much did community benefit because of the thankee’s efforts? o Did they address an issue that impacts all of us? <p>Thank(s) that involve the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Is the thank bigger than one individual can offer - it takes community-level participation o Could your thank help build and strengthen the affected community? 	<p>Thankee(s) who really, really deserve it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Was some element of sacrifice made in their actions? o Was their act without immediate self-benefit? o Have they yet to be sufficiently recognized for their effort? <p>Authentic, heartfelt thank(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A real expression of gratitude to the thankee (as distinct from merely approval/judgment or actually a selfish act) o Thanks is appropriate and proportional to the act o Does the thankee recognize and appreciate the thank?

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Generating One Billion Acts of Gratitude

4 Steps to Creating a Successful SuperThank Story

- 1. Focus on gratitude and on community.** Specifically, your story should express gratitude for a person (or group) who has gone above and beyond to add value to our community, benefiting us all, and who has not been thanked or recognized for his or her contributions.
- 2. Include an element of sacrifice on the part of the thankee,** and make clear the relevance of the act on the speaker and the community — this act was a game changer.
- 3. Help the listener appreciate community or think about community from a different perspective.** Listeners need to understand the value of who you are thanking and why they deserve a super-sized thank you.
- 4. Use descriptive language to grab the listener’s attention.** Remember, you are bringing the listeners on a journey with you to share an unexpected kindness from a stranger, change their perspective on something that matters to you, or bring their attention to overlooked parts our shared humanity and community.

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SuperThank Storytelling Exercises

BRAINSTORM: THINK OF A STORY ARC

What is the purpose of your story? How will it start and how will it end? What is the theme and focus of the story, why are you telling it? How do you want your listeners to feel as they hear it?

Exercise: Establish the 'moral' of your story and write it down in one or two concise sentences (and no more). Every part of your story should align with achieving this end.

THE INTRO: START AT THE BEGINNING

What was going on with you before the subject of your story impacted your life or the life/lives of others? Think about what was going on that caused the subject of your story to make an impact on you or others. How will you describe this to others? This is your opportunity to set the tone of your story and is typically brief.

Exercise: Try to not write your story out in 'script' form. Your story is a living thing that is experienced by the storyteller as if it's unfolding around you as you tell it. Write plot notes to jog your memory but stay away from memorizing a script.

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PLOT DEVELOPMENT: INCITING INCIDENT/CATALYST

How did the subject of your story arrive in your life? Why was their arrival so impactful on you? Did you think it positive or negative? Did your perspective change because of the subject of your story? What forces/circumstances brought you together and why?

Exercise: *Why does this story matter to others? Write down what the universal understanding of this story might mean from your listener's perspective.*

PLOT DEVELOPMENT: RAISING THE STAKES

Did the subject of your story cause you to gain or lose something? Did they give you a gift or ask for a sacrifice? Did they stir an emotion in you or others because of their action/s? Hope, fear, love, anger? Can you recreate this emotional experience for your listeners?

Exercise: *Write some descriptions of what it was like to be inside your mind during these experiences - emotions, sensations, etc particular to you.*

PLOT DEVELOPMENT: TURNING POINT

What did the subject of your story do that changed the path of things to come? Did they alter your plans? Did they change the trajectory of others? What did they do? How did they do it and why did it have such a profound influence on you? This is your opportunity to crystallize, for the listener, the impact the subject of your story had on your life or the life/lives of others.

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Exercise: Practice your pacing out loud. Timely pauses in the correct places can help usher in emotional depth and gravitas.

THE CONCLUSION: THE WORLD AS IT IS FOR YOU NOW

How did the subject of your story change the way you operate now/see things/change your perspective going forward? Is this something that can impact others? Use the conclusion of your story to recap the subject of your story's impact on your life/the life of others. This is a great opportunity for you to build momentum or support for the subject of your story and provide incentive for the audience to use your story to do more good and express more radical gratitude for stuff that matters.

Exercise: Tell your story completely out loud using a recording app or device. Listen back, and listen for 'genuineness' and 'emotionality.' Do you feel fully immersed in the story? Make changes and re-record as needed.

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SuperThank's Storyteller Tips

Storytelling can be intimidating, to some, and the sentiment of gratitude can be hard to capture in words, for many.

Fortunately, stories, including gratitude stories, often follow a similar pattern. We've found that gratitude stories usually include an emotional component that makes them more meaningful to the listeners.

SuperThank put together a list of guidelines to help you tell your most compelling story while conveying your gratitude with confidence for the biggest impact in a fun and entertaining way.

Storytelling Tips

- Practice, practice, practice! *The better prepared you are, the better your story.*
- Make an outline of your story, memorize your main points and order
- Invite your friends to hear your story. A friendly audience is the best audience. Encourage your family and friends to attend your storytelling event.

1. The focus of your story should be on **gratitude** and **community**. Specifically, it should express gratitude for someone (or group) who has gone above and beyond to add value to our community, and who has not been thanked or recognized for his or her contributions.

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2. Please choose a story to tell that adheres to as many of our **SuperThank Criteria** as possible (see criteria in the table below). We want to be sure we are spreading stories that help us achieve our mission of “radical community gratitude...for stuff that matters.”

3. Your story should take **3-8 minutes** to tell. Shorter is better. It is, of course, better to not have to rush the end of the story since often that is where the best stuff happens. So, when you practice telling the story, keep it no longer than 8 minutes since it might take longer to tell in person to a live audience if they clap, laugh or awww at the times when you hope they will.

4. **Work with a coach.** We have team members who are focused on helping you tell the most engaging story possible. Look for an email with a coach’s contact information. You and the coach will set up a time(s) to meet virtually or in person as you prepare for the event.

Storytelling Tips

Say it with Emotion: Your listeners are looking to you for story cues. Your facial expressions and voice (intonation, inflection, tone) help the listeners to feel what you’re feeling.

Set the scene: Use descriptive words that bring the listeners into your world so they can almost feel, see, hear, and even taste the elements of your story as they were part of it.

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5. We welcome storytellers to consider doing something tangible for your thankee to **bring your gratitude to life** in a way that will help and encourage them continue to do their good work. A quiet group of SuperThankers can sometimes help coordinate such an effort, so we welcome you to contact us.

6. **A good story of gratitude is its own promotion.** Storytellers should not sell their own products, books, or businesses from the stage. We do value our speakers highly, and we will be happy to include your credentials in your introduction. *Marketing and promoting your storytelling participation is strongly encouraged.*

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SuperThank Storytelling Event Task List & Deadlines

Task	Do # of days task is due before the event:	Review 2 weeks prior to event. Is the task done?	Task completed by:
Confirm venue and date/time for event	60		
Confirm 3-4 storytellers	42		
Confirm another 3-4 storytellers	35		
Confirm lighting equipment	21		
Assign coaches to storytellers	20		
Create Eventbrite event	20		
Create Facebook event (make sure to include Eventbrite ticket link)	20		
Send HTML invitation using Eventbrite/Mailchimp integration	15		
Posters – send information (date, time, venue, storytellers if including, specific theme if relevant) to designer	20		
Posters – designer to share draft design with team	18		
Posters – review design and recommend revisions or approve	18		
Posters – deadline to print final	15		
Posters – distribute to team for posting around town immediately	15		

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Posters – team to post around town and ensure at least five are provided to EastBurn	15		
Prompts – brainstorm ideas and finalize choices	7		
Check-in with coach and storytellers	7		
Table programs – deadline to create and print	3		
Prompts – deadline to print and cut out	3		
Release forms – deadline to print	1		
Sign-in sheet – deadline to print	1		
Run of show – deadline to create and share with MC	1		
Final check-in with coach and storytellers	1		
Confirm before event who will bring these items:			
Run of show			
Basket to collect prompts			
Square/card reader to collect payment			
Sign-in sheet			
Clipboards (if using)			
Prompts for audience to fill out			
Pens for audience to fill out prompts			
Release forms for storytellers			
Table programs			

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SuperThank Run of Show [Example]

Date

Location

Doors open at Xpm

Show from Xpm - Xpm

Storyteller Lineup:

[Speaker names]

Event Timeline:

5:30-6:00pm Arrive and set up lighting, arrange tables and chairs, test audio and recording.

6:00-6:30pm Storytellers arrive. X will greet them, prep storytellers, make sure they know how the evening will flow. **Collect signed consent forms.**

6:30pm-7pm - X (and hopefully one other person) will greet people as they arrive and give them handouts with information about the event and collect their email addresses on the sign-in sheet. **Give them slips with prompts and ask them to fill it out; it will be collected before the show and/or at intermission.**

6:58pm - Pre-intro announcement by X

- “We will get started in a few minutes” [or say precise number of minutes].
- Let them know where the bar is (if there is one) and encourage folks to order food/drinks early so deliveries don’t interrupt the storytelling.
- Encourage them to take their seats.
- If you have service, please check in on social media.

Explain what the prompts are and encourage the audience to fill them out.

If folks didn’t pick them up at the door, they might find some around the room.

Fill them out -- don’t put your name on them -- and we will read them in

between stories. **Bring them up (or have X collect them).**



The Gratitude Engine

Generating One Billion Acts of Gratitude

PROMPTS [examples: customize for your event]:

- Why do we say thank you?
- Do you say thank you enough?
- Do people thank you enough?
- Do you think there should be a holiday to express gratitude? What would you call it?

7:03pm-7:06pm - MC - Welcome

Welcome everyone - especially our storytellers, and the friends and supporters of our storytellers. Thanks to those of you who have come tonight for the first time (hands), and those who are repeat supporters (hands).

Thank our venue host - X (and encourage people to get food and drinks and tip the bartender!)

A little bit of information about SuperThank's events -- these events are one part of SuperThank's mission to promote a billion acts of radical community gratitude...to express gratitude for someone (or a group) who has gone above and beyond to add value to our community, and who is not typically thanked or recognized for his or her contributions.

There are people who are under-thanked. People who do things that the private market don't sufficiently reward for the good they provide the community.

Fun Fact: Gratitude is good for you. From Forbes Magazine:

- Gratitude improves physical health.
- Gratitude improves psychological health.
- Grateful people sleep better.

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- Gratitude improves self-esteem.

Radio: Some of these stories might be selected to play on XRAY FM in Portland, OR or air on the SuperThank podcast; [to do this the event must be recorded]. Cheering and laughing is encouraged.

- If you curse, the FCC might fine us all.
- Silence phones/devices.
- iTunes & Soundcloud -- SuperThank.

7:06-7:10pm - [A little information about why you are hosting the event]

Warm up the crowd with a story [recommended to share a personal story]

[*optional to your event]

If you're feeling inspired, we'll have an **open mic** portion in the middle of the event tonight, so be thinking of a quick 2-minute story of gratitude you might want to share then. **Let them know how to sign up.**

Slips/prompts reminder!

1st Storyteller:

7:10 [read name and bio]

2nd Storyteller:

7:20 [read name and bio]

3rd Storyteller

7:30 [read name and bio]

7:45 Send folks to Break

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We're about to go to break. Things to do during break.

- Follow us [if you are an organization] and SuperThank on Twitter, like us on Facebook, and favorite SuperThank on SoundCloud
- Follow SuperThank and rate them on iTunes
- Remind audience to turn in question slips (TO X) if they haven't yet.
- Invite everyone to check in on Facebook and post a thank of their own. If you don't use Facebook, do it on Twitter or Instagram. #pdxgratitude #SuperThank
- OPEN MIC: Be ready to share a short (2 minutes or less) story of gratitude during the Open Mic portion. Sign up with _____.
- Invite everyone to stretch their legs, get more food and drink and be back in 15 (TBD) minutes for more gratitude stories.

[Need someone playing floor captain for audience questions]

7:45-8:00 BREAK

8:05-8:20 OPEN MIC (4-6 people)

4th Storyteller:

8:25 [read name and bio]

5th Storyteller:

8:35 [read name and bio]

6th Storyteller:

[read name and bio]

8:55-9pm closing remarks **MC**

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Support asks:

- Reinforce the importance of community gratitude
- Community -- we are shaped by the work around us. How much do we support and appreciate the people and work that matter most to us?
- Tell them about SuperThank's tools - live events, radio show, and website, and encourage folks to say "THANK YOU" more often
- If you or someone you know would be interested in hosting a live storytelling event contact SuperThank via email at stories@superthank.org.

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