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Living Gratitude

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Living Gratitude



Grat-i-tude

/ˈgrədə,t(y)ood/

(the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.)

Another season is upon us; and each season brings change and a time to reflect. Fond memories and missed opportunities pass through our mental spaces, marking time. Yet, when we return to the present, we realize that the plethora of opportunities that lie ahead are exhilarating.

I reflect on my **GRATITUDE** in multiple respects—to my God, my community in faith and at large, my family and my friends.

I am grateful for those who pushed me up and even those who pushed me down—they fueled my persistence. I am grateful for those who made a way out of no way for me. And I'm grateful that my consciousness awoke to the abundant opportunities.

In my reflections, I see the **GRACE** I have been given. For receiving grace, I must show gratitude. In this cycle of life, I am moved by those who poured blessings into me, and I am committed to passing them along to others. I pass them on to those from whom I expect nothing except to continue the cycle and give to others.

Recently, speaking to students at Governors State University's Men's Leadership Conference, I shared a philosophy that is commonly held among those who have "achieved." The belief is, "If you are the smartest person in the room, you should leave the room."

The thinking is that you can not be challenged or grow if you are more accomplished than the others in the room. And I agree—most of the time.

As someone with a capitalist mindset and a community heart, I love competition and collaboration. And it is important to me to be in a room with friends, mentors, coaches, and colleagues to “sharpen each other’s saws” as stated by author Steven Covey in *Habits of Highly Effective People*. Conversely, I am anxious to leave a room where I do not feel we are making each other better.

However, I know my obligation is to continue the cycle—to give back, because of those who did not leave me in the room. Staying engaged and preparing others through my gifts of time, talent, and treasure, I can help prepare others to lead and to better the community.

As our seasons change, I encourage all of us to continue sharpening our saws and staying engaged with the rooms we have outgrown, despite our individual successes. As you enter the new year and decade, reflect on how you have used your time, talents, and treasures to stay engaged. To those of you who have supported Governors State, I say thank you. Thank you for being the change agent our students need to take advantage of accessible higher education and enhanced academic experiences. Your gifts also benefit our faculty’s practices and research which continues to prove their expertise as they prepare our students to succeed in a local and global world.

And to our alumni, *especially*, I applaud all of you, from those who came to Governors State to make your personal change as first-year students or those who came to “Finish What You Started,” and all of you who found a pathway to your personal and professional goals. In this season of reflection, please contemplate not only on the past, but look *forward* and consider Jaguars who are following in your footsteps. As you were once upon a time, they are now — persevering, sacrificing, self-determining, caretaking, and dreaming as they navigate college regardless of whether they are third-generation or first-generation students.

Reward their grit and tenacity with a gift that will also allow academic programs to thrive.

In this time of reflection and renewal, I invite you to participate in helping those who are persisting to finish what they started at Governors State University and to engage in what is yet to begin.

To make a contribution, click [here](#) or contact Lauren Healy (lesolato@govst.edu) at 708-534-4105.