ENCOURAGEMENT & REINFORCEMENT

The Penny Jar Approach & Helping Others Feel Seen, Supported & Valued

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THE STARTING POINT: NOTICE WHAT'S WORKING

It's often easier to notice what's missing than what's present.

We recognize the unfinished task, the missed opportunity, the frustrating behavior, or the thing someone could have done differently. Meanwhile, the small efforts, contributions, thoughtful gestures, and moments of growth happening around us may go unnoticed.

This doesn't necessarily mean we don't appreciate them.

Sometimes we're simply so focused on managing life, solving problems, or identifying what needs attention that we overlook what's already working.

Encouragement and reinforcement invite us to broaden our attention not simply toward what needs to change, but toward what deserves recognition.

When we notice and acknowledge someone's efforts, capabilities, contributions, or progress, we create opportunities for them to feel seen, supported, and valued.

These practices can strengthen confidence, motivation, connection, and the quality of our relationships.

But encouragement isn't simply saying something positive. It involves understanding what matters to another person, recognizing their experience, and responding in ways that are genuine and meaningful.

The objective isn't to praise everything, eliminate difficult conversations, or ignore behaviors that need attention.

It's to develop greater awareness of the different ways we can support one another.

The Penny Jar Approach provides one practical way to build this awareness by recognizing the small, everyday contributions that can otherwise become invisible.

The following areas offer opportunities to explore how we encourage, appreciate, and reinforce ourselves and others.

UNDERSTAND ENCOURAGEMENT & REINFORCEMENT

Different Ways of Recognizing, Supporting & Responding

Encouragement, appreciation, validation, reinforcement, and celebration are closely related. We may use these terms interchangeably, but they serve somewhat different purposes. Understanding these differences can help us respond more effectively to what someone is experiencing.

Sometimes people need recognition. Sometimes they need reassurance. Sometimes they need someone to acknowledge that something is difficult.

And sometimes they need encouragement to keep trying.

WHAT TO EXPLORE

Encouragement | Supporting Effort & Confidence

Encouragement helps someone recognize their capabilities, effort, and willingness to continue.

It can be particularly valuable when someone is learning, facing uncertainty, experiencing setbacks, or trying something difficult.

- For example: *"I know this hasn't been easy. I've noticed how much effort you're putting into figuring it out."*

Encouragement doesn't require a successful outcome. Sometimes the willingness to try deserves recognition.

Appreciation | Recognizing Contributions & Impact

Appreciation communicates that someone's efforts, actions, or presence have meaning.

It helps make contributions visible.

- For example: *"Thank you for taking care of dinner. It gave me time to decompress after a difficult day."*

Specific appreciation helps someone understand not only what you noticed, but why it mattered.

Validation | Acknowledging the Experience

Validation communicates that someone's feelings or experiences have been heard and understood.

It doesn't necessarily mean agreeing with their interpretation, approving their behavior, or accepting responsibility for what happened.

- For example: *"I can understand why that conversation felt frustrating. You were hoping for a different response."*

Sometimes validation is more useful than encouragement. Before helping someone move forward, we may need to acknowledge where they are.

Reinforcement | Supporting Helpful Behaviors

Reinforcement involves responding to a behavior in ways that make it more likely to continue.

Within relationships, this may include acknowledging communication, follow-through, accountability, cooperation, or other behaviors that contribute to connection.

- For example: *"I appreciated that you told me you needed a break and then came back to finish our conversation. That helped me feel more confident we could work through it."*

The intention is to recognize what supports the relationship not to control another person's behavior through approval.

Celebration | Recognizing Meaningful Moments

Celebration creates opportunities to acknowledge achievements, progress, milestones, and meaningful experiences.

Sometimes this involves something significant. Other times, it might simply mean pausing long enough to recognize a small accomplishment.

- For example: *"You've worked toward this for months. How would you like to celebrate?"*

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How do I typically encourage or acknowledge others?
- Do I recognize effort and progress, or primarily focus on outcomes?
- When might someone need validation rather than encouragement?
- How do I communicate appreciation for another person's contributions?
- What helpful behaviors or interactions could benefit from more acknowledgment?
- How comfortable am I receiving encouragement, appreciation, or recognition?

THE OPPORTUNITY: Recognize that encouragement isn't one particular response. It's a range of ways to help others feel understood, supported, and valued.

RECOGNIZE WHAT MATTERS

Effort, Capabilities, Progress & Everyday Contributions

Not everything meaningful is immediately visible. Some contributions are obvious. Others happen quietly, consistently, or behind the scenes. We may notice when something doesn't get done while overlooking the effort required to keep things functioning.

We may recognize someone's achievement without acknowledging the persistence, learning, or uncertainty involved in getting there.

Effective encouragement begins with learning what to notice.

WHAT TO EXPLORE

Be Specific & Intentional

General encouragement can be meaningful. But specific acknowledgment helps someone recognize exactly what you noticed.

Instead of: *"Good job."*

Consider: *"I noticed how you stayed engaged in that difficult conversation, even when you were frustrated."*

Specificity can make encouragement feel more authentic and meaningful.

Catch Them Doing It Right

We often identify unproductive behavior quickly. What if we became equally skilled at recognizing productive behavior?

Notice moments when someone communicates clearly, follows through, shows patience, accepts feedback, offers support, or tries something different.

The goal isn't to monitor or evaluate another person. It's to develop a more balanced awareness of what they're contributing.

Recognize Effort, Not Only Outcomes

Outcomes don't always reflect the amount of effort involved. Someone may work hard and still experience disappointment. Someone may attempt a new behavior without getting it right immediately.

Recognizing persistence, willingness, and learning can help support continued effort.

- For example: *"I know that didn't go the way you hoped. I also noticed that you tried a different approach rather than falling back into the same pattern."*

Reinforce Capabilities & Agency

Encouragement can help people recognize their own strengths and capabilities. Rather than always telling someone what they did well, invite them to reflect on their experience.

Consider asking:

- *"How did you make that happen?"*
- *"What helped you work through that?"*
- *"What did you learn about yourself?"*
- *"What are you most satisfied with?"*

These questions can help someone develop greater self-awareness, confidence, and self-efficacy. The objective isn't to make someone dependent on our approval.

It's to help them recognize what they're capable of.

Make the Invisible Visible

Some of the most meaningful contributions are easy to overlook because they happen regularly.

- Remembering appointments.
- Managing schedules.
- Anticipating needs.
- Following through on responsibilities.
- Making time for someone.
- Offering emotional support.
- Choosing patience during a difficult moment.

These contributions may be part of ordinary life, but that doesn't make them unworthy of acknowledgment. Appreciation can coexist with accountability.

Thanking someone for fulfilling a shared responsibility doesn't mean the responsibility was optional or that they deserve extraordinary praise for doing their part.

It simply recognizes that their contribution matters.

Recognizing Our Own Effort & Growth

Encouragement also involves how we recognize our own experiences. Many of us evaluate ourselves primarily through outcomes, mistakes, unfinished tasks, or what we haven't accomplished.

Consider developing a personal process for periodically reflecting on effort, learning, and progress.

This might involve journaling, reviewing goals, tracking practices, or taking a few minutes each week to reflect.

Questions might include:

- What did I practice or attempt?
- Where did I show up differently?
- What capabilities did I draw upon?
- What did I learn?
- What effort or progress deserves acknowledgment?
- What would I like to continue or adjust?

The objective isn't to create another performance requirement.

It's to develop a more complete understanding of our own efforts, capabilities, and growth.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What contributions do I regularly overlook?
- Do I recognize the process behind someone's effort or primarily the final result?
- How can I make my encouragement more specific and meaningful?
- What capabilities or strengths could I help someone recognize in themselves?
- How do I acknowledge ordinary responsibilities without turning appreciation into a reward system?
- What personal reflection practice might help me recognize my own effort and growth?

THE OPPORTUNITY: Broaden what we notice so that effort, progress, capabilities, and everyday contributions receive meaningful recognition.

LEARN HOW OTHERS EXPERIENCE ENCOURAGEMENT

Preferences, Timing, Emotional State & Responsiveness

Not everyone experiences encouragement the same way. One person may appreciate verbal recognition. Another may feel uncomfortable receiving praise in front of others. Someone may welcome practical support. Someone else may prefer to work independently and receive acknowledgment afterward.

Even the same person may need different responses depending on the circumstances.

Encouragement is most effective when it fits the person and the moment not simply our preferred way of offering it.

WHAT TO EXPLORE

Know the Person

Consider what helps someone feel recognized and supported.

- Do they appreciate direct acknowledgment?
- Thoughtful questions?
- Practical assistance?
- Quiet encouragement?
- Shared celebration?

Rather than assuming, ask. *"What kind of encouragement is helpful for you?" or "Would you like feedback, support, or simply someone to listen?"*

Match the Moment

Someone who's disappointed may not want to hear how much they've learned. Someone who's overwhelmed may not benefit from being told to keep pushing. Someone who's proud of an accomplishment may want to celebrate rather than immediately discuss what comes next.

Consider the emotional context before deciding how to respond.

Listen First, Act Second

One of the most effective ways to support someone is to understand their experience before offering a response.

A useful starting point is: **Listen → Understand → Validate (LUV)**

Listen to what they're sharing. Seek to understand what the experience means to them. Acknowledge what they're feeling or navigating.

Then consider whether encouragement, reassurance, practical assistance, or another response would be useful.

Respect Autonomy & Preferences

Encouragement shouldn't become pressure. Someone may not want advice, attention, physical affection, or public recognition. They may need space to process an experience independently.

Supporting another person sometimes means allowing them to choose how and when they receive support.

Notice How Encouragement Lands

We may intend to be supportive while the other person experiences our response differently.

- For example: *"You can do anything you put your mind to!"*

May feel motivating to one person and dismissive to another who's facing genuine limitations. Pay attention to the response. Be willing to adjust. The objective isn't simply to deliver encouragement.

It's to create an experience of support.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How do the important people in my life prefer to receive encouragement?
- Do I tend to offer the kind of support I would want rather than what they need?
- When might listening or validation be more useful than reassurance?
- How do timing, emotional state, and context influence how encouragement is received?
- Can I offer support without taking over or creating pressure?
- How comfortable am I asking others what kind of encouragement works for them?

THE OPPORTUNITY: Develop greater flexibility in how we encourage others so that our intentions translate into meaningful support.

DIVERSIFY HOW WE SHOW UP

Words, Presence, Actions, Connection & Empowerment

Encouragement doesn't always require a speech. Sometimes it comes through a few thoughtful words.

Sometimes it's demonstrated through attention, practical support, affection, or making room for someone's autonomy. Different approaches create different experiences.

The goal isn't to become more complimentary. It's to become more intentional and versatile in how we support others.

WHAT TO EXPLORE

Words & Acknowledgment

Communicate appreciation, encouragement, and recognition directly.

Name the effort, behavior, or contribution you noticed.

For example:

- *"I appreciate how thoughtfully you approached that decision."*
- *"Thank you for following through on what we discussed."*
- *"I noticed you made an effort to understand my perspective."*

Attention & Presence

Sometimes feeling heard is more encouraging than receiving praise.

- Show interest.
- Ask questions.
- Remember important details.
- Make time.
- Follow up.

For example: *"How did your meeting go? I remember you were nervous about it."*

Attention communicates that someone's experiences matter.

Actions & Practical Support

Encouragement can be demonstrated through behavior. Helping with a responsibility. Making room for rest. Following through on a commitment. Offering assistance when appropriate.

- For example: *"I know you've had a demanding week. Would it help if I handled dinner tonight?"*

Practical support is most useful when it reflects what the person actually needs rather than what we assume they need.

Connection & Affection

Warmth, appropriate physical affection, humor, companionship, and shared experiences can communicate care and support.

- A hug.
- A smile.
- A thoughtful gesture.
- An invitation to spend time together.
- A moment of laughter.

The form matters less than whether it is welcome and meaningful to the recipient.

Opportunities & Empowerment

Sometimes encouragement means expressing confidence in another person's capabilities and supporting their autonomy.

For example: *"You've thought carefully about this. I trust you to decide what works best."* Or: *"Would it help to talk through your options, or would you prefer some space to figure it out?"*

Support doesn't always mean stepping in. Sometimes it means making room for someone to develop confidence through their own experience.

Written & Digital Encouragement

A thoughtful note, text message, email, or written acknowledgment can provide recognition that someone can revisit.

- For example: *"I was thinking about how you handled that conversation yesterday. I appreciated the effort you made to stay curious."*

These approaches can be especially meaningful when people are apart or when expressing appreciation verbally feels less natural.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Which forms of encouragement come naturally to me?
- Which approaches do I rarely use?
- How might I demonstrate support through attention or action rather than words alone?
- When could encouragement involve supporting someone's autonomy rather than offering assistance?
- What forms of connection or affection feel meaningful and appropriate?
- How can I expand my range of responses without becoming inauthentic?

THE OPPORTUNITY: Build a broader playbook for encouragement so that support can be expressed in ways that fit different people, needs, and circumstances.

PRACTICE THE PENNY JAR APPROACH

Small Deposits, Meaningful Recognition & Everyday Connection

Many of the things that sustain relationships are small.

- A thoughtful gesture.
- A completed responsibility.
- A moment of patience.
- An encouraging word.
- A willingness to listen.
- An effort to repair after a disagreement.

Individually, these moments may not seem particularly significant. But over time, they can contribute to how we experience the relationship.

Think pennies, not $100 bills.

The Penny Jar Approach helps us develop a habit of noticing and acknowledging the everyday efforts, contributions, and experiences that might otherwise go unseen.

The objective isn't to count who contributes more or create a reward system.

It's to make appreciation more intentional, visible, and consistent.

WHAT TO EXPLORE

The Relationship Penny Jar

Create a physical jar, bowl, box, or other container. Label it your Relationship Penny Jar. Throughout the day or week, pay attention to things your partner does that you appreciate. Write them on small pieces of paper and place them in the jar.

You can communicate your appreciation in the moment, make a deposit afterward, or do both. Periodically, choose a time to read and share the deposits together.

The jar becomes a visible reminder of the efforts, care, and connection that exist within the relationship.

What Counts as a Penny?

Almost anything genuinely meaningful. Consider different categories of deposits.

Effort & Persistence

Recognizing someone's willingness to try, learn, or continue through difficulty. *"I noticed how hard you worked to figure that out, even when it became frustrating."*

Contributions & Shared Responsibilities

Acknowledging practical efforts, follow-through, and invisible work. *"Thank you for coordinating the appointments this week. I know there was more involved than simply putting them on the calendar."*

Connection & Emotional Availability

Recognizing moments of listening, presence, affection, or responsiveness. *"I appreciated that you made time to listen when I was having a difficult day."*

Growth & Trying Something Different

Acknowledging efforts to interrupt old patterns or practice new behaviors. *"I noticed you approached that disagreement differently. It helped us stay connected."*

Kindness & Character

Recognizing thoughtful, honest, generous, or considerate behavior. *"I appreciated how you treated that person with kindness when the situation became uncomfortable."*

Accountability & Repair

Acknowledging responsibility, follow-through, and meaningful attempts to repair. *"It meant a lot that you came back to our conversation and acknowledged what happened."*

Support & Encouragement

Recognizing ways someone helped you feel supported or understood. *"Thank you for encouraging me to take some time for myself. I needed that."*

Play & Shared Enjoyment

Acknowledging humor, spontaneity, novelty, and moments of connection. *"I loved that you suggested trying something different this weekend. It was fun spending time together."*

These categories aren't requirements or separate jars. They're simply prompts to broaden what we notice.

How to Make a Deposit

Keep it simple. Notice something meaningful. Write down what happened. Include why it mattered, if possible. Place it in the jar.

For example: *"Thank you for cleaning up after the dog when I was overwhelmed. I noticed, and I appreciated not having to manage one more thing."* Or: *"I appreciated that you asked how I was doing instead of assuming I was upset with you."*

The objective is authenticity, not elaborate wording.

Sharing the Deposits

Choose a rhythm that works for your relationship. Maybe once a week. Maybe once a month. Maybe whenever the jar begins to fill. Take time to read the notes together.

Notice what each person appreciates. Notice which contributions might otherwise go unrecognized. Notice what you learn about how the other person experiences support. There is no required number of deposits.

And the jar isn't intended to measure relationship health by volume.

A few genuine acknowledgments can be more meaningful than dozens of obligatory notes.

What If Only One Person Participates?

The practice can still help you become more aware of what you appreciate.

You can begin by noticing and communicating genuine recognition without requiring the other person to participate. However, the Penny Jar shouldn't become another responsibility one person must carry to maintain the relationship.

If the exercise feels one-sided, obligatory, or disconnected from broader relationship concerns, that's useful information to explore.

What the Penny Jar Isn't

The Penny Jar isn't:

- A competition over who contributes more.
- A substitute for addressing unresolved problems.
- A way to earn affection, forgiveness, or compliance.
- A requirement to praise every ordinary responsibility.
- A strategy for ignoring unequal contributions or harmful behavior.
- A measurement of how much someone loves or values another person.

Positive experiences can nourish a relationship, but they don't cancel out mistreatment or replace accountability.

The objective is to recognize what matters while remaining honest about what needs attention.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What small contributions or gestures do I regularly overlook?
- Which categories of deposits might help me broaden my awareness?
- What do I appreciate that I haven't communicated?
- How might writing and sharing these moments influence our connection?
- What could we learn about each other's preferences through the deposits?
- How can we keep the practice genuine rather than obligatory or transactional?

THE OPPORTUNITY: Make everyday care, effort, and connection more visible through small, consistent acts of acknowledgment.

CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Consistency, Authenticity, Mutuality & What Doesn't Work

Encouragement is most meaningful when it becomes part of how we naturally interact with others. Not simply something we offer during major accomplishments. Not only when someone is struggling.

And not exclusively when we want a particular behavior to change.

A culture of encouragement develops when recognition, appreciation, curiosity, and support become familiar parts of the relationship.

But good intentions don't guarantee that encouragement will be helpful. Sometimes the way we offer support can unintentionally create pressure, dismiss someone's experience, or undermine their autonomy.

The objective isn't more positivity at any cost. It's more meaningful, authentic, and responsive support.

WHAT TO EXPLORE

Consistency Over Grand Gestures

Small acknowledgments can become more meaningful when they're part of everyday life. You don't need elaborate compliments, expensive gifts, or extraordinary gestures to communicate appreciation.

Sometimes a simple, specific thank-you is enough.

Authenticity Over Obligation

Encouragement is most useful when it's genuine. People can often recognize when praise feels exaggerated, scripted, or disconnected from their actual experience.

You don't need to manufacture something positive. Notice what's real.

Mutuality Without Scorekeeping

Healthy relationships benefit when people feel recognized and supported. However, encouragement doesn't need to be exchanged in identical amounts or at identical times. One person may naturally express appreciation more frequently. Another may demonstrate support through actions.

The opportunity is to understand how encouragement is offered and received while ensuring that important needs aren't repeatedly overlooked.

WHEN ENCOURAGEMENT MISSES THE MARK

Forced Positivity | When We Rush Past the Experience

Sometimes we try to make someone feel better before understanding what they're experiencing.

- *"Everything happens for a reason."*
- *"At least it wasn't worse."*
- *"Just stay positive."*

These responses may be well-intended but can leave someone feeling dismissed.

Consider: *"That sounds really disappointing. Do you want to talk about it?"*

Sometimes understanding comes before encouragement.

Conditional Approval | When Recognition Must Be Earned

Encouragement can become unproductive when warmth, affection, or acceptance is consistently offered only when someone behaves as desired.

- For example: *“I'm proud of you when you do what I ask.”*

The concern isn't that behavior has consequences or that accomplishments deserve recognition. It's when approval becomes a condition for feeling accepted or valued.

Healthy encouragement supports growth without making someone's basic worth dependent on performance.

Transactional Reinforcement | When Appreciation Becomes Currency

Appreciation can become problematic when it's used to obtain compliance, affection, forgiveness, or other desired responses.

- For example: *“I complimented you all week. Why aren't you doing what I want?”*

Encouragement isn't a payment system. Recognizing someone doesn't create an obligation for them to respond in a particular way.

Excessive or Inauthentic Praise | When More Isn't Better

Not every behavior requires enthusiastic recognition. Overpraising can feel patronizing, exaggerated, or disconnected from the actual effort involved. Instead of automatically celebrating everything, consider what genuinely deserves acknowledgment.

Specific, proportionate encouragement often feels more meaningful.

Love Bombing | When Attention Becomes Pressure or Control

Love bombing generally describes a pattern of intense or disproportionate affection, praise, gifts, or attention that may be used to accelerate closeness, create dependency, or influence someone's choices.

Not every enthusiastic or highly affectionate person is engaging in love bombing.

The broader pattern matters.

Consider whether the attention:

- Creates pressure to reciprocate or commit before someone is ready.
- Becomes conditional on compliance.
- Is followed by guilt, punishment, or withdrawal when boundaries are established.
- Undermines someone's autonomy or relationships with others.
- Creates obligation rather than genuine connection.

Healthy encouragement supports agency and well-being. Manipulative attention may use affection or praise as a means of gaining influence or control.

Using Appreciation to Avoid Accountability

Sometimes encouragement becomes a way to avoid difficult conversations. We may focus on positive contributions while minimizing repeated broken agreements, unequal responsibilities, or harmful behavior.

Appreciation and accountability aren't opposites. We can recognize what someone contributes while also addressing what needs to change.

A Penny Jar full of positive moments doesn't erase unresolved problems.

Encouragement That Takes Over

Sometimes we become so eager to support someone that we begin solving their problems, directing their decisions, or managing their experience. This can unintentionally communicate a lack of confidence in their capabilities.

Consider whether the person wants assistance, collaboration, or simply an opportunity to work through something independently.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Does my encouragement feel authentic and proportionate to the situation?
- When might I unintentionally rush someone toward positivity?
- Am I offering support freely, or expecting something in return?
- How do I distinguish encouragement from pressure or control?
- Do I recognize positive contributions while remaining willing to address difficult issues?
- How can I help create an environment where people feel valued without making approval conditional?

THE OPPORTUNITY: Cultivate encouragement that is genuine, responsive, and supportive of autonomy rather than dependent on praise, pressure, or obligation.

CONNECTING ME TO WE & US

Recognizing Ourselves, Supporting Others & Nourishing the Relationship

The ME | WE | US framework offers three perspectives for understanding encouragement and reinforcement.

ME | WHAT DO I RECOGNIZE IN MYSELF?

How do I acknowledge my own effort, learning, progress, and capabilities? Am I primarily focused on shortcomings, or do I recognize what I'm practicing and developing?

What reflection process might help me become more aware of my growth?

WE | HOW DO I ENCOURAGE & RESPOND TO OTHERS?

How do I recognize another person's efforts and experiences? What helps them feel understood, supported, and appreciated?

Can I adapt my encouragement to their needs rather than relying only on my preferred approach?

US | WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP ENVIRONMENT ARE WE CULTIVATING?

How do we make everyday contributions visible? How do we recognize what supports our connection?

What practices help encouragement, appreciation, and reinforcement become part of our shared experience?

AN EXAMPLE: PRACTICING SOMETHING DIFFERENT

- **ME**: "I recognize that I often become defensive during difficult conversations. I've been practicing slowing down and listening before responding."
- **WE**: "My partner notices that I stayed engaged during a challenging discussion and acknowledges the effort."
- **US**: "We begin recognizing these small moments of progress and reinforcing the behaviors that support healthier communication."

The individual effort becomes visible. The acknowledgment supports the interaction. And repeated experiences contribute to the relationship we're cultivating.

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Finding Opportunities to Notice & Encourage

You don't need to become more expressive overnight or develop an elaborate system. Begin with what feels realistic.

Consider:

- **What am I overlooking?** Which efforts, contributions, or behaviors deserve more recognition?
- **Who might benefit?** Is there someone in my life who could use encouragement, validation, or appreciation?
- **How can I diversify?** What form of support might I try that I don't typically use?

- **What can I recognize in myself?** What effort, capability, or progress deserves acknowledgment?
- **What can we practice together?** Would the Penny Jar help us make appreciation more visible?

Choose one small opportunity. Notice something meaningful. Communicate it in a way that fits the person and the moment. Pay attention to how it's received. Adjust and continue practicing.

The goal isn't to deliver more compliments.

It's to become more intentional about recognizing what matters.

A FINAL THOUGHT

People benefit from feeling seen, understood, supported, and valued. Yet many of the things worth recognizing happen quietly. Someone tries something difficult. Follows through on a responsibility. Makes an effort to communicate differently. Offers support. Demonstrates patience. Takes responsibility.

Or simply shows up when it matters.

These moments can be easy to overlook when we're focused primarily on what needs improvement. Encouragement and reinforcement invite us to notice more of the complete picture. Not to ignore problems. Not to manufacture positivity.

And not to turn appreciation into a transaction. But to recognize effort, capabilities, contributions, and meaningful moments of connection. Sometimes that recognition comes through words. Sometimes through listening, actions, affection, or shared experiences.

And sometimes through a small piece of paper dropped into a jar.

Think pennies, not $100 bills.

Small moments of genuine recognition can help people feel seen and valued and help us cultivate relationships where appreciation becomes part of everyday life.