

## Harvesting the 'power' of thankfulness

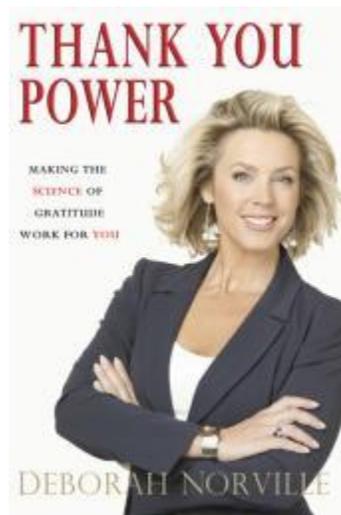
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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Published on: 11/13/2007

UGA grad and former Atlantan Deborah Norville knows the title of her book is gagworthy: "Thank You Power: Making the Science of Gratitude Work for You."

The "Inside Edition" anchor also knows the claims she makes in the book — that being thankful can make you healthier, happier and wiser — "sound like some cheesy infomercial at 2 a.m. in the morning."



But Norville said there's a science behind the breathless prose on the back cover. ("Say thank you. It's the real secret to having the life you want!")

"I wanted to know: Has anyone reputable with valued credentials studied whether there were measurable benefits to counting your blessings?" Norville said from her home in New York [City](#). She is in Atlanta Tuesday for a private National Philanthropy Day luncheon downtown. She will later sign books from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at Kroger, 2090 Dunwoody Club Drive.

Before writing her new book, Norville says she checked other "positive thinking" books on the shelves along the lines of "The Secret." "There were tons of platitudes about attitudes. They were all full of rhymes, very pithy. But there was nothing there of substance."

So she sifted through academic journals ("a cure for insomnia," she joked) and found what she was looking for: dozens of studies proving that gratitude can improve you both physically and emotionally.

In one test by two professors, groups were split into those who focused on what was wrong with their lives, those who thought about normal day-to-day events and those who specifically thought about the good things in life, be it family, friends or the smell of lilacs in the front yard. And yes, the positive thinkers were happier and even exercised significantly more than the Debbie Downers.

Norville said this is not just about "positive thinking" but "positive action." She requires those taking on "Thank You Power" to each day write down three things that they are thankful for. The act of writing these thoughts down versus just thinking about them provides a more concrete catalyst toward positive feelings and outcomes, she said.

Interestingly, this focus on gratitude does not turn people into Pollyannas who think bad people or bad situations are good, she said. Rather, they will better perceive neutral or good things and be more inclined to help people who deserve it.

Norville has been writing down her thankful moments daily since Valentine's Day. She said she used to get migraines regularly but since she started tracking what is good in her life, the migraines have disappeared.

"Thank you power, baby!" she said.

"I'm more proud of this book than anything I've done professionally over 30 years," Norville said. In fact, the book became a New York Times best-seller this fall. "I believe there's a lot of truth in the book and it has the potential to make a difference."