

Make America Grateful Again

By [Lance Woodbury](#)

Much has been written about the way in which the political atmosphere of the last several months increased the sense of division between us. Within families, between coworkers,

in our churches and our neighborhoods and towns, we were often at odds. Many were disheartened by the tone of the discussion and the negativity. No matter the side, contempt for the alternative was often visible and visceral. Our choices as a country seemed inconsistent with our potential as people and as practitioners of faith. It was a difficult time intellectually, emotionally and spiritually, and I, for one, am ready to move forward.

As I thought about the divisiveness of our public discourse – which, by the way, permeated many family meetings and peer group gatherings throughout the spring, summer and fall – I considered this Guiding Principles column. I thought about how the principles described by [those leaders we profiled](#) had propelled their families and their companies to make a positive impact on so many, and had created a legacy of which to be proud.

I wondered, if I had to choose one principle that might help us approach the future after a difficult period, which one would be most fruitful? The more I thought about it, the more I came to see Gratitude as that principle. Let me offer three reasons why:

Gratitude makes us more aware. Recalling what we appreciate cultivates a mindfulness of the events and people in our lives. We tune in to what is happening around us, in a world where distraction via technology and entertainment is too often the norm.

Gratitude creates a positive foundation. After taking stock of your many blessings, it is hard not to look at your future in a more positive and abundant light.

Gratitude includes others. Seldom do all of one's good fortunes and lessons learned come solely from within. God, family, employees, customers, partners, and neighbors are part of our thanks-giving. Recognizing their contribution draws us closer together and moves us beyond a focus on ourselves.

[G.K. Chesterton](#), a writer and Christian apologist, suggested that “Othanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.” What a fulfilling prescription for the future. May your Thanksgiving be filled with gratitude.