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# Learning Lifeline

A LETTER ABOUT LEARNING FROM ESTHER WILKISON

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Last March, a wise friend reminded me that I adult better when I use a paper planner. I agreed and chose a planner that provided daily columns on a two-page weekly spread.

Below each day's list of appointment hours, the planner provided four little lines. Quite often, I used those to jot down what I was most thankful for from the day.

I began this gratitude practice, not because I set a smart goal or developed self-discipline, but simply because God provided a system that gave me daily space.

I've had a tendency around past Thanksgivings to feel low-level guilt for not expressing my gratitude all the other days of the year. Now, I see that I didn't have a lack of gratitude—I just needed a better system.

Could it be that where we struggle has more to do with systems failures than with character flaws? Could that also be the case for those we work with?

Recently, I was talking to a retired music teacher about a workshop I was preparing on motivating learners. She told me that, for her, motivation comes down to two words—observation and curiosity. She observed her students in order to find out what they were curious about. Then she used what they were curious about as an entry point to invite them into the learning.

I love that her own curiosity influenced how she observed her students. She was not watching to condemn, but to discover.

I don't know about you, but I've got room to grow in this area of observation from a place of curiosity. When I write what I'm thankful for in my planner today, I'm going to thank God for the chance to keep learning and for all of you who are learning with me.

Blessings on your Thanksgiving.