

# The PACKARD PRESS

A collection of thoughts and stories to educate, entertain, and inspire.

## UNLOCK 25% MORE HAPPINESS

### *Simply by Keeping a Gratitude Journal*

When I sat down to write this letter, I carried one of my old gratitude journals over to my desk with me, planning to flip through it for inspiration. After turning just a few pages, I found myself smiling. A feeling of warmth and happiness permeated my body.

There is so much wonder and joy in that little handwritten journal. Here are just a few of the things I wrote I was thankful for:

- *Hugs from my young children*
- *My friendships with my siblings*
- *Technology that allows me to communicate with friends and family far away*
- *Playing flag football with the kids*
- *Game nights with friends*
- *Poetry*
- *My son's big, gap-filled smile after he lost a tooth*
- *Chit-chatting with the kiddos on the short ride to school*
- *Sleeping in*
- *The cool weather in the fall*
- *Late night talks with my teenagers*
- *Christina Perri's lullabies*

I've kept a gratitude journal — either handwritten or in digital form — since late 2019. I knew about the importance of gratitude earlier, but that was the year I decided to experiment with deliberately writing it down and expressing it.

This experiment helped me to recognize the feeling of gratitude when it bubbled up throughout the day. It became an attitude that flowed through my body, not necessarily attached to one person or thing but encompassing my whole heart. For the first time, I was able to step to the side and focus not on myself but on the wonderful things happening to and around me every day of my life.

Maybe all this sounds a little hokey, but science backs up the power of my little gratitude book. Not long ago, I



was sitting in a continuing legal education class when one of the speakers shared an astounding statistic: Keeping a gratitude journal can increase your happiness level by 25%.

That number blew me away. Even the speaker himself couldn't believe it, but he explained that he'd looked into the studies ... and it was true! The deliberate and purposeful practice of gratitude can be more effective at increasing happiness than other common techniques, including medication.

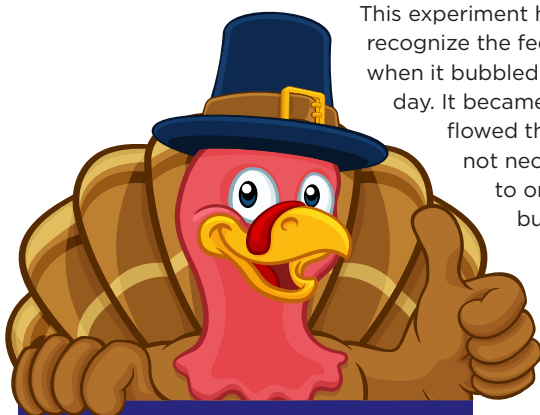
As I got more serious about gratitude, I found that keeping a journal really does increase my level of happiness. It helps me see sad moments in a better light. It reduces feelings of entitlement, fear, and frustration. It also makes positive experiences even better. My practice also helps me refocus my attention away from myself and outward to others. As Huston Smith said, "The self is too small an object for perpetual enthusiasm."

My gratitude practice has slowly spread to my family. Every November, to celebrate Thanksgiving, we keep a collective gratitude journal for the entire month. It's a little notebook we bring out at the dinner table. Each night, AmyLyn and I sit down with the kids and pass the journal around the table. We all take a moment to write down one thing from the day we're thankful for.

If you've never kept a gratitude journal, this is the perfect month to try it. There's no wrong way to journal. You can hand-write your list in a notebook or type it in a note or document on your phone or computer. (Pro Tip: If you choose the latter, organize your notes so the new entries are at the top of the sheet. It seems backward, but it will save you from scrolling!) Whichever option you try, just make sure to record something each day. Writing in my journal at night works for me (I have a whole day of experiences to look back on), but do whatever works for you.

This month, I hope you'll join me in focusing on gratitude. You might be happy you did (up to 25% more)!

*—Michael Packard*



### **Our annual Turkey Giveaway is back!**

With just one text message, you can win your family a free bird for Thanksgiving. Turn to Page 3 to learn how to enter.

# THANKSGIVING IS ABOUT MORE THAN FOOD

## It's About Showing Gratitude

As we prepare for our Thanksgiving feasts, Thursday night football games, and Black Friday shopping, take some time to show gratitude for those around you and for what you have. Here are a few ways to practice gratitude this month.

### **Appreciate everything.**

Get into the habit of being grateful for the little things in your life. It can be easy to acknowledge the “big” things, but nothing is too small to be thankful for. You can be grateful the weather is nice and sunny, that you received the package you’ve been waiting for, or that you got out of bed today. Don’t leave out anything when practicing gratitude.

### **Practice mindfulness.**

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present and aware of what’s happening around you. So, instead of being overwhelmed by what you need to do tomorrow or next week, focus on the present moment and enjoy the time you spend solo or with your loved ones. Live in the moment and take one day at a time. Tomorrow will surely come, and you only have a limited amount of time in the present.

### **Celebrate your challenges.**

Sometimes struggles and battles in our lives can weigh us down. But when you persevere and continue to push forward, you will find success. Challenges help you improve your abilities and resilience, so celebrate the progress you’ve made. Showing gratitude for challenges and negative experiences allows us to acknowledge humility and appreciate growth in our lives.

### **Keep a journal.**

Writing down the things you’re grateful for will remind you of all the great things you have when other things aren’t going so well. So, keep a journal about what you’re grateful for each day or week — even if it’s just small things at first. Your perspective on life will change, and it will get easier to see the good things and to feel grateful for things you were likely overlooking.

Showing gratitude is something we should do every day, all throughout the year — not just during the holidays. So, try to practice mindfulness and gratitude using these tips! Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!



## 2 LOCAL CHARITIES WORTH SUPPORTING

### Consider Them in Your Giving This Season!

Every person on Earth has two vital needs: food and housing. So, if you’re looking for ways to give back to your community during this holiday season, those are great places to start. Our team engages as much as possible with local charities that help people in need, and these are two of our favorite organizations that stay busy taking care of the basics.

#### **The San Antonio Food Bank (SAFoodBank.org)**

This huge food bank serves 100,000 people every single week and hands out 74 million meals annually. A lot of those meals go to kids. According to the food bank, 1 in 4 children in our city goes to bed hungry — can you believe that?

Fortunately, the food bank is fighting back. Since 1980, it has been a go-to resource in the community, and it’s definitely a place worth supporting. If you have the funds, consider donating. Every dollar you donate provides seven meals. You can also volunteer your time in the sorting room or organize a food drive. Visit the food bank’s website to learn more about what they need and discover which option is best for you.

#### **Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio (HabitatSA.org)**

This wonderful organization relies on donations and volunteers to build modest, affordable homes for families in need. It also sells building supplies, furniture, and decor through its Habitat Home Center stores to raise money for its efforts. We love the nonprofit’s motto: “We provide a hand-up, not a handout.”

Habitat for Humanity is always looking for monetary help, and 100% of all donations go toward its home-building program. If you’re able, you can also volunteer to work in a Habitat Home Center store (there are three local stores), make lunches, or even pitch in with the building process.

If you’re not in a position to give this holiday season, that’s okay, too. Cherish the time with your loved ones, and don’t be afraid to reach out to an organization like the San Antonio Food Bank or Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio if you need food or shelter. That’s why they’re here!

*—Michael Packard*





# WIN A FREE TURKEY FOR YOUR TABLE!

Enter Our Annual Thanksgiving Giveaway

Thanksgiving just isn't Thanksgiving without a turkey at the center of the table. However, sometimes getting your hands on a bird can be expensive or complicated. **To make things a bit easier for you this holiday season and to help increase gratitude and happiness this Thanksgiving, our office is giving away THREE Thanksgiving turkeys, absolutely free!**

There's just one catch. To enter, we ask that you share **three things you're grateful for this year**, one for each turkey in the giveaway! You can put your name in the hat by **texting your thankful list to 210-756-5399 or by emailing us at Thanksgiving@PackardFirm.com**. Just make sure you do it before **Sunday, Nov. 20!** You can also invite your friends and family to enter. Just share this newsletter with them. Everyone is welcome.

We'll draw names on Monday, Nov. 21, so check our Facebook page for an announcement of the winners. We will contact you the same way you contacted us to make sure you get your turkey

by Thanksgiving. You can find us on Facebook at **Facebook.com/ThePackardLawFirm**.

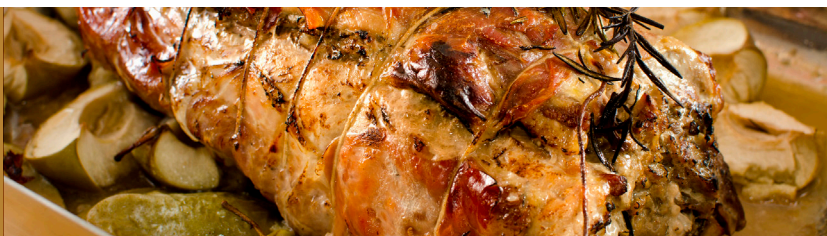
We started this tradition last year, and we knew immediately we'd do it again! We were pleasantly surprised by how many people sent in their thankful lists. We loved reading through the things everyone was grateful for. Some entries mentioned things many of us take for granted, like regaining the ability to walk pain-free after a surgery. Reading those lists brought contagious positivity into our office. This year, we'd like to encourage you to share your lists with others as well. So, if you share your list on social media or even in a group chat/text, then you'll get an additional entry for the drawing. Just send us a screenshot.

**Remember, to enter, text your thankful list to 210-756-5399 or email it to Thanksgiving@PackardFirm.com.** Your three things can be as simple or as detailed as you like. If you feel stuck, read Michael's article on the cover for inspiration. Good luck!

## TAKE A BREAK

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| Casserole | Raking      | Thanksgiving |
| Election  | Remembrance | Topaz        |
| Gratitude | Saints      | Turkey       |
| Harvest   | Squash      | Veteran      |



## ROASTED PORK LOIN WITH APPLES

### Ingredients

*Inspired by MomFoodie.com*

- 4 lbs pork loin
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tsp salt, divided
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 8 apples
- 2 red onions
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 3 tbsp butter, softened

### Directions

1. In a large bowl, season pork loin with garlic powder, 1 1/2 tsp salt, and pepper, then cover and place in refrigerator for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 425 F.
3. Slice apples and onions, then chop garlic cloves. Season with brown sugar, olive oil, remaining salt, and cinnamon.
4. In a 9x13-inch baking dish, place a layer of apples and onions in the pan, put pork loin on top, then place remaining apples and onions around it.
5. Break butter into small pieces and place them on the pork loin and apples. Place dish in oven and let it bake for 15 minutes.
6. Reduce the heat to 350 F, then continue to bake for 60 minutes.
7. Remove dish and stir apples and onions.
8. Increase heat to 450 F, put dish in oven, and roast for an additional 8-10 minutes.

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- 1 How Michael Unlocked 25% More Happiness
- 2 It's National Gratitude Month!  
2 Charities That Need Your Help
- 3 Win a FREE Turkey for Your Table!  
Roasted Pork Loin With Apples
- 4 Calico Cat Saves Owner From  
Would-Be Burglars

## GUARD CAT MODE ACTIVATED

### *Feline Defender Prevents Robbery*

We've heard of guard dogs, but have you ever heard of a guard cat? Well, Bandit the calico cat somehow knew exactly what to do when she spied intruders at her owner's back door! Some may call it instinct, some may call it luck, but to Fred Everitt, she's a hero.

Everitt, a 68-year-old retired oral surgeon, was sound asleep in his Mississippi home on Sunday, July 24, when Bandit started letting out deep meows sometime between 2:30–3 a.m. Everitt assumed Bandit had seen another cat or other animal outside.

Cats tend to be active at night, and Bandit is no exception. She's been known to roam the living room and explore the kitchen cabinets while Everitt sleeps soundly. He quickly realized it was something else when she came into his room and tried to pull his comforters off and clawed at his arms.

Bandit's behavior was unusual, so Everitt knew something was wrong. "She had never done that before," Everitt said. "I went, 'What in the world is wrong with you?'"

Bandit's persistence eventually pulled him from bed, and after throwing his robe on, he went to investigate. When he finally got into the kitchen, he noticed two figures — one with a crowbar and one with what looked like a handgun — trying to break into his back door.

By the time Everitt returned from retrieving his own handgun, the intruders were gone. Thankfully, it didn't turn into a confrontational situation, and Everitt gave credit to the 20-pound cat that he adopted from a Humane Society. If it hadn't been for Bandit's alertness, it could've been a completely different story.

"I want to let people know that you save a life when you adopt from a pet shelter or rescue one," Everitt said, "but the tides could be turned. You never know when you save an animal if they're going to save you."

