

# Gratitude: Counting our Blessings

Monta Vista Character Lab

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4/26/25

# My Friend Angela Duckworth



Adam TOUGHZA  
SAMPLE FOOTER TEXT 2  
INSFAD - Europe



## Gratitude

So many people had a hand in our success, from the teachers who inspired us to the janitors who kept the school clean.

-Michelle Obama



# People who express gratitude see the world differently

- Gifts
- Welcoming
- Interesting
- Blessed
- Improving
- Hopeful
- Fortunate
- Abundant



- Deprivation
- Deservingness
- Blessings
- Regrets
- Lack
- Need
- Scarcity
- Loss

# Gratitude

Appreciation for the benefits we receive, and the desire to reciprocate

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A grateful person might think, "I ran further today than I did last week," whereas an ungrateful person might think, "I wish I were as fast as her."



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to me ▼

Hi Coach Flatow!

I'm Rachel from the Class of 2021, a former MVXC/T&F runner. If there's anything that might help you recall who I am, I wore a homemade Angela Duckworth T-shirt for a Crystal Springs XC meet for Halloween.

It's been four years since I last stepped foot on Monta Vista's Campus. A lot has happened in these four years, and as I'm about to graduate from college, I wanted to personally reach out to give you some updates on my life and also extend a very delayed thank you message for being an inspirational figure throughout my life.

This will likely be quite a long email, but I'll try to summarize these four years ' worth of events as much as I can. It will likely still be very long. So feel free to read this when you have a lot of time on your hands :)

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2021 Summer: I moved south to start my college career, majoring in pre-economics at UC Santa Barbara. It was a great location for a runner like me, and it was a great fresh start to my life, after stressful AP tests, COVID-19 quarantine, and just going through some personal things during my senior year of high school.

2021 Fall: Coming from a journalism background, the first thing I did in college was interview a UCSB professor whose research revolved around analyzing and studying the trends of misinformation in the media. In a spontaneous turn of events, our interview ended with him encouraging me to get on the waitlist for a remote intro to computer science class. So I did just that.

2022 Winter: I got off the waitlist, and did surprisingly well in that class, and realized that coding was pretty fun. My professor, who taught the introductory class, also felt the same and suddenly invited me to become her undergraduate learning assistant (ULA, a TA position for undergrad students) for her class in the following quarter. This was the first job I've ever had in my life, and for the first time in my life, I felt that perhaps I was meant to be an engineer.

4/26/25 Weeks later, the decisions came flooding in. Both good and bad. Accepted to UMichigan for ECE. Rejected from Princeton, Stanford, and Berkeley for Electrical Engineering.

...and six pages  
later...

Finally, accepted to ECE at Carnegie Mellon University at 12 am PST on yet another Sunday night. This was my dream program. It was the first of a handful of decisions that I was so relieved.

Spring 2025: And we're back to the present! A few weeks ago, I'd gotten 3 acceptances in a span of 20 minutes from UIUC, Georgia Tech, and CMU for Electrical and Computer Engineering programs. And this wrapped up my college admission decisions journey.

As you might have guessed. I committed to CMU. And as I took all the memories I've made these past few years, I realized that I never really said out to those who supported me during high school. So I wanted to reach out to you to say thank you for instilling in me the values of grit, strength, and perseverance that carried me throughout my personal marathon of being a college student.

Your daily speeches, motivating presence, and never-ending dedication to the XC/TF students at Monta Vista have inspired me to show gratitude, kindness to others, to give back to my community, and to (hopefully) inspire others.

By now, I've realized that this email has gone on too long, and it's a bit late to cut down. However, I would love to hear from you and how you've been these past few years. How have the XC and T&F seasons been going? What's changed, what's been the same?

Thank you for everything you've done for the team, and thank you for changing my life.

Wishing all the best,  
Rachel Jiang

PS: I'm still doing daily runs to this day. Every. Single. Day.



# What Research Tells Us

Gratitude correlates with positive life outcomes.

Gratitude is positively related to hope, forgiveness, pride, contentment, optimism, inspiration, and overall positive affect.

**Studies have shown that people can build and improve their gratitude.**





## The Subtle Impact of Gratitude

We realize what a positive impact we can have on people around us.

We reflect upon the many good things in our lives.



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# A Gratitude and Blessings Exercise

**Break into groups**

**Alternate drawing a topic**

**Share something you are grateful  
for related to that topic**

**Others respond**





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# Discussion

## How to bring more gratitude into our lives

