



First English Thanksgiving Commemorative Ceremony
Jamestown Settlement
December 4, 2019

Welcome

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox, Speaker of the House of Delegates of Virginia

Announcer:

Please welcome, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates and Co-Chair of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution, the Honorable M. Kirkland Cox.

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox:

Thank you, thank you. Well, good afternoon. Let's give a special thanks to the Jamestown High School Chamber Choir under the direction of Matt Rapach. What a tremendous performance.

Welcome to the commemorative ceremony of the 400th anniversary of the first official English Thanksgiving in North America. I would like to especially welcome a few special guests we have with us, including Chief Stephen R. Adkins, Sr., of the Chickahominy Indian Tribe. Chief Rafferty Brown of the Nottoway Indian Tribe. Our First Lady of Virginia, Pam Northam. Former Governor George F. Allen and former First Lady Susan Allen. Justice William C. Mims of the Virginia Supreme Court. And of course, my great commemoration co-chair Thomas "Tommy" K. Norment, Jr. Of course he also serves as the majority leader in the Senate of Virginia. Also I want to welcome our members of the General Assembly who are here today, so thank you all so much for coming. Mayor of Hampton Donnie R. Tuck. And former Lieutenant Governor John H. Hager.

All year long, the Commonwealth has been commemorating formative history that occurred in Virginia during 1619 through the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. First, we commemorated the 400th anniversary of the first representative legislative assembly in the new world on July 30th right here at Jamestown Settlement and at Historic Jamestowne on Jamestown Island. It was followed by the 400 anniversary of the first African landing at Old Point Comfort, today's Fort Monroe and Hampton, August 23rd through August 25th.

Today, we are commemorating our third historical date this year. We've also showcased recruitment of English women in significant numbers, the entrepreneurial spirit of the Virginia Company, and the perseverance and fortitude of our Virginia Indians for over 400 years. Today marks the 400th anniversary of the first official English Thanksgiving. Before English settlers arrived in the new world, Native American peoples marked successful harvests with feasts and communal celebrations during the 16th and 17th centuries. English settlers and explorers frequently gave thanks to God after experiencing good fortune or completing an arduous journey.

Today, we will hear from representatives of the original three cultures that forged Virginia, beginning in 1619, and from faith leaders and thought leaders with wisdom and insights that call each of us to a renewed spirit of Thanksgiving. Today, December 4th, is a day of giving thanks for the divine providence God has bestowed upon Virginia and America for over 400 years. May God bless Virginia and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

It is now my pleasure to introduce the Reverend Catherine Tyndall Boyd, rector of St. Martin's Episcopal Church here in Williamsburg, Virginia. Please stand for the invocation and remain standing for the pledge of allegiance.

Invocation

The Reverend Catherine Tyndall Boyd, Rector of St. Martin's Episcopal Church

The Reverend Catherine Tyndall Boyd:

The great British thinker and British and Anglican theologian C. S. Lewis said, "Gratitude looks to the past, and love looks to the present." Let us open our hearts to God in gratitude and in love. As we look to the past, we are grateful. We are grateful to God for all those who have gone before. We honor them, and we bear witness to their lives. We bear witness to kindness and cruelty. We bear witness to their joys and suffering. And so we stand side by side with all those who have been here before us. We gather their spirits to ours. We remember them, put them back together. All those who have gone before us are still here. Thousands of years of spirits. In my tradition, we call this the communion of saints, the community of those whom we love but see no longer. Still living in the heart of God. And we are grateful.

Gratitude looks to the past, and love looks to the present. We gather here in love because love is the path to forgiveness. We feel our feet standing firmly on this sacred ground. The gratitude of our hearts connects us and roots us to the ground. We acknowledge the hard complexity and the fullness of the history that has brought us to this day. With solemn hearts, we bear witness to our own suffering, to our own joys. We gather here in love in this present company and invoke God's forgiveness and blessing on our lives. We open our hearts and spirits to the one who created all things, and our prayer unites us to one another as siblings of God. May the holy one grant that all the peoples of the earth be healed of division and united in one spirit. Amen. May it be so.

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox:

Please remain standing for the pledge of allegiance, led by the Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr., majority leader of the Senate of Virginia and co-chair of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution.

Pledge of Allegiance and Introduction
The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr.

The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr.:

As the good reverend said that we are standing side by side, please join me in the pledge to our flag of the United States of America. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Please be seated.

Good afternoon and welcome. First of all, I want to extend my congratulations to the Jamestown High School chorus that I drive past twice a day, just down from where I live. So it's wonderful to have you all here. It is my pleasure to introduce three prominent Virginian leaders who will offer reflections of the original three cultures as we commemorate the first official Thanksgiving in North America and our 400 years' evolution as a commonwealth and as a nation.

The first gentleman that I will introduce is a friend of mine that I have known for many years going back to 2007 and have come to value his friendship. And that is Stephen R. Adkins, who was elected chief of the Chickahominy Tribe in 2001. He has worked absolutely tirelessly on behalf of the Virginia Indian tribes to gain federal recognition, which was accomplished in 2018. Steve also serves on the board of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and is a member of the 2019 Commemoration Steering Committee.

The second gentleman that I would like to introduce is Graham Woodlief, and Graham is a direct descendant of Captain John Woodlief, who captained the *Margaret* from Bristol, England to Berkeley Hundred, today Berkeley's Plantation, along the James River. Graham is a retired president of Media General Group and serves as president of the Virginia Thanksgiving Festival and as chair of the 2019 Commemoration First Thanksgiving Committee.

The last gentleman that I would introduce is also an old time friend that I first met when he was working with Colonial Williamsburg, Dr. Rex Ellis. Dr. Ellis is the Associate Director for Curatorial Affairs Emeritus for the National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Dr. Ellis is also an ordained minister and chair of the 400 Years of African American History Commission. So with that, chief?

Reflections of the Original Three Cultures
The Honorable Stephen R. Adkins, Sr., Chief of the Chickahominy Indian Tribe
H. Graham Woodlief, descendant of Captain John Woodlief and director of the Virginia Thanksgiving Festival

Dr. Rex Ellis, Associate Director for Curatorial Affairs at the National Museum of African American History and Culture

The Honorable Stephen R. Adkins, Sr.:

Thank you, Senator Norment. Greetings all gathered here today and my platform guests, First Lady Northam, and all the guests assembled here. It is indeed an honor to be here today. And as we are here to reflect on Thanksgiving, the calendar settles the question of the first English-speaking Thanksgiving event in North America. Surely no one in my company today can dispute the fact that 1619 preceded 1620. And if you do, let's talk a little bit outside. We can... Anyway.

While Virginia's indigenous peoples did not gather at Berkeley in 1619, they had actually practiced Thanksgiving celebrations for many years prior to December 4th, 1619. In fact, fall celebrations centered around thanks to the creator for the bounties harvested from Mother Earth. So Thanksgiving wasn't new to us. It was a part of life. I'm proud to reflect that it has become a part of life in all of North America.

So let's fast forward to December 4th, 2019. We are culminating a year of 400th anniversary commemorations. The arrival of the first enslaved Africans, the arrival of English women, the seating of the first English-speaking legislature comprised of public representatives. And yes, the first English-speaking Thanksgiving. I would contend that convening that first general assembly was a significant step toward a more perfect union and a republic characterized by government of the people, by the people, for the people. Really, as espoused in the United States constitution, which was ratified in 1788. To be sure, there have been fits and starts along the way, yet the journey continues.

Am I thankful that by 1699, 90% of the indigenous peoples in the Tidewater area had perished? Of course not. Am I thankful that Lord De la Warr ordered the annihilation of the Paspahegh tribe in 1619? Another rhetorical question, of course not. Or am I thankful that my people were driven from their ancestral lands by the mid-17th century? And of course, the answer is a resounding no.

However, I am very thankful that we are still here, that our contributions are being recognized, that our history is being ransomed, a history that's been held hostage way too long. It's both been ransomed and shared with a populace that's very hungry for the truth. I'm thankful that institutions like the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation are researching the history of Virginia's indigenous peoples and their role in the shaping of both the history of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States of America, by boldly sharing and even showcasing this untold history.

And why would I say boldly? Because the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation is going against the norms. They have chosen to do a deep dive in those resources that really have chronicled the narrative of both blacks and indigenous peoples of this area. And they have made a commitment to share that story. And why it is so important is because the Department of Education has shied

away from it for 412 years. I'm not saying the Department of Education has existed that long. Surely it has not. But the ruling majority has chosen not to share that history.

So I hope the actions taken about the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and institutions like the Virginia Museum of History and Culture can cast a wide enough net that we can fill the void that has been left, systematically, by design, from the public school systems in Virginia, the United States notwithstanding.

So my prayer is that we can navigate the next 400 years in a way that appreciates and builds on the rich diversity that has been part and parcel of the Commonwealth of Virginia since those seminal events of 1619. And I further hope that, as we continue on that journey to a more perfect union, which I think is not an aspirational goal, I think it's an achievable goal that we work on every day. But as we approach that, as we continue that journey, my prayer is that, during this holiday season, that we can really promote, live, and act out this concept of peace and goodwill to all the men of Earth. Peace and goodwill towards all humankind. So I would like to engage you now for a commitment, by show of hands, that you will help us be very thankful of where we are, and march toward peace and goodwill on Earth to all men. Thank you.

H. Graham Woodlief:

Thank you. It's a real pleasure to be here today. What a beautiful day we have, and what a special day it is. This year will mark the 400th anniversary of the first official English Thanksgiving in the New World. 400 years ago today, Captain John Woodlief and his 35 settlers landed on what is now Berkeley Plantation. When they landed, they kneeled and gave a prayer of Thanksgiving for their safe voyage. This was exactly one year and 17 days before the pilgrims landed in Massachusetts. Just to set the record straight.

How did this journey begin? Well, in the spring of 1618, four Englishman known as the Berkeley Company met in London to discuss starting a settlement in Virginia, a piece of land, 8,000 acres, was granted to them by the Virginia Company. They needed an experienced leader to lead the expedition over to the new world to find this new land, and they chose John Woodlief whom I'm a descendant of.

Now Woodlief had been to the new world several times, he asked if I have the starving time at Jamestown. The Berkeley Company made him a captain and governor of the colony and gave him a list of 10 instructions once he landed. The very first instruction was to give thanks to almighty God for their safe voyage and to give a prayer of Thanksgiving annually and perpetually thereafter.

Now Woodlief chose 35 able bodied men to accompany him on this trip. He leased the good ship, *Margaret*, which weighed only 47 tons and was only 35 feet long. Now can you imagine 35 settlers on this ship that was 35 feet long? And they had a crew of 19, spending two and a half months across the Atlantic Ocean. The *Margaret* set sail on September the 16th, 1619 at 8 o'clock in the morning and as I said, they spent two and a half months on a stormy Atlantic ocean. The men were homesick, claustrophobic, there was a vermin infestation, and they prayed constantly. They entered the Chesapeake Bay on November 28 and sailed towards the King James River.

On December the 4th exactly 400 years ago today, the *Margaret* landed at Berkeley Hundred, and the men kneeled and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving as instructed by the Berkeley Company. It was a simple prayer in the middle of the winter by 35 men on the barren banks of the James River. They prayed this prayer, we are deigned this day of our ship's arrival at a place assigned for planting on in the land of Virginia shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of Thanksgiving to almighty God. The first official English Thanksgiving in the new world had just occurred.

Now, how did we find out about this? Well, in 1931, Dr. Lyon Tyler, president of William & Mary College and the son of President John Tyler, uncovered papers known as the "Nibley papers" at the New York Public Library. They were doing an article and doing research for an article. The Nibley papers recorded Woodlief's journey to the new world. Now Dr. Tyler was a columnist for the Richmond News Leader - many of you remember that newspaper - and he wrote an article entitled "The first Thanksgiving in America was decreed for the town of Berkeley on the James."

Now, he told his neighbor Malcolm Jamieson of his discovery. Jamieson owned Berkeley Plantation, and in 1958, Jamieson invited the Woodley family to the plantation to celebrate their ancestor's landing. That has evolved into the Virginia Thanksgiving Festival, where we have reenacted the original Thanksgiving service for the last 61 years, just as ordered by the Berkeley Company in 1619.

Over the years, Virginia's governors and legislators have recognized this historic event. In fact, even President Kennedy in his 1963 presidential Thanksgiving proclamation recognized Virginia as having the first Thanksgiving, first English Thanksgiving.

Now how did he get to do that? Well, after his 1962 Thanksgiving proclamation was published, he was admonished by Virginia State Senator John J. Wicker for not having mentioned Virginia's role in that proclamation. Shortly thereafter, he received a reply from Arthur Schlesinger, Kennedy's historian, apologizing for the error. He said, in his reply he wrote, "It was due to our incomparable New England bias on the part of the White House staff that the error was made, and it would be corrected in future proclamations." And it certainly was. And Virginia was mentioned first before Massachusetts that next year in Kennedy's 1963 Thanksgiving proclamation.

Now in 2007 George W. Bush spoke at the Thanksgiving festival at Berkeley and mentioned this important piece of Virginia's history. In his remarks, he and the story of Berkeley reminds us that we live in a land of opportunity. We remember the settlers at Berkeley came to America with a hope of building a better life, and we remember the immigrants that every generation have followed in their footsteps. The late Virginia governor Gerald Baliles said it well when he ended the speech at the Thanksgiving festival as well. He said, "Let us not allow Virginia's first Thanksgiving to languish in the midst of time. It could, should, and ought to be the gift of history that never stops giving." So I welcome you today, and I wish you a happy Thanksgiving on December the 4th. Thank you so much.

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:

Well, good afternoon. When the first Virginians gathered at what would become Berkeley Hundred for a holy day of thanksgiving to God on December 4th, 1619 four months earlier, Africans arrived at Point Comfort as commodities to be sold in what was then British North America.

Despite our history and such perilous beginnings, Africans and African Americans have long participated in Thanksgiving observances. For the black community in particular, Thanksgiving was about faith and church. As time passed, sermons could be heard in early black churches all across the nation as men of God gave voice to the fears, the sufferings, the hopes, and the dreams of a people who continued to be identified as chattel in an increasingly powerful and global nation. Many of these sermons openly mourned the institution of slavery, the suffering of black people and pleaded for the collective awakening of a slave free consciousness in America. 189 years after the first Berkeley day of Thanksgiving, the act to prohibit the slave trade became federal law on January 1st, 1808. On that same day, African Americans across the nation gathered to acknowledge and to thank God for deliverance.

Absalom Jones, the first African American ordained as a priest in the Episcopal Church in the United States, offered a Thanksgiving sermon and said what many were thinking and even speaks to some of the challenges we continue to face today.

He said, "Let not our expressions of gratitude to God for his late goodness and mercy to our countrymen be confined to this day nor to this house. Let us carry grateful hearts with us to our places of abode and to our daily occupations and let praise and Thanksgivings ascend daily to the throne of grace in our families and our closets for whatever God has done for our African brethren. Let us not forget to praise him for his mercies, to such of our color as our inhabitants of this country, particularly for disposing the hearts of the rulers of many of the states to pass laws for the abolition of slavery for the member and the zeal of friends he has raised up to plead our case or in our cause and for the privileges we enjoy. For worshiping of worshiping God agreeably to our conferences in churches of our own, we pray, Oh God, for all our friends and benefactors in Great Britain, as well as in the United States, reward them.

We beseech thee with blessings upon earth and prepare them to enjoy the fruits of their kindness to us in thy everlasting kingdom in heaven. And then dispose us who are assembled in this in thy presence to be always thankful for thy mercies and to act as becomes a people who owe so much to thy goodness. We implore thy blessing, Oh God, upon the president and all who are in authority in the United States. Direct them by thy wisdom in all their deliberations and Oh God, save thy people from the calamities of war. Give peace in our day. We beseech thee. Oh thou God of peace, grant that this highly favored country may continue to afford a safe and peaceful retreat from the calamities of war and slavery for ages yet to come. We implore all these blessings and mercies only in the name of thy beloved son Jesus, our Lord, and now, Oh Lord, we desire with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven evermore to praise the saying, Holy, Holy, Holy lord God almighty. The earth is full of thy glory. Amen."

Introduction

The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr. Majority Leader of the Senate of Virginia

The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr.:

Dr. Ellis, thank you very much for your delivery on that, and Mr. Woodlief, thank you for the historical journey that you took us on. And speaking of journeys, Chief, thank you very much for your words. I harken back to the Thanksgiving in 2007, when the chief and I were part of the welcoming party for then-President Bush, and I recall that the chief gave the president of the United States a gift on behalf of the indigenous people of America. So thank you.

It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce someone that really needs no introduction whatsoever, and that is since January of 2018, Pamela Northam has used her experience as a former pediatric occupational therapist and science educator to lead the Northam administration's work to increase access to quality early education and care. First Lady Northam's primary goal is to improve school readiness statewide, so that Virginia children are ready for successes in school and beyond. Mrs. Northam taught high school biology. Recognizing a need for the STEM in elementary education, she became a national award winning science specialist, and worked to develop an inquiry-based, hands-on curriculum for students in grades K-5.

First Lady Northam is the chair of both the Virginia Children's Cabinet and Virginia STEM Educational Commission. After studying at Baylor University and the University of Texas, which recently played- the First Lady specialized in pediatric occupational therapy in a variety of settings. The Northams have two adult children, Wes, who is a neurosurgery resident, and Aubrey, a web developer. Please join me in welcoming the First Lady of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Pamela Northam.

Special Remarks and Introduction

Pamela Northam, First Lady of Virginia

Pamela Northam:

Thank you Senator Norment. Well, good afternoon. Thank you all so much for joining us here today at Jamestown Settlement for this historic occasion. You know, standing here, so near the banks of the James River, I'm reminded of visiting Virginia and seeing the river for the first time as a young bride. It was long time ago, not quite 400 years ago, Senator Norment, but it was a long time ago, and it was about this time of year. The wetland grasses were burnished bronze bordered by the stately pines, all reflected in the water on a chilly grey evening, and I fell in love. Overhead, I heard the wild geese call as they flew by as if welcoming me to my new home.

I thought then as I think now of the native peoples who navigated these waters and lived here in harmony with this beauty and bounty for millennia. Powerful Native American communities who thrived in Virginia centuries before Europeans arrived here at Jamestown. Powhatan, an estimated 10,000 indigenous people lived from coastal Virginia all the way north to present day

DC, leaving a legacy of strength and diversity to this day. The governor was also on the James River recently, announcing the purchase of over 100 acres called Chickahominy on the Powhatan, to preserve and protect Virginia Indian heritage. Virginians have always been explorers, revolutionaries, and innovators. In fact, a little earlier than 400 years ago, soon after arriving in Jamestown, Captain John Smith explored the rivers in the bay in a small open boat and he said it was so rich in biodiversity that, "Heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation."

Back then there were oysters this size of a plate, and the oyster reefs were 30 feet high navigational hazards. The fish were so abundant he said, you only had to dip your pan in the water to scoop them up, ready to cook. Sadly, Captain Smith and our ancestors 400 years ago would probably not recognize much of our river or bay today, but I hope that they would be proud of our efforts to restore them.

On this remembrance of the first Thanksgiving, I am thankful that we may come together and talk about our American evolution. America's story started here in Virginia, and as an educator, I know this commemorative year has given us an extraordinary opportunity to research, discuss and teach all aspects of our rich and complicated 400 year legacy. Thank you to our speakers who shed light on this history in our ongoing pursuit of democracy, diversity, and opportunity.

Our children are our future, and it is imperative that we not only prepare our children for success in school and beyond, but that we continue to give them a strong historical foundation. Over the past year, I've traveled more than 5,000 miles to visit schools and early childhood education programs in every region of Virginia. I am so very thankful for educators all across the Commonwealth who work hard every day to inspire and teach our students about our shared history so that they might better understand who they are and where they are going. Virginia has a wealth of museums and historical sites who have done incredible work with exhibits like tenacity right here, Jamestown, to celebrate and enlighten learners and visitors this commemorative year. During this holiday season, I hope we may each take a moment to be thankful for all of those on whose shoulders we stand today, the courageous and diverse men and women, those who are natives of this land, those who were brought here against their will and those who came in search of opportunity. Among them are those who work to make our great Commonwealth a place where we may all live our own American dream.

And finally, let us ask ourselves, are we being good ancestors? Let us be good stewards of the great gifts we have been given. Let us work together as Virginians to leave a rich, diverse and bountiful legacy to the children of the Commonwealth and the next 400 years. Thank you.

Now, I have the distinct honor and privilege of introducing our featured speaker for today, Michelle Gielan, a beloved and nationally known CBS news anchor, positive psychology researcher and bestselling author of *Broadcasting Happiness*. She speaks to Fortune 500 companies, schools, and organizations about the power of positive communication to drive success and to fuel happiness.

Ms. Gielan is the founder of the Institute for Applied Positive Research and is partnering with Arianna Huffington to study how transformative stories and studies fuel success. She is an executive producer of The Happiness Advantage special on PBS and a featured professor and Oprah's Happiness Course. Please help me to welcome Ms. Michelle Gielan.

Featured Speaker

Michelle Gielan, positive communication expert

Michelle Gielan:

Good afternoon. I'm so grateful to be here with you. I'm so excited to get the chance to share with you the science of happiness and how we can use it to fuel success in every aspect of our lives. I hope that as I'm talking about this research, you'll see that it's about you. You'll see how this research comes alive in your life, and also how we can use it just ever so slightly more to enjoy the wealth and the spoils of things like gratitude, optimism, and resilience.

I was recently in New York. I gave a talk there for a company. I land at LaGuardia and love everything about New York, I love the tall buildings, the energy of the city, the yellow cabs. And so when I land at the airport and I jump in the back of one of those cabs and there's a television screen with the news going on, I can't wait to hear what's going on around the city. And this is what I hear. "Topping today's news, four people were stabbed on the subway. There's been an outbreak of disease-carrying rats in lower Manhattan, and rents are on the rise again across the city."

So by the time we get to my talk in Midtown, I'm thinking, "Am I going to get mugged on the subway by a rat with Ebola who can't even afford an apartment? What is going on," right? But it's not just New York. Over the last decade, you've seen how news has gotten more negative. And so I want to see a show of hands of how many of you have changed your news consumption habits over the past 10 years? Okay. So I think what you're intuiting is that negative messages can have a negative effect on our health, our happiness, our stress levels. And you're right.

In a study that I did with Arianna Huffington, we found that just three minutes of negative news in the morning can increase your chances of having a bad day by 27% and that's actually as reported six to eight hours after you were exposed to that news. So it's like you're taking a poison pill with breakfast, still feeling the negative effects as you're cooking dinner that night. So that was one piece of information that prompted me to leave CBS to go to the University of Pennsylvania to study positive psychology.

What I was really interested in was how can we talk about the negative in a way that honors it but also allows us not to feel stuck and depleted, instead leaves us energized and ready to take positive action to right wrongs that are existing in our society? And I stumbled across positive psychology, the scientific study of happiness and human potential. It's an amazing, relatively new field since 1998 looking at how when we cultivate an optimistic, resilient and positive mindset, how that fuels every single business and educational outcome that we know how to track, so much so we've been able to quantify it. When our brain is in a more positive and

optimistic state, we enjoy 23% higher levels of productive energy. We are more likely to get a promotion over the next year. We are more likely to survive a cancer diagnosis. We enjoy 23% lower levels of stress like headaches, backaches and fatigue. And that's just a snippet of the research.

So what I'd love to do today is share with you a bit of about this research and in particular how we can use it in small ways to cultivate that optimistic and resilient mindset and ripple it out to the people around us. But before I do that, what I'd love to do is run an experiment with you. I am a researcher after all. So if you're willing to participate, I'd love for you to sit up straight. Okay, excellent. All right. Now slump back down for a sec. All right. It feels weird, right? Okay, good.

Now that you all look absolutely gorgeous, you should know that there's a hot debate in the scientific community about exactly what this does to you. Researchers have found that this lowers your levels of cortisol, raises your levels of testosterone ... You're welcome, gentlemen ... and it makes you appear more likable and capable were you to go into an interview or a meeting.

So now that you look absolutely beautiful, what I'd love for you to do is partner up with someone sitting near you. And the key to this though, my friends, is you want to find a partner who's not going to look better than you on television. So if you need to move around, that's okay. All right. So find a partner, and ideally don't do this with someone you're married to or want to be married to.

Very good. Okay, so person number one, you're sitting closest to this side of the room. Person number two, you're sitting closest to this side of the room. Person number one, raise your hand. Person number two, raise your hand. Okay. Excellent. That's not the experiment. All right, so in a second, what I would love for you to do ... Well, first of all, do we have any psychology friends here, like psychology degrees, read a lot of books? Okay, so for my psychology friends, this is the emotional prime. For the rest of you, this is nothing.

Okay, so you are where you are today because you have had high levels of self-discipline and self-control, right? It allowed you to pass the classes in schools, to graduate, to get into college or work your way up through the ranks at your company. So I would like for you to cultivate all that self-discipline and self-control that you've had over the course of your lifetime to control your behavior with your partner for just seven seconds. You think you can do it? Okay.

So I'd like for you to turn and face one another. Person number one, I'd like for you to go neutral on the inside. I would like you to feel no emotions, think no thoughts, which will be easier for somebody than others. And what I would love for you to do is have a poker face. You want to keep a neutral face, hands at your side, okay? And person number one, I would like you to keep this neutral face for seven seconds and please do not get angry at person number two when they do to you what I'm about to tell them to do to you, okay? All right. So when I say go, person number two for seven seconds, I'd like for you to warmly and genuinely smile at person number one and try to break them. Go. And stop.

All right, so for my psychology friends, you know that if there's deception in the experiment, you would never switch things around. But I would love to give person number one chance for retaliation. So person number two, go neutral on the side. Feel no emotions, things and thoughts. Keep a poker face, hands at your sides. Person number one, go. Smile at them warmly and genuinely. And stop. Very good.

As a show of hands, success in this experiment meant that you controlled your behavior for those seconds, those seven seconds, and did not smile when I so nicely asked you not to do it, and failure meant that you cracked a smile. So I would like to see the number of people here who miserably failed. High and proud. Excellent. All right. And then who was successful? Hands up high. One, two, three, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10. Okay. My math on the fly is terrible, but I'm guessing we had about, what, 40 liars? Okay.

All right, so that's probably about 10% of the room. Okay, so this is great news. The smiling percentage ... Now, so my husband, who is also a happiness researcher ... Yes, I know we're two married happiness researchers ... he and I have done this experiment now in more than 50 countries across the world. And what we find is that the average smiling percentage is 80 to 85% so you all are above average, which explains so much, right? That's wonderful.

What I love about this experiment, we did it for two reasons. First of all, my hope is that as you partnered up, you would smile and laugh, and that's so good for the brain. When our brain is in that positive state, it unlocks dopamine and a handful of other positive neurochemicals and it actually also turns on all the learning centers on our brain, so that makes us smarter and better at whatever we're doing.

The other piece is that you all partnered up and got to build one more ever so small piece of social connection with your partner, right? Social connection is the greatest predictor of long term levels of happiness that we have in the research. It's the breadth, depth and meaning in our relationships. You don't have to have a million friends. You just have a handful of meaningful relationships in your life. The more we can cultivate social connection, the more we fuel our happiness and the happiness for the people around us. And gratitude is so central to creating that connection because as we express our gratitude, we are also getting other people to think about what they're grateful for in their lives and we can have a positive ripple effect.

As you saw in less than seven seconds for many of you, you changed the other person you were sitting with, right? You had them go from very serious and struggling ever so hard to keep that face to smiling. There is a fantastic study done at the University of California Riverside where they took groups of strangers, three people, and they had them sit in a room in silence for just two minutes. They tested their moves before and after and what they found was the person in the room who was the most non-verbally expressive of their mood and mindset actually significantly changed the other two people in the room. So what that means is if they were sitting there with their arms crossed and looking negative, they actually made the other two people more negative. If they were relaxed and smiling, that actually made the other two people feel more positive.

So what happens if we actually speak up and we have longer than two minutes? How can we positively impact other people? So what I have the blessing of doing is working with schools and companies, business teams, and looking at the ripple effect that one person can have on many, and how to create a more positive culture that's rooted in optimism and gratitude. And in short, what we find is that the more that we consciously cultivate a grateful and optimistic mindset and we're expressive of that with the people around us, the more we strengthen that positive culture that says when things are great, we can celebrate them and when we have challenges, we can respond to those challenges in a way that reminds our brain our behavior matters.

So at the cornerstone of our research is two elements that are incredibly predictive of our long-term levels of happiness. It's that social connection we talked about, and it's optimism. But I have to define optimism because oftentimes people get the wrong idea. So optimism is the expectation of good things to happen and it's the belief that our behavior matters, especially in the face of challenges.

I mentioned my husband, Shawn Achor. If you've seen his hilarious TED Talk, 12 minutes, on the science of happiness and you laughed the entire time, that's him. He came back from a talk one time and he said, "You won't believe what happened." I said, "What is it?" He said, "I gave this talk at a company on the power of optimism. The CEO really loved the research and wanted to figure out how to embed it into his organization, so he offered me a ride to the airport."

Shawn gets in the CEO's really nice car, puts on a seatbelt. The CEO gets in and doesn't put on a seatbelt. After a couple of minutes, the seatbelt bell starts to go off. And Shawn, who thinks he's making a joke ... He's very funny, right ... he turns to the CEO and says, "Oh you don't wear seatbelts?" And the man said, "No, I saw your talk. I'm an optimist." Shawn's like, "You are something else, but I'd still love to work with you."

So optimism doesn't stop cars from hitting us, right? It doesn't stop reality from impinging upon us. What we talk about in our research is rational optimism. It's taking a realistic assessment of the present moment while maintaining the belief that our behavior matters and expecting a good outcome if we're linked with the people around us to solve challenges.

So I would love to share with you the two habits that we've been able to distill from the research that I think are not only absolutely fantastic, fun to engage in, very easy to do, but they also involve other people. And so this ultimately can help you cultivate a more positive and optimistic mindset but also have that ripple effect at the same time on other people. If you're already doing this, which I believe you are sometimes in some moments with some people, then I want you to see this research in action in your life, and then my hope is that maybe we turn up the dial on being that positive broadcast or ever so slightly.

So the first one is this idea of the power lead. It's where you start off conversations by sharing something positive and meaningful. As was mentioned, I'm a former news anchor, right? And when we choose the top story or the producers do, they follow the old adage, "If it bleeds, it leads," right? My question to you is for your own newscast, as you walk around throughout your

day and people ask you, "Hey, how are you?" What's your top story? What are you sharing first with people? Because the first thing we say changes the trajectory of the interaction.

As a researcher, finding those first few words I can predict with a high degree of likelihood the outcome of that conversation. If we start off with something negative, "How are you?" "Oh, I'm so tired. Oh, I'm exhausted. Let me tell you all the horrible things going on that I saw on the news," what happens is there's only two directions a conversation can go, typically. Either the person offers you compassion, which I've told my husband's always the correct response, or they play misery poker. "You think your commute was bad? Let me tell you about mine," right?

Meanwhile, when we start by sharing something meaningful and positive in our lives, we not only scan our world and our reality for that good thing, right, so we're consciously focusing our brain on the things we're grateful for. But as we share them, we as human beings are socialized to reciprocate. So then guess what? Oftentimes the other person will scan their world and hopefully share something good as well.

This is not to say we can't talk about the negative. If something is really happening in our lives, we need to shine a light on all the injustices in the world and the things that are not working well in our families. But at the same moment, if we can cultivate that optimistic mindset, it makes us so much better at problem solving, so much so that the follow-up study I did with Arianna Huffington, we found when you don't just bombard people with problems, but you actually go on to share potential or actual solutions they can take part in, it makes them 20% better on creative problem solving tasks that they do later on in the day. Just opening up our mind to those positive things happening in our world changes how we approach problems. So if you were to ask me yesterday, "How are you?" I'd tell you, "Oh, I'm great. I had breakfast with my son this morning. He was being so cute."

Now, if you asked me this morning, I tell you I'm great. I have breakfast by myself. And it was so beautiful. So what's your power lead? The more you share the good with others, the more they're likely to share the good with you. And the second habit that I absolutely love and Thanksgiving is the holiday of this, is to consciously develop a practice of writing notes to people that you know. These are people in your social support network, praising or thanking them.

So when I talk to executives at companies, I always recommend do it by email. It's the easiest, right? You open up your inbox first thing in the morning, don't look at the messages that are there waiting for you. Instead, just first hit, compose and send off a nice note, two minutes takes, is three or four lines, praising or thanking someone you know, a family member, a friend, a colleague, your old English teacher.

"Thank you so much for giving me a love of reading and writing. You're why I felt like I had the tools to write my first book. I remember so fondly the conversations we had during class and the debates over the books that we were reading. Thank you so much." Just something so simple. If you want to do it by text message or WhatsApp or whatever's cool these days, which I'm not, do it. Whatever's easiest.

The reason why I talk about developing a daily habit, so my challenge to you would be seven people over seven days, is that what happens is after the first three or four days, first of all you say, "Hey, I'm the type of person that writes these nice notes," which is awesome. That's not why we do it. You also might get nice notes in return. Again, just an added benefit, but not central to why we do it.

The reason why this habit can be so powerful is because by day three or four, your brain starts to remember all the people in your life that love you, that care about you, that have invested in your success over the years, that are central to your happiness. Your brain starts to remember all the social support that you have in life. And as we talked about, that's the greatest predictor of long-term levels of happiness that we have. I had the blessing of developing a positivity program for Walmart. This was for the floor associates, and as part of that process, during the pilot phase, we went out to three stores in three days in three different cities. The last stop was Memphis. In Memphis, I attend the morning meeting. I'm like, "Hi, I'm a happiness researcher. Here's the idea for the program. We'd love your feedback."

This woman comes up to me afterwards and she says, "My name is Sharon. I'm the happiest woman in the world. You should study me." "Tell me your story." And she said, "So I didn't get married until later in life because I hadn't met anyone special until then. And I meet this guy, he's amazing. We get married. Six months into it, my mom, whom I was very close with, die suddenly of health complications and my husband was there for me. He was the rock. Every day through that grieving process he was so supportive. And about six months after her death, just as I'm sort of starting to feel back to normal as one can be, he gets killed in a car accident."

And so she said, my face was like many of your faces right now she says, "No, no, no. The reason why I feel like I have the right to call myself the happiest woman in the world is that after a period of time of grieving his death, I woke up one morning and I realized I have a choice. I have a choice every single day in how I wake up. In how I show up, in the conversations that I have with my coworkers, I have a choice. And I'm not going to say I can make the choice towards happiness every last day of my life, but every time I can, I'm going to do it."

So I talked to her coworkers. I said, "What's Sharon's deal?" They said, "Oh yeah, she's the most positive person you'll ever meet. She's amazing." And you know what her power lead is? She comes into work, she's like, "It's a great day. How are you doing?" Right, she doesn't even let you get in there and mess things up. I love it.

So whenever I'm having a down day, whenever, I experienced a year long bout with depression in my mid-twenties and this is, I wish I had known Sharon's story at that point. But even today when I'm having a down day, when challenges strike, when things are not as I'd hoped them to be, I think of Sharon and I put then I put this research into practice.

When our daughter was born two months early, Super Bowl Sunday night. Yeah. I was like, "I'll just Uber to the hospital, Sean." He got me an XL, it was nice. But as I sat by her bedside, and spoiler alert and thankfully, my gosh, thank goodness, she is perfect and beautiful and wonderful

and healthy. But as I sat by her bedside, she's in this tiny little box and she's three pounds, seven ounces. Every day I went back to this research and I put it into practice. I wrote my gratitudes. I wrote nice notes to the nurses. I had conversations with other moms where I tried to focus on all the good things going on.

And I think that, and then I allowed the community where we live to love on us. And I think those things are what help us weather the harder times and also have that mindset that allows us to accomplish anything, overcome any challenge that we're experiencing.

So my hope is that as you see this research alive in your life, you'll take the opportunities whenever you have them to put it into practice ever so slightly more. And so if you're one of those parents that does gratitudes around the dinner table with your kids, you're amazing. If you're one of those couples, by the way, who does gratitudes right before you go to bed with your spouse out loud, three new and unique things are grateful for, there was a great study that found that six months later you'll report each other as more attractive than you were six months prior. So you're doing good for your marriage too.

So, and I believe that when we really have this drum beat of positivity, when we focus on the things we're grateful for, we can tip the world away from the stress and negativity that we see on the news to a world in which we believe our behavior matters. And we can turn any of the negatives that we see into opportunities to work together to overcome those challenges, to create the world that we're hoping for. Thank you so much. Appreciate you, thank you.

Introduction

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox, Speaker of the House of Delegates of Virginia

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox:

Well, Michelle, thank you for those inspiring remarks. I sat next to Tommy Norment, I want you to know, who's one of the toughest negotiators I've ever dealt with. I don't think we smile at each other a whole lot. So we smiled at each other for seven consecutive seconds. That was cool. So Tommy's response was, "Oh, my jaws hurt."

So that really was inspirational though. Thank you so much, we really appreciate it. I want to thank all of our speakers today. Let's give them all a nice round of applause. So as we close these commemorative events for 2019 Commemoration American Evolution, please join me in thanking all those involved in the planning, the funding, and the executing a tremendous year for our Commonwealth and our nation. That deserves a nice round of applause too.

Now please stand for our benediction presented by the Reverend Jennifer Andrews-Weckerly, Rector of the Hickory Neck Episcopal Church in Toano, followed by our closing presentation by the Jamestown High School Chamber Choir.

Benediction

The Reverend Jennifer Andrews-Weckerly, Rector at Hickory Neck Episcopal Church

The Reverend Jennifer Andrews-Weckerly:

Let us pray. God of abundance, whose almighty presence has held this sacred place together in the midst of pain, suffering, betrayal, fear, and sorrow and walked us onto the path of healing, penitents, reconciliation, justice and joy. We thank you for being ever present. As three cultures found a way to shape something new and full of hope, as we made a way forward, you were with us as a people from all over the world, joined us, opening our hearts and inviting us to become a people of greater thanksgiving, grace and love.

We asked your continued activity among us as we endeavor to see our shared history with thankful hearts. Knowing that with greater understanding of one another, we are stronger together in peace, then when we are divided by what separates us. Send us out into our communities as a people rooted in thanksgiving and gratitude. Open our hearts to see the sacred in each person we encounter and embolden us to be peacemakers sharing your mercy with our brothers and sisters.

Bless us, bless our efforts to honor one another, and you, and bless us with a spirit of thanksgiving that can be a foundation for a community, a Commonwealth, and a country rooted in loving kindness. In your Holy name, we pray. Amen.

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox:

Thank you for joining us today. This concludes our ceremony and we ask all guests to enjoy the refreshments inside at the rotunda, and encourage you to visit the refreshed galleries here at the Jamestown settlement. In this special exhibition for the 2019 commemoration, Tenacity, Women in Jamestown and Early Virginia on the second floor. At 3:20 PM we will have a special commemorative photo on the lawn. Please join us.