

CHARACTER

Gratitude

November 2008



Gratitude: “an appreciative awareness and thankfulness, as for kindness shown or something received.”

“To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch heaven.” –Elizabeth Carter

GratITUDE unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity...It turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

Albert Schweitzer:

To educate yourself for the feeling of gratitude means to take nothing for granted, but to always seek out and value the kind that will stand behind the action. Nothing that is done for you is a matter of course. Everything originates in a will for the good, which is directed at you. Train yourself never to put off the word or action for the expression of gratitude.

Definitions for Gratitude:

- **an appreciative attitude for what one has received;
- **a warm or deep appreciation of personal kindness;
- **a disposition to express gratefulness by giving thanks.

I think gratitude also relates to a full life spent in awareness of all the good things that surround us.

Characteristics of a Grateful Life

A life of gratitude if composed of three parts that combine to make a whole.

1. A sense of purpose in our lives.
2. An appreciation for the lives of those around us.
3. A willingness to take action to show the gratitude we feel.

Gratitude is expressed through big and small things.

Over the next 30 days, I would like to challenge you to create your own life of gratitude in a way that is meaningful to you, and to begin practicing acts of gratefulness more than you have ever done before.

I'll be doing it along with you, and so will a lot of other readers. It's always good to be specific, so here are some ideas...but don't let these limit you.

- **Spend three minutes every morning writing down a few things you are grateful for that day.
- **Devote a full morning or afternoon to composing a more detailed gratefulness list. (One tip: think both about what you are grateful for and also how you can show that gratitude).
- **Make it a habit to encourage at least one person every day.
- **Plan something fun, like a trip to somewhere you've never been.
- **For one day (or more), say something positive to every person you meet.

Gratefulness Challenge is for you to pass on the challenge to others.

Anonymous

“GRATITUDE IS THE HEART'S MEMORY.”
—FRENCH PROVERB

“Remember that not to be happy is not to be grateful.”
—Elizabeth Carter

“Feeling grateful or appreciative of someone or something in your life actually attracts more of the things that you appreciate and value into your life”
—Northrup Christiane

Book List



Hannah and the Whistling Teakettle

by Mindy

Thank You, Mr. Falker

by Patricia Polacco

Silver Packages

by Cynthia Gylant

Grandad's Prayers of the Earth

by Douglas Wood

Best Friends

by Loretta Krupinski

Family Activities

-Instead of the usual Christmas greeting, write a Thanksgiving holiday newsletter that lists blessings for which each family member is grateful.

-Keep a daily gratitude journal listing three different blessings each day.

-Play the "Memory Game of Thanksgiving." The first person tells what he is thankful for. ("I am thankful for animals.") The second person tells what the first person said, then adds another blessing. ("I am thankful for animals and balloons.") Play continues.

-Marie Sklodowska Curie was born in Warsaw, Poland on November 7, 1867. Madame Curie studies mathematics, physics, and chemistry in Paris and became famous for her research on radioactivity. Later, she received a Nobel Prize in physics and also one in chemistry. Said Madame Curie, "All my life through, the new sights of Nature made me rejoice like a child." *How does the ability to be aware help in making scientific discoveries as well as in having gratitude?*

By Laura Clement

Kid's Corner

It is said that during a particularly trying time, the Plymouth Pilgrims survived on a ration of 5 corn kernels per person, per day.

For the month of November, keep a journal of gratitude, writing 5 different blessings daily.

We, at Character Connection, would like to focus on helping parents access character materials by using the web site located at www.lindoncharacterconnection.com.

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