

The Gift of Gratitude

Leaves falling, wind blowing, rain drops trickling and cold temperatures rising, all wonderful signs that the holidays are upon us. For some, this time of year brings a sense of nostalgia and love. For others, the thought of various tasks that must be accomplished are daunting and stressful. While the holiday season can become overwhelming there is no denying that there is a sense of gratitude that permeates the atmosphere.

This time of year tends to bring people together and allows for families to create and share wonderful memories that last a lifetime. The intentionality of thankfulness, love and gratefulness that is reciprocated amongst most Americans can be felt from person to person. There truly is a sense of healing through unity when communities come together with a sole purpose to spread joy and holiday cheer. Perhaps, this one of the reasons why suicide rates decline significantly during the winter season, December being the lowest.

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/articles/suicide-rates-spike-in-spring-not-winter>).

Although great things do come about during this season, there are still hurdles that need to be conquered. While children look forward to the season of gifts and gatherings, parents carry the burden of fulfilling those expectations. Those expectations put parents in a state of subjectivity to people and lists. When parents worry about finances and gifts, they get so consumed with buying presents they forget to be present. When the focal point becomes buying the latest gadget, toys, shoes, or clothes for our children, it convolutes the true meaning of the season. While all those things are awesome, putting emphasis and focus on gifting children gifts that last longer and make a greater impact are worth noting.

The holiday season makes for a great time to reflect on all that there is to be thankful for. As families make plans to gather and spend quality time around a good meal -- it makes for a great opportunity to teach children how to value people, relationships, and communities. To show how to be grateful for all that has been given helps to cultivate a more positive outlook in life. While far from perfect, we still live in a nation that offers plenty of opportunities. Opportunities that should not be taken for granted, but embraced and respected.

To raise up children to impact this world in a positive manner, a gratitude mindset must be adopted. However, before we can instill that into children, we must first walk in it ourselves. Gratitude is not just an affective trait, but an emotion and mood which make for a wonderful gift to share. Although much gratitude is already felt, there is always room for more of it in the world.

Gratitude is such a powerful force with the ability to change and transform. Gratitude according to the Oxford Dictionary, is defined as the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. Raising a generation that is not entitled, but rather understands and knows the power of giving and being thankful will produce good fruit. During this season teaching our children how to give to others, how to be about the heart of others -- will create a sense of accomplishment and empathy. Various studies show how grateful children tend to be happier, more optimistic, have better social support, have better grades, are less envious, less depressed and are more satisfied with their families, communities, friends, and themselves. <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-teach-children-gratitude-4782154#citation-1>

As gratitude is notable during this season, as parents, we should take the opportunity to highlight it and embrace it even further. Although it is easy to fall into the worry, stress and frustrations that also accompany the holiday season, to remain focused on being thankful and grateful is of greater value. Not only will it benefit the person that walks around with gratitude, but it will touch those on the receiving end. This holiday season make it a point to give children a gift that will last a lifetime -- The gift of gratitude. Till next time...

Your Mommy-Friend,
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