

Creating an Attitude of Gratitude, Episode 85



Power of Moms
A Gathering Place for Deliberate Mothers

With April and Saren

In this podcast April and Saren discuss how to foster the values of optimism and gratitude when we feel like we are lacking in certain areas. It is so easy to get caught up in the issues of our daily life. Sometimes life just feels heavy, but if we take extra time to focus on the positive, we can find something good in *everything* AND we can teach our children an attitude of gratitude.

If thinking positively is difficult for you, it's okay. This podcast is meant to help find the good in even some terrible situations, allowing us to control the things we can, and move forward in being deliberate mothers.

- Say "thank you." Reinforce the concept of saying "thank you" to dad, to teachers, to the clerk at the grocery store, and especially to our children. Take it one step further and *write* thank you notes to your kids (and those listed above). Look for when kids do something positive! Catch them doing something right! Make a big deal of the little things that they do and they will want to continue in that vein.

Ask what good things happened today. Often, we hear a lot of complaining about school, friends, challenges, etc., changing focus from negative to positive is a skill that needs developed. Create a family version of a gratitude journal or gratitude calendar and note as a family what went well that day.

- Create a Thankful tree: In the United States, Thanksgiving is celebrated every November. Having the holiday at the end of the month gives ample time to create this fun and festive tree of gratitude. Have everyone in the family write down one thing that they are grateful for then add it to the "Thankful tree". As the month goes on, the tree gets covered with "leaves of gratitude".

Remind kids just how lucky they are. A Facebook follower shared this quote: "Someone else is praying for something that you take for granted." It's easy to take for granted the size of our house or the water in our faucet or the refrigerator, the clothes we wear, the three (sometimes more) meals we eat, our health, the list goes on and on. Give children the opportunity to acknowledge what they have.

Once a week, write a thank you card to someone, *anyone*. April recalls a time when she was in New York City and she had a wonderful cab driver who avoided the toll roads so that she didn't have to pay and was overall really sweet. She quickly wrote him a "thank you" note and he said it was the first one he

had ever received. Also, when traveling to Disneyland April's kids pay special attention to those who are serving them and give "thank you" notes to the employees who stand out.

During a Scout Meeting, Saren's young boys struggled to pay attention and so Saren made a point of mentioning that their leaders were volunteers who didn't get paid. One was shocked and it brought home the idea that it is always a good idea to be grateful.

- Do personal service. It doesn't have to be at a homeless shelter or food pantry (though helping those organizations is wonderful), service can be found in our own neighborhood. Bake cookies. Write a note.

Check the internet for organizations that need help (see links at Power of Moms (dot) com).

Donate gently used toys to families who do not have toys.

Literature is also a powerful tool that can teach children (and remind us) to develop a feeling of gratitude. Read the Bible. Find stories where people show gratitude, for example the story of the Ten Lepers. Listen to or read books that help kids to understand just how lucky they are. Saren mentioned that she and her kids are listening to a book called *Wonder* about a young child who is born with a face deformity. It has reminded them to feel grateful that have good health.

Optimism ties in to gratitude. Shape your inner dialogue. If you or your children are talking negatively out-loud, chances are the inner voices are not positive ones. Strive to change your inner thoughts by noting that today will be a great day. Things will work out. Life is good. Etc.

Model and exemplify gratitude so that children can learn by example. Take the time to develop the attitude of gratitude.

Transcribed by Rosie Liljenquist