



# 15 WAYS TO CREATE AN *Attitude of Gratitude* IN YOUR FAMILY

**Simply put, gratitude is a feeling of being thankful and appreciative, affirming the goodness in our lives and acknowledging the role that others play in that goodness.**

Research shows that gratitude has wide-ranging benefits for our physical and mental health, happiness, and success. Gratitude builds connections and deeper relationships with others, increases self-esteem, builds resiliency, and reduces depression. It increases a sense of relaxation, sleep quality, energy levels, and vitality while reducing stress, pain and blood pressure. Gratitude encourages pro-social behavior leading to greater kindness toward others and research shows that grateful people are both more likely to reach out to others in times of need as well as help others and provide support to those who are struggling. And gratitude makes us happier, too!

Gratitude doesn't always come naturally, but the good news is that adopting gratitude practices trains the brain to focus on positive experiences, interactions, and emotions. Gratitude and its benefits to our health and well-being grow as we practice it.

## WAYS TO FOSTER GRATITUDE IN YOUR LIFE AND WITH YOUR FAMILY

**Watch Brene Brown's YouTube video *On Joy and Gratitude*** to better understand the powerful relationship between gratitude and joy and learn tangible ways to cultivate greater joy in your life and with your family.

**Ask about the good** - What made you laugh, made you feel good, or is the nicest things you did for someone today? Focus your child's attention on the positives and the ways that they can help make the good things happen again.

**Model empathy** – the most important emotion for the development of gratitude and moral behavior.

**Write letters of gratitude** to those who have positively impacted your life.

**Practice savoring positive life experiences and celebrate the present.** Mindful practices go hand-in-hand with the practice of savoring. Remember to take a pause to appreciate a moment or a feeling and the small pleasures in your everyday life.

**Create a family gratitude jar or book** to document the positive things that happen each day.

**Go on a gratitude walk in nature** with your family, noticing things are you grateful for with your five sense.

**Encourage helping others and nurturing relationships.** Teach your children to be thoughtful, kind, giving, cooperative, and helpful as well as to recognize and thank others for their kindness and support.

**Read books as a family that teach and model gratitude.** Use the stories and lessons learned as an opportunity to talk about gratitude in your life.

**Find activities to do together,** especially those that teach the many ways that we can make a positive difference in the lives of others.

**Post gratitude quotes throughout your house** as simple reminders to adopt an attitude of gratitude.

**Practice mindfulness.** Take a moment each day to close your eyes, relax your body, breathe deeply and think about some of the things that you are thankful for.

**Reinforce your child's grateful behavior and language** by identifying and acknowledging it.

**Model gratitude with your children,** showing them how to identify and focus on the positive experiences, big and small, in their life.

**Become gratitude explorers** on the lookout for opportunities to feel grateful.

*“Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.” – Robert Brault*