

Dear Parent,

The following article may be useful if you read and reflect. I found it inspiring. FORWARDED AS IT IS RECEIVED

### **"GRATITUDE BE AN ATTITUDE"**

"One of the biggest disappointments I see in parent's eyes is when the child shows no signs of gratitude for everything that the parents are doing for them. "I wake up early in the morning to cook lunch for his school. Forget thank you, he doesn't even eat it".

"I don't have a nice suit to wear in functions. I saved money so she can go to her singing classes. Now she tells me that I don't care for her?" "My wife, my in-laws, everyone fought with me that I shouldn't buy son a new phone. But I did, for his happiness.

Now I ask him to leave the phone, just during exams, and he's fighting with me? Forget acknowledging what I did for him, he can't even talk to me nicely? I work all day for these children. I cook for them, clean their room, drop them to school, pick them up, take them to shopping..... everything. And I ask them to do one thing, one thing for me, and they just say no, just like that. Why should I have to FIGHT every time I need to get something done?"

"Every time he needs something, becomes all sweet and chatty, papa this! Papa that! But after the need is fulfilled, doesn't even look at me. I come home from work and he can't even sit with me for 10 minutes? Am I just a money machine for him?"

What's common in these examples? Parents do so much for the children, but the child shows no acknowledgement, neither through their words, nor actions. And then how do parents deal with this? They'll sulk. They'll fight.

They try to ignore. They actually don't know much about what to do. So, one obvious solution to this could be, "Why not tell the child everything you are doing for them?" but many parents think, "Why should we have to say something. Can't they see it themselves? I mean if I have to ask them then it's of no value. We don't want to beg for their attention and care. They should do it themselves". Ok. You won't ask, they are not doing it their own.

What is the solution then? Keep getting disappointed and give up? Well, not so soon. I have some suggestion. If I could tell you, really I mean it, the single most important psychological trait or state, which can contribute to individual and interpersonal well-being.

It would be GRATITUDE. If you want to be happy yourself, if you want a happy child, and if you want happy relationships, there's probably nothing more important than gratefulness or thankfulness. And speak of this from deep personal experiences despite the conflicts. Show it through your actions, that, "my relationship with your grandparents may not be perfect, but I'm grateful to them, for A,B,C,D,E".

Second, interpersonal gratitude is partly dependent on empathy. Unless they actually know the cost you are paying for their lives, unless they can look at your difficulties from your perspective, they won't actually understand the depth of what you're going through them.

So, you'll have to tell them very explicitly. If you woke up too early for them and felt drowsy the whole day, if you're suppressing your own desires to save money for them, if you're fighting with other people to defend them, if you are sacrificing your leisure time for their tasks, talk about it. Talk not just about what you're doing, but also about, what you're going through inside. Basically you will have to educate them about the personal cost you're paying for their sake. This is not about tooting your own horn, this is about filling their blind spots. **This is about presenting a better reality to them. This is education.**

But Caution: don't do it with an attitude that you're doing them a favor by giving them birth and raising them. That attitude is not wise. Because despite everything you're doing for them, you started a family for YOURSELF, because you thought creating a family is a good way to live life.

Your child never came to know you and said. "Mom and Dad please give me birth". So when you teach them gratitude, don't sound like the benefit is one sided. You are also deriving the satisfaction of being a parent, through them. So, keep your patronizing and condescension in check. And once they understand the efforts you are making for them, once they have some empathy with your struggles, that will then become the basis for their thankfulness towards you.

Finally if you want them to notice your efforts on their own, that also needs to be executed systematically. Sit down with them, every day, or alternate day or at least every Sunday, and ask them, in the past one week, what are the things that you are thankful for towards me and your dad? This sounds like an odd question. As if you are forcefully trying to get compliments but remember, this is not about you, this is about them. It would be best if schools could do this, but they don't. it's not part of the syllabus. So you'll have to do it yourself.

Literally make them write the things they are grateful for, towards you, on a piece of paper. Make it concrete. Initially it might seem very synthetic and awkward, but gradually it'll normalize and it'll sink in.

In summary, make gratitude the religion of the house. Practice it yourself, teach it to your children consistently."

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