

Gratitude is one of the most powerful emotions a person can experience. It increases happiness, gives you a grounded feeling. This sense of calm helps you regulate emotions by building your mental strength! Gratitude is known to increase your connection to the people in your life and promotes a desire to take better care of yourself. Thank goodness we have this powerhouse emotion!

GRATITUDE IS A SUPERPOWER!

Instilling gratitude in children starts with leading by example. A great place to start is by noticing how you feel and express gratitude.

Take a moment and reflect on how you identify and express gratitude. These are the building blocks you can use as you begin to empower your child to recognize and cultivate gratitude in their own life.

Sharing your own experience will provide them with tools and guidance to begin practicing gratitude in their own unique way.

GRATITUDE BEGINS BY NOTICING

- Take a moment and notice the object you are looking at or the person you are with.
- Slow down long enough to appreciate the small things; the colors of the sunset or the reflection of the light.
- Look at the smile on a loved one's face as you open a gift from them.
- Even the silliness of your dog curled up on the tiniest of pillows is a perfect time to realize you are appreciating the moment.

FEEL GRATITUDE IN YOUR BODY

- It may be a feeling deep within, a warm sense of spaciousness in your heart, or a deep connection to a person or object.
 - Perhaps there are tears on your cheeks or a smile that automatically appears.
 - Words like, "wow" or "that's amazing" may come to mind.
- By tuning in to how gratitude feels in your body you can begin to help your child recognize when they are feeling gratitude by asking how it feels to them.

FIND A WAY TO EXPRESS IT

- Once you recognize you are feeling grateful, go ahead and express it.
- You may want to write it down in a journal
- Maybe you tell the person how you feel.
- Taking a moment to reflect and give in to your feelings in this moment grows your gratitude muscles.
- Showing gratitude can inspire those around you. Equally, watch and be inspired as others begin to share their gratitude.

HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT GRATITUDE:

- Begin by telling him when you are feeling gratitude. *"I'm feeling grateful for grandma right now."*
- Tell him how it feels in your body. *"My heart feels warm and full."*
- Share with your child how you plan to express your feeling. *"I am going to send grandma a picture of you and me together and tell her I love her"*

REINFORCE GRATITUDE

When you notice your child expressing gratitude, take a moment to talk with your child about it.

Ask questions:

What did they notice or pay attention to?

How does it feel in their body?

What can they do to share that wonderful feeling of gratitude with others?

Gratitude can be practiced in so many ways, the more you make it part of your daily routine, the more likely you are to experience its positive effects on you and your child's mental and emotional well-being.