

Adventures at AIMS...coming together as a community

Appreciation and Gratitude

For most of us, the celebrations at this time of year direct our attention toward appreciation and gratitude in our daily lives. We make a conscious choice to react to the world in a different way. It is a valuable mindset to have, directing our attention and perceptions toward the positive, when the rest of year we often find ourselves in a difficult balance of optimism, pessimism and the realism of our circumstances.

How can we find Thanksgiving throughout the year? Perhaps by shifting our focus and commitment to ourselves to always look for the positive. This means appreciating and sharing praise daily with our family and friends – looking for and recognizing qualities such as love, intelligence, strength, enthusiasm, persistence, humor, kindness, beauty, tenderness, care, or help. Expressing these traits may not only lead to our own happiness but also provide modeling for our children in learning how to be thankful.

A practice I have found fairly common that I have now adopted on this island is “paying it forward”. It started for me in the Starbucks drive-through line. I sat in my car annoyed with the customers in front of me with big orders, or paying without the app. Didn’t they know I had to get to school? Finally, I pulled up to the window to pay only to be told that the car in front of me had paid for my order! Who knew that one of my less desirable characteristics, impatience, could lead to two of my finer, appreciation and gratitude?

If you find yourself in grumpy mood, try to shift your focus on the previously mentioned qualities and blessings. Ask yourself, “What can I appreciate in this situation?” or “How can I express my gratitude?” What we feed grows, so feed the positive qualities and ignore the negative ones.