

## The Art of Being Grateful for Your Family



**Family Leader:** *I am very busy most days with going to work during the week, taking the kids to their activities, errands, and chores on the weekend. And as much as I love my family and would do anything for them, I don't always remember to show my gratitude for my family. Yet, I want to be a better parent and be more grateful for all that I have. What can I do to show my family that I'm grateful for them?*

We understand how busy life gets and how many things compete for the attention of a family leader, yet, showing the family gratitude is one of the key elements of a thriving family that stays connected over time.

Gratitude is defined as “the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness,” according to Oxford Lexico<sup>1</sup>.

Not only is being grateful an emotional recognition of what is most valuable and meaningful but gratefulness is followed up with an action to show appreciation and return kindness.

The key to showing gratitude begins with a relationship. If the foundation of the relationship has not been built and fortified over the years, the family member may reject any attempts by the family leader to show gratitude.

For instance, if a father gives his grown son a card stating how much he appreciates him, yet the father and son have no relationship, the son may wonder why he is receiving a card after many years of disconnection. However, if the father and son have built the relationship from an early age, the gratitude expressed in the card would bolster the already strong relationship.

The best way for a family leader to strengthen their family relationships is by spending time with each member and participating in intentional activities.

In fact, every person has a “love tank that can be filled” by frequent emotional connection in close relationships, according to Dr. Gary Chapman, author of *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts*.

The time family members spend together provides an opportunity for the family leader to express their gratitude for their family members. And, if a family member is comfortable with spending time with the family leader, there will be a greater chance that the family member will reciprocate their appreciation for the relationship.

Communication is another key component when expressing gratitude because once the relationship has been built and the family is spending time together, trust is built between family members, which opens the door to a deeper connection.

And if the family leader is intentional with how they communicate, specifically taking the time to listen to what is most important to each family member and connecting with them in the way that each family member feels fulfilled, the family connectivity as a whole will grow stronger over time.

We hope you've learned how important relationships and communication are when expressing gratitude.

1. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/gratitude>