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Creating an Active Culture of Gratitude in Your Home

As children, we were often reminded by our parents to say, “Thank you,” because it was the polite thing to do. But how many of us have given thought to the far-reaching impact of those two simple words?



▲ Judith Fisher

Paul reminds us to *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus* (1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV). What are the benefits of expressing gratitude in *all* circumstances? For the person cultivating a grateful heart, the benefits are countless.

A recent study from the National Institute of Health concluded that feeling grateful activates our hypothalamus, the part of our brain which plays a role in our appetite, our emotions, our sleep, our body temperature, our blood pressure, and many other body functions. Studies also show that individuals dealing with body pain felt less pain when they kept a gratitude journal. Saying “thank you” and sharing other expressions of gratitude increase the positive energy between the giver and the receiver, and have been shown to positively impact our mood. This positive force has the potential of spreading to others with an infectious effect.

Gratitude has been shown to improve the quality of marital relationships, as well as the relationship dynamics in the workplace. A culture of gratitude involves more than the usual “thank-you” comments at the Thanksgiving table. It compels people to engage in active acts of gratitude outside the usual perfunctory “thank you” repeated routinely in our private and public prayers.



Active expressions of gratitude help us keep our minds on our blessings while dimming the spotlight on what we don’t have. A culture of gratitude helps us maintain a sense of optimism and hope. The benefits to our wellbeing are too far-reaching to not make this life-enhancing gift an active part of our everyday life. Parents are to instill gratitude in their children during the early formative years, and create in their home a setting where the spirit of gratitude thrives. Here are some ways to cultivate gratitude in your home:

- ☺ Encourage each family member to keep a gratitude journal and share gratitude notes during daily family worship time, and throughout the day.
- ☺ At weekly family vespers include a “Count your blessings” feature where family members share blessings experienced that week. The member identifying the most blessings gets acknowledged.
- ☺ Place a gratitude board in your home where members pin thank you notes addressed to each other and to God. Parents can use gratitude stickers on the board for the younger children.
- ☺ Set aside a day once a week when family members offer only prayers of gratitude during family devotions.
- ☺ Make “thank you” a popular phrase in your home and create an active culture of gratitude. ■

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Health Benefits of Seeds

God made seeds. Packed with His own life force, they’ve been part of His plan since the beginning (Gen. 1:11–12). Our Creator, who knows our bodies best, told us to eat them (Gen. 1:29).

Why? Because He wants us to live and to have life abundantly (John 10:10)! Grains, beans and nuts are actually all seeds. Combine with fruit* that bears seeds and you have a great whole foods plant-based diet.

But what does “whole food” really mean? God made seeds in a perfect package. Every seed has three parts, but often they get separated!

1) **The seed coat** is essential. Also called bran, it is filled with fiber, vitamins and minerals, protecting the precious life inside. Industrial processing of foods often removes it, selling most of it for animal feed. Animal producers know the value of the nutrients. Sadly, most parents don’t. Many people don’t realize that all rice is brown when harvested!

2) **The embryo** is like the starter kit for the plant with its earliest form of roots, leaves and stem. It is full of nutrients and healthy fats. Those fats and oils are necessary for your mind, skin and eyes. This part is also often removed in industrial processing, sold later as germ, or pressed for the oil. Before we get it in a bottle, the most beneficial nutrients in the oils are chemically extracted, or go rancid, once removed from the perfect package — the seed.

3) **The endosperm** is the food storage for the nourishment of the embryo in the form of new leaves called cotyledons. Depending on the kind of seed, it has a specific ratio of carbohydrates, protein and fats, but it is often primarily starch, a simple sugar. This

endosperm is the part that is used most often for human food; while it has value, it is sorely missing its companions, the seed coat and embryo.

Eating a whole foods, plant-based diet, is simple. Whole foods use all three parts of a seed. It’s the way God made them. When you eat all three parts, you get the most nutrition. And why not? Any farmer or

gardener knows that when one of these three parts is removed, the seed would never germinate. So how can we imagine that it will give life to our bodies without the whole three-in-one?

We’re told the invisible things of nature reflect God. *For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — His eternal power and Divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse* (Romans 1:20 NIV).

God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Together they form the Godhead (Trinity). This truth, an essential Christian understanding and the second of the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is revealed in seeds. Have you ever thought that the gospel could be shown in a seed? I encourage you to share that news! In this way, a whole foods diet is an act of worship. Your diet can be seed-saving! ■

**Seeds from stone fruits (peaches, apricots, etc.) and apples should be avoided due to low levels of amygdalin which breaks down into hydrogen cyanide when ingested.*

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