
WORDS OF THE WEEK

MOTIVATIONAL LESSONS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Gratitude

Week 1

"The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings."

Eric Hoffer, 20th American philosopher and poet

Translation for Adults

It sometimes seems that everyone but you has the perfect job, the fancy car and big house. If you're a "glass-half-empty" kind of person, then, of course, you will view your life in negative terms; but, instead, you should be counting your blessings. Look at life with a positive attitude. You may not have the biggest house, but you do have a roof over your head. You may not have the best-paying job, but you do have a job that takes care of your family's needs. Look at the glass as being half-full, instead of half-empty, and you'll learn to be grateful for what you have and be able to concentrate on filling the other half of the glass.

Translation for Kids

It's always better to be grateful for what you have than be negative about what you don't have. Your bike may not be as cool as your neighbor's or your best friend may have the newest video gaming system—and you don't. Instead of wishing for what others have, think positive about your life. Be grateful that your parents love and take care of you. Be grateful that you eat well everyday and sleep in a warm bed—many children do not. Most importantly, tell your parents, your friends and your teachers how grateful you are for what they do for you.

Class Discussion for Kids

1. For what are you grateful?
2. Why is it important to have a positive attitude?

Week 2

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

John F. Kennedy,
35th President of the United States

Translation for Adults

"You can talk the talk, but can you walk the walk?" is an actions-over-words philosophy that you can follow to express your gratitude. Sure, you can (and should) say "thank you" to the neighbor who gathered your mail and newspaper during your vacation, but your gratitude is more meaningful when you return the favor, shovel his sidewalk or rake leaves from his yard. What you do sends a much more powerful message—and teaches a much more powerful lesson—than what you say.

Translation for Kids

It is really good manners to say "thank you" when someone does something nice for you. Not only is it polite, but also it makes the other person happy to know you are grateful. You can make that person even happier if you show your gratitude, instead of just saying, "Thank you." You should thank your mom every day for the meals she prepares for you, but you can really show your gratitude when you offer to clear the table, wash the dishes or help her make tomorrow's meals. Your actions can say much more about your attitude than the words you speak.

Class Discussion for Kids

1. Who did you thank recently for helping you or doing something nice for you? What did he or she do?
2. What actions could you take to show your gratitude?

WORDS OF THE WEEK

MOTIVATIONAL LESSONS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Week 3

"The deepest craving of human nature is the need to be appreciated."

William James, 19th century American philosopher and psychologist

Translation for Adults

Being grateful to others with a "thank you" is polite, but there is a deeper reason for showing gratitude, and that's to allow others to feel appreciated. When others help you, they want to know that their efforts were noticed. You can easily put yourself in their shoes because, undoubtedly, you've helped others, but were never thanked. How did you feel? Unappreciated? Unimportant? Saying "thank you" and showing gratitude with reciprocal actions are the best motivators to continue to help each other.

Translation for Kids

Thanking others for what they've done for you is more than good manners. It can make them happy that they helped you. They know that you appreciate their efforts—and everyone wants to be appreciated. Do you remember when you helped someone and he or she thanked you? Didn't it make you feel great? You probably also remember when you were helpful and no one thanked you. How did you feel? Unappreciated? Helping others makes the world a better place to live, but making sure they know that you appreciate what they did will motivate them (and you) to help even more people. That's what a Black Belt does!

Class Discussion for Kids

1. Who do you appreciate for helping you? Have you thanked him or her?
2. Why is it important that he or she knows you appreciate what he or she did for you?

Week 4

"We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude."

Cynthia Ozick, 20th century American novelist and short-story writer

Translation for Adults

There are many people that take small actions every day that make a big difference in your life, but, admit it, you don't always notice their helpfulness: the coworker who always ready to make a fresh pot of coffee; the relative who watches your kids whenever you ask; and your spouse who makes you breakfast every morning because you are too busy to make it yourself. These little actions can mean the most when you take the time to acknowledge them. Typically, however, they are taken for granted because they are everyday occurrences, so you are less likely to show your appreciation. Open your eyes and mind and recognize these small, daily actions and take the time and make the effort to say "thank you" and show your gratitude.

Translation for Kids

Think about the events in your life today. Most happen every day, which means you can easily overlook their importance and the people who help you. You probably woke, dressed, ate breakfast and went to school. Who woke you? Who washed your clothes, so you could look nice? Who bought the food for your breakfast and prepared it? Who drove you to school? Probably, many people helped you today: your parents, siblings, school bus driver and/or martial arts instructor. All of them helped you have a great day, but their efforts are often taken for granted because they happen every day. You can make today special for them (and you) when you take the time to say "thank you" and show your gratitude.

Class Discussion for Kids

1. What does someone do for you every day or very often?
2. How would your life be different if he or she stopped doing it for you?