
The Sense of Gratitude

She is searching for some form of her own identity... have you seen her around? Her hair is long but a little shorter than her simple dress which hangs on her body. Does she sound familiar? She stutters and never stands still, always fidgeting. She has never tried to squeeze blood out of a stone. She was content in who she was.

However, in today's society our thoughts are governed and limited into categories of right, wrong, possible and what's seemingly impossible. She is caught in a never-ending inferiority complex. Ladies and Gentlemen the general well-off teenager doesn't have a sense of sincere gratitude. Yes, we must think of what to say before we speak, but never are we told to think differently. A sheep mentality is what has been instilled in the millennial generation. This mentality, judgement and what we take for granted prevent us from being grateful, therefore we try to force blood from a stone and make the impossible not seem so well impossible.

As a little girl, you can never ask your mom why the woman with her three children wears such old dresses. To question certain things today is extremely sensitive and wrong, as if wanting to learn about life is looked down upon, as it's not a child's place but what most don't realize is one day that little girl could be a mom one day. The skills we learn as children are vital for when we grow up but to be empty is good because the less you say, the better. The more you look like, act like and be like other people, the more you "fit in".

According to research done: materialism has a negative effect on a child's judgement and ability to decide rights and wrongs. Parents are advised to restrict children from a young age to minimal materialism by not associating them with the value of money as it is much simpler to accept a sheep mentality than it is to think for yourself. Perhaps if I was an orphan child in a children's home, I might expect less, but understand more. If only one day I experienced an environment such as a dilapidated schoolhouse with illiterate teachers, I might stop pampering the dawn of every passing school day. If only I was thankful for each experience I've ever been through, would I be different.

Today's gratitude is simply referred to as a ritual to reassure people that you deserve what's coming your way; so, it will never be taken away and we can never push for a little more blood. Remember Daddy's smart little girl needs to be a doctor. In her matric year, if someone asks her what she wants to do for the rest of her life. She'll automatically answer, without thinking, She must meet her parent's expectations, because being goal orientated, driven and knowing what you want will make you successful, and being successful is so much more important than happiness. Our pre-established ideas force blood from that stone. Most parents are completely opposed to the idea of a 'gap-year', not so that their children must be grateful for the fact that they are able to study, but because a good image does not allow for judgement.

However, in recent research results have shown children who take a gap year overall achieve much more than children who went to study directly after school. If only some of us experienced life in a different way, would it shape or change our view on the working world? Imagine if we lived in a hut and had to walk 100s of kilometres to reach fresh water. Would we be more careful next time we leave our running tap open? I could bet none of us have ever gone

starving, but imagine if we had to beg for food and all we had was one stale slice of bread to mend our aches of hunger. Will we appreciate and be thankful for our warm home cooked meals? Perhaps if our parents put less pressure on us to perform and didn't focus so much on the idea of success but rather be sincerely grateful for the happiness we get to experience. After all isn't happiness key ?

Finally, as teenagers we must accept less for granted. Gratitude, or lack of it, is not necessarily linked only to materialism, but also to ignorance. The generalization is that we do not really know what we have until we lose it, and it is rather a matter of being aware of what we have but not being grateful for it because we don't think it will ever be lost. The stones blood is already empty. We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude. Do we have a mattress made of newspapers? Do we eat scraps just to end aches? Do we look for plastics to earn a living? Do we feel safe in a metal sheet? Are we grateful for the life we live?

The greatest reward and luxury of travel is to be able to experience everyday things as if for the first time, to be in a position in which almost nothing is so familiar it is taken for granted. Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have, even more to express gratitude for.

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