

## **Cultivating a Culture of Gratitude – Oct. 2023**

LWCC Marriage Ministries Email For October 2023

Greetings once again from the Marriage Ministries Team. We trust you are enjoying this Spring season. One holiday weekend just gone and another just around the corner. Ronnie and I are currently spending 3 and a bit weeks in Hanmer aiding her recovery, and giving me some 'break' time - some much needed time for us both to focus for a season on our health. Which is a subtle introduction to our Marriage topic for this month: the benefit, value, and blessing of focusing, cultivating or redeveloping, a culture of Gratitude - or thankfulness - in our marriage.

If there's one thing, next to Date Time, that will keep a marriage healthy, it's good, regular doses of Gratitude/Thankfulness. Gratitude is more than an important part of a healthy marriage - It's Crucial. Each of you need to intentionally, and constantly cultivate a sense of gratitude toward one another. Not only will it maintain harmony and happiness in the relationship, but, if you're looking for a way to deepen your love, and get closer with each other, then practising regular gratitude is one of the best ways to make that happen.

Genuine Gratitude - Genuine thanks - generates two other important ingredients that will carry you through all sorts of challenges in your marriage journey - patience and empathy. When you express genuine gratitude toward your spouse, it will resonate with them. And when you make it a habit to do so, you're creating fertile ground for more love and positivity in the future.

There are many ways to thank your spouse for everything they do for you and to show them how grateful you are for them. While this isn't an exhaustive list, it contains some simple tips to help inspire you to show your spouse more gratitude each and every day.

### **1. SAY THANK YOU OFTEN**

There are many ways to say thank you to the person you love most in the world. Speaking the words verbally is important, of course. You can also express gratitude in other ways, such as in letters, cards, or text messages. Add value by expressing thanks on a card attached to a flower or chocolate. Or, you could add a little intrigue, by sending a text telling your spouse to go and look in a certain place for a special message, and when they find the hidden message, there is also a special treat attached.

Don't feel pressured to commit to elaborate gestures if that's not how you normally communicate (or if it's not what your spouse responds well to). The key is consistent gratitude. However, put a little thought into occasionally varying the delivery of the message. How you express Thanks though, can also just be simple. However it's delivered, don't neglect to let your spouse know how much you truly appreciate who they are, what they do, and what they mean to you.

### **2. TAKE A spontaneous PAUSE JUST FOR THEM**

Gratitude can be well expressed by pausing everyday activities to simply focus on your spouse. So, what might a pause look like?

- A slow meal at your spouse's favourite café:

- Initiate a No Device evening:
- Spending a night in, rather than serving other obligations:
- Interrupt them in the middle of a mundane chore, and express thanks for the way she/he just gets on and does things:
- Taking extra time for intimacy that's focused on your spouse:
- Dropping what you're doing to go on a spontaneous date.

Your pause can look many different ways, and there's no one size fits all rule. However you choose to go about it, a pause is meant to pull the two of you outside of your normal hectic pace so you have a chance to show your gratitude without being in a rush. Make it spontaneous occasionally. On your way home from work, call and tell her you've got an idea to..... Sometime during the day, call him at work and suggest..... We challenge you to try it out, and watch what happens!!!!

### **3. BE AFFECTIONATE**

It's possible for open and regular affection to wane in the face of hectic schedules, careers, and outside obligations. But affection is a wonderful way to show your spouse gratitude, so make time for it. So, initiate some spontaneous affection by, stopping him/her somewhere mid-evening, and express thanks for something that they are, or something they do, that is meaningful to you, then embrace them in a moment or two of affection.

### **4. SERVE YOUR SPOUSE**

No, this doesn't necessarily mean breakfast in bed (although if that's what you have in mind, we're sure your spouse won't complain!). Serving and loving your spouse selflessly, without expectations, is one of the highest acts of love and gratitude you can accomplish. That could look like:

- Picking up the slack somewhere in your everyday life, particularly if it has been a busy season:
- It could also look like you giving your spouse a break by taking on additional responsibilities for them:
- Stopping them mid-way through a chore, with their favourite beverage, and then finishing the chore for them.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Ultimately, you can create your own picture of what gratitude might look like in your marriage. The important thing is to follow through with consistency and love. Thank your spouse on a regular basis, do so in a variety of ways, and help your relationship thrive. Maybe as a result of reading this email, you both might sit down and re-evaluate where Thanks and Gratitude are at in your relationship, and what you might do to re-infuse it into your relationship.

Blessings as always From The Marriage Ministries Team: Stan & Ronnie, John & Karen.

(Content adapted from article by Prepare/Enrich)

