

Mother Nurture

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Gratitude

I've been thinking lately that I need to focus more on the ways my glass is half full rather than half empty – otherwise, I feel down and cranky. Any ideas?

This is a beautiful question, and in response we would like to offer an excerpt from our book, *Mother Nurture*.

[From *Mother Nurture: A Mother's Guide to Health in Body, Mind, and Intimate Relationships*, by Rick Hanson, Ph.D., Jan Hanson, L.Ac., Ricki Pollycove, M.D. Copyright © 2002. Reprinted by arrangement with Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Putnam Inc.]

A Mother's Meditation on Gratitude

Set aside a quiet time during which you can reflect on some of the many things you could be thankful for. As a starting point, you might read the passage below to yourself or out loud, adapting it to your situation as you like.

There really is so much to be thankful for.

I am grateful for my children, for the delight and love they bring, for the sweet smell of their hair and the soft touch of their skin. For the first time they smiled at me or walked into my arms. For the meaning they bring to life. For receiving my love and lessons. For being their own persons, for giving me their own love and lessons. Having them at all is a miracle, and the rest is details.

I appreciate myself. For the love I have given my children, all the diapers changed, all the dishes done. For the long hours I've worked, the hoops I've jumped through to keep all those balls up in the air. For the efforts I've made, the many times I've stayed patient, the many times I've found more to give inside when I thought I was empty.

I appreciate my partner. For the ways he has loved me, the fun we've had together, the humor and the companionship. For the times of support, understanding, and sympathy. For sweating and suffering too.

I feel thankful for the life I've already had, for the good parts of my childhood, for everything I've learned, for good friends and beautiful sights. For the roof over my head and the bread on my table, for being able to have a life that is healthier, longer, and freer than most people have ever dreamed of. For this beautiful world, where each breath is a gift of air, each dawn a gift of light. For the plants and animals that die so I may live. For

the extraordinary gifts of evolution I carry in each cell of my body, for the capabilities accumulated during three and a half billion years of life's presence on our planet.

For the wonder of the universe, for all the atoms in my body—the carbon in my bones, the oxygen and iron in my blood—that were born in the heart of a star billions of years ago, to drift through space, to form a sun and planets, to form the hand that holds this book and the eye that reads this word. For all that was in order for me to be. For grace, for wisdom, for the sacred, for spirit as I know it. For this moment, this breath, this sight. For every good thing that was, that is, that ever will be.

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This column is offered freely to parent-related organizations. If you know of another newsletter that might like to carry it besides the one in which you are reading it now, please encourage that organization to contact Rick Hanson at the email address below. Or just email Rick with the contact info and he will approach the organization.

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(Rick Hanson is a clinical psychologist, Jan Hanson is an acupuncturist/nutritionist, and they are raising a daughter and son, ages 12 and 14. With Ricki Pollycove, M.D., they are the authors of *Mother Nurture: A Mother's Guide to Health in Body, Mind, and Intimate Relationships*, published by Penguin. You can see their website at www.nurturemom.com or email them with questions or comments at info@nurturemom.com; unfortunately, a personal reply may not always be possible.)