

When a Gift Is Bad for Your Child

Gratitude increases closeness in relationships. As you parent your children, look for opportunities to take advantage of gratefulness to draw closer to your kids. Give your children small gifts of love day after day. Be careful, though, that you don't confuse the gratefulness principle with the overindulgence trap.

Some parents, wanting to connect with their kids and develop closeness, recognize giving gifts opens the heart, so they overdo it by giving them too many things. Giving to your kids must be tied into relationship, or the gifts feed selfishness instead of gratefulness.

"Overindulgence is giving your child more than their character can handle."

When children lack gratitude, then the more you give them, the less they appreciate. Parents must restrain themselves or they'll exceed their children's ability to manage the blessings.

Overindulged children rarely become grateful when you give them more things. They grow to be more demanding and selfish. Parents then feel unappreciated and may become resentful. The hearts of both parents and children tend to harden toward each other, and closeness turns into distance.

If your children become overindulged rather than grateful, then pull back on the area where you're giving too much. Look for creative ways to give differently to your child. Teaching the heart gratefulness can be a challenge. Having a child say thank you is just behavior. Gratefulness comes from the heart.

Monitor your child's response to gifts of love to determine if

you're growing gratitude or overindulgence. As gratefulness increases, you can slowly give blessings in a way that will produce more gratefulness. You'll know if you're moving too quickly by your child's response.

*This tip comes from the book, Parenting Is Heart Work by **Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, R.N., .***