

Gratitude

One of the most common thing in our lives, that is often ignored, are the minutes that pass in each hour of the day. For all of us, time is indeed an indispensable resource. It can neither be ignored nor altered. We are compelled to spend it at a fixed rate of sixty minutes every hour. No tap can be installed to regulate its flow, and no refilling device can replenish its quantity. The question is not one of managing the clock, but one of managing ourselves with respect to the time we have. It is often said that time is *"man's most perishable resource,"* and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed. Each minute is a little thing and yet, with respect to our personal productivity, to manage the minute is the secret of success. At school we regularly lock horns with students who are wasting not only their time but that of their peers and their teachers with very little understanding or care for the waste. If only we could get them to understand how precious time is and how productive they could be if they made better use of the minutes they have.

It is so easy to ignore the little tasks or to cut corners, however if we do so in the ignorance of the impact that doing so will have, we are ensuring that success is very unlikely to come our way. Are we completely honest in the effort we are applying to our schoolwork? Did we concentrate in all our classes today? Did we give our last assignment all the time and effort it deserved? Paying due diligence to all these little things is what is going to give us the foundations upon which we can build our dreams and reach our goal. Failing to do them is setting ourselves up for failure.

The little things don't end with time management or work ethic. Do we take the time to remember some of the simple courtesies that are so important in our efforts to build relationships with others? Do we remember to smile, to greet or perhaps even compliment others in the community? Did we pay due respect to all in the community? The positive note, and the word of encouragement never goes astray. We should do these important little things without hesitation. They should be a part of our everyday manner in these critical young-adult years if we are to become great men and women. Lord Chesterfield said, *"Trifles, little attentions, mere nothings, either done or neglected, will make you either liked or disliked in the general run of the world"*

This leads me to my second point – gratitude. I read an article the other day and I share it with you as I believe it to be very sound in its arguments and it offers good advice to us all.

Many writers and sociologists have referred to the era in which we live as the "age of entitlement." People's expectations of life have never been higher; therefore, disappointments have never been greater. How can we avoid being entitled? How can we find the line between standing up for what we deserve and expecting too much?

The type of entitlement I will discuss in this lesson is defined as such: the belief that you deserve special treatment and privileges just for being you. This attitude is the antithesis of humility and the enemy of growth.

Entitled people:

- Are rude when they don't get their way
- Expect others to do favours for them
- Assume they'll be rewarded merely for participation
- Are often angry at their unmet and unspoken expectations of others
- Feel victimized when they are not treated as extraordinary
- Suffer chronic disappointment as a result of their expectations

People who seem entitled are likely to lose the respect of their peers, the patience of their leaders, and the accommodation of their friends.

Here are five ways to avoid entitlement:

1. **Get to the heart of the issue.** Look within. Do you believe that you are worth more than those around you? Do you think you deserve a prize just for being you? This isn't meant to deter you from being confident; it's meant to stop you from becoming prideful. Confidence is well founded in experience and excellence. Pride, on the other hand, is flimsy and unmerited. You are a wonderful creation, but that doesn't mean you are inherently worth more than those around you.
2. **Look to peers before asking favours of leadership.** Before you ask for or expect something, be honest with yourself. Does the value that you are bringing truly match up with the rewards or income that you are expecting? Look to others who are offering similar value before you ask for special favours, but be careful not to use comparison as a foundation for entitlement (i.e. "John got X, so why didn't I get X too?").
3. **Ask with humility.** Whenever you ask anyone to go out of their way to do something for you, be conscious of how you posture yourself when you ask. If you come across as expectant, people will often hesitate to do you any favours. If you come across humble and grateful, they are much more likely to respond with a willingness to help.
4. **Respond to disappointments with grace.** There will always be times when we don't get what we want. Whether it's witnessing a beloved project crash and burn or not being offered that well-deserved promotion, we will face failure and disappointments. When these issues arise, be careful how you respond and to whom you direct your criticism or negativity. If those around you think that you blame them for your personal failings, they will be much less likely to help you succeed in the future.

Look first at yourself and the ways that you can improve. If you still believe that others are at least partially to blame, make a point to communicate all future expectations to them without passing blame. Avoid becoming angry or bitter in the face of disappointment. This makes you look spoiled and childish and will cause others to lose respect for you.

5. **Be grateful.** Brené Brown, acclaimed author and life coach, once said, "The difference between privilege and entitlement is gratitude." Whenever someone does something nice for you, your response should always be appreciation. Go the extra mile to show that you are grateful and honoured by what others do for you.

Whether it's giving advice on how to advance your career or picking up ice on the way to an event, never let a kind deed go without a "thank you." Being grateful will make you a happier, more content person.

Look at your interactions with your co-workers, leaders, and even your friends. Do you sometimes feel as though you are not getting what is owed to you? Analyse the situation. Is this a result of an unhealthy relationship, where you're not being seen or appreciated, or is it because of prideful expectation? You reap what you sow. Before you expect a harvest, first investigate the soil to ensure that what you're sowing is adequate to achieve your goals. So, do the little things well and be thankful for everything we have, especially the relationships we share.