

How To Raise A Thankful Child

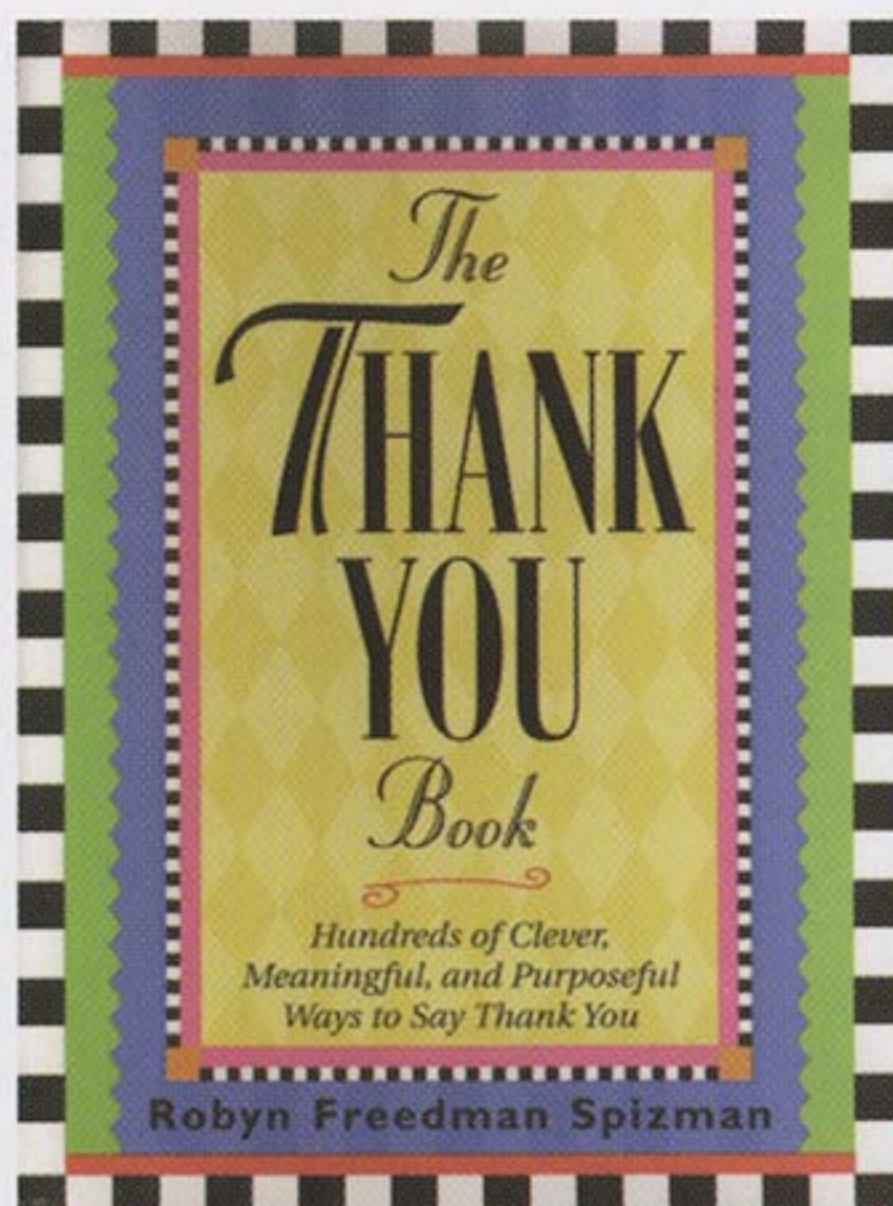
By Robyn Freedman Spizman

Teaching a child to say “thank you” requires many repetitions, but teaching a child to be a thankful person is even harder. Encouraging a child to be grateful is a life-long gift, but it doesn’t have to be a daily challenge.

What’s the secret to raising a thankful child? When our daughter Ali was a little girl, she got bored easily while we were doing errands. To make the trips more eventful, I decided to put her in charge of saying “thank you” to any helpful person we met along the way. I made her CEO of an imaginary family company called “The Thank You Company”. It was Ali’s job to point out the people who were polite and friendly.

Over the years Ali pointed out hundreds of “thank you” people, from the check-out lady at the grocery to the waiters and waitresses at restaurants, and the man who helped us at the gas station. If people were friendly and outgoing, Ali proudly hired them for our family’s Thank You Company. The responses were priceless, as were the lessons that young Ali learned about the importance of saying “thank you” and spreading kindness. Yet I never knew how important this little game was until Ali became a teenager.


In 1994 I wrote a book about the importance of saying “thank you”. When Ali turned 13, she decided to write the cooler version of my book to inspire other kids. She



called it *The Thank You Book For Kids: Hundreds of Creative, Cool and Clever Ways To Say Thank You* (Longstreet Press, \$12.95). As I thought about Ali’s mission to spread gratitude and appreciation, it occurred to me that this was one of the best gifts I had ever given her.

The world becomes a nicer place when people are open-hearted, whether they show it with a smile or a friendly greeting. In our busy, rushed world, the best of us may find ourselves too stressed to stop and acknowledge the good that others do for us. Yet we know that when we do a kind deed for someone and they thank us, we feel a deep satisfaction. Thanking others

reminds us of the little pleasures in life that we can all receive from our actions or words.

Ali’s spin on saying “thank you” is a reminder that we should all be in the “thank you” business and mindful that “thank you’s” really do matter. If we want more friends, customers, happy employees, appreciative partners, and even positive energy flowing in our direction, we must cultivate kindness in ourselves so that we set an example. This message may seem sentimental, but I guarantee you: You’ll never regret raising a thoughtful child, or finding new ways to express your appreciation to those around you. You’ll be thankful you did. 

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perverts, who seek to destroy all sexual taboos in their obsessive quest to satiate their own sexual appetites under the guise of freedom.

This is why I have come full circle from embracing politically-correct feminism as a young woman to seeing it as Public Enemy Number One and saying so as loudly and as often as I can. While most young women don’t identify as feminists today, too many of them have bought into the distorted view of licentiousness as freedom. Casual sex, experimentation with homosexuality and bi-sexuality, and abortion as birth control are seen by too many young people as *rights*. What no one tells them is that these behaviors also entitle them to a lifetime of emptiness, regret and confusion, the possibility of infertility, the loss of intimacy, and exposure to a whole host of acute and chronic diseases. Authentic Feminism does not lead young women into this quagmire of unfulfilled living. (See *What Would the Suffragettes Say?* on page 14.)

I deeply disdain the feminists for what they have done to

generations of women and to children who pay the price of lost intact, loving, stable homes with married committed moms and dads. I am enraged that bright young women are shunted into “women’s studies” programs that do not prepare them to be leaders in the real world. Does a degree in Women’s Studies prepare a woman to work at NASA? To run a corporation? To create new technology? I don’t think so. Authentic feminists go for real goals—not for paddling around in the academic backwaters complaining about the patriarchy. I’m not shy about making my feelings known. I guess it’s no surprise that despite my rise to the top of a male-dominated profession, I’m not likely to be the feminist poster girl any time soon.

But I cherish the fact that I AM a hero to women and men of all ages who continue to revere our G-d given roles and responsibilities. I will continue to champion the contributions and sacrifices of Authentic Feminism and be its proud spokesperson. 