

Extending Encouragement and Acceptance to Your Grown Child

A complimentary resource for *Blessing Your Grown Children* by Debra Evans

encouragement {in-‘ker-ij-mənt}: give assistance or comfort; be present and give encouragement; give active help and encouragement; be in favor or something, support that inspires confidence.

acceptance {ek-‘sept-tən(t)s}: the quality or state of being accepted or acceptable.

My Personal Checklist

— *Where am I at now?* Using a pencil, place a checkmark by each behavior and attitude on the following list that you’ve recently engaged in your relationship with your grown child. Note any thoughts, observations, comments, and ideas you may want to add.

Encouragement:

Appreciating
Respecting
Thanking
Comforting
Supporting
Sharing
Commending
Affirming

Acceptance:

Listening
Hearing
Seeing
Understanding
Honoring
Welcoming
Valuing
Approving

Resistance:

Discounting
Patronizing
Withdrawing
Fixing
Criticizing
Assuming
Blaming
Avoiding

Rejection:

Ignoring
Invalidating
Mocking
Manipulating
Judging
Condemning
Devaluing
Shaming

— *Where do I want to be next?* Erase the checkmarks next to the actions and approaches you would like to limit in the future.

— *When things do not go the way I plan on or expect, how will I respond?* Review the checklist once again. Underline the areas you where you think change may be easiest and most difficult.

My Plan

— *What will be my action plan when I feel bewildered or stuck?* Identify the steps you'll take to extend your encouragement and acceptance toward your grown children:

Support positive change:

- Set limits
- Change focus
- Avoid comparisons
- Trust God

Take care of myself:

- Manage priorities
- Get support from others
- Enjoy time alone with God
- Pursue healthy behaviors

Focus my attention:

- Listen attentively
- Provide eye contact
- Spend one-on-one time
- Cultivate love and forgiveness

Respect my grown child's privacy:

- Keep confidences
- Steer clear of intrusive behaviors
- Mind my own business
- Understand visiting expectations

Extend my courtesy:

- Ask rather than assume
- Call her/him by name
- Observe punctuality
- Make/honor invitations

Celebrate his/her milestones:

- Verbally affirm accomplishments
- Give appropriate cards and gifts
- Attend parties, ceremonies, services, and receptions
- Show approval

Provide material support:

Agree on clear expectations and/or time limits up front

Require reasonable contributions

Stay organized

Hold to the agreement

Refuse my endorsement of self-destructive behavior:

Recognize symptoms

Refuse manipulation

Stop enabling

Say no

Do not let the empty cup be your first teacher of the blessings you had when it was full. Do not let a hard place here and there in the bed destroy your rest. Seek, as a plain duty, to cultivate a buoyant, joyous sense of the crowded kindnesses of God in your daily life.

— Alexander Maclaren

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.

— Ephesians 4:2, NLT

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