



The Gratitude Tree



Written and Illustrated by Stacey Peters



The Gratitude Tree

What does
gratitude mean?

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Once there was a tree on a hill,
enjoying the warm spring breeze. There was
nothing special about this tree, really, he was just
an ordinary tree with dull green leaves.
Sadly, nobody paid much attention to this ordinary tree.



Suddenly, a bird landed on the tree and asked if she could build a nest in his branches. “Why would you want to build a nest in my branches? I’m just an ordinary tree with dull green leaves. Nobody pays attention to me,” replied the tree.



“Yes”, said the bird, “but you have very strong branches.” “Well, I guess I do have very strong branches”, said the tree.

“I am grateful for that”, continued the tree.



And just as he said it, one of his leaves turned a beautiful pink with orange stripes. “Would you look at that”, said the tree. “I wonder how that happened?”



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As the bird began to build her nest, the tree thought to himself, *I'm a pretty lucky tree to be selected as the home of new baby birds.*



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Just then he noticed another leaf turn a bright purple with gold lines.



He looked back at the first leaf. It reminded him of his strong branches. Then he looked back at the newly purple leaf. It reminded him of the bird's nest. The tree began to feel a little better about himself.



Later on that day, as he was watching a boy swing from a tire swing, he smiled inside and thought how nice it was to have someone keeping him company.



Another leaf turned a bright orange with yellow stripes.
The tree was beginning to see the connection.

Have you
figured it
out, yet?



The more he thought of good things the better he felt. The better he felt, the more he thought of good things. He just couldn't help himself. And by the time the sun was about to set, all of his leaves had turned beautiful colors.



The next day, all the tree had to do was to look at his leaves and he was reminded of all the wonderful things in his life. This kept him happy and his leaves stayed beautiful colors. He was no longer an ordinary tree. He was a bright and colorful tree, who was admired by everyone who passed by.



He thought that all the attention would make him happy. He had always wanted more attention. But he discovered something new. It wasn't being bright and colorful that made him the happiest. It was thinking about all the things he was grateful for. This was the secret to happiness!



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That's the secret
to happiness!
I'm going to tell all
my friends!

What do you think the little bird said?

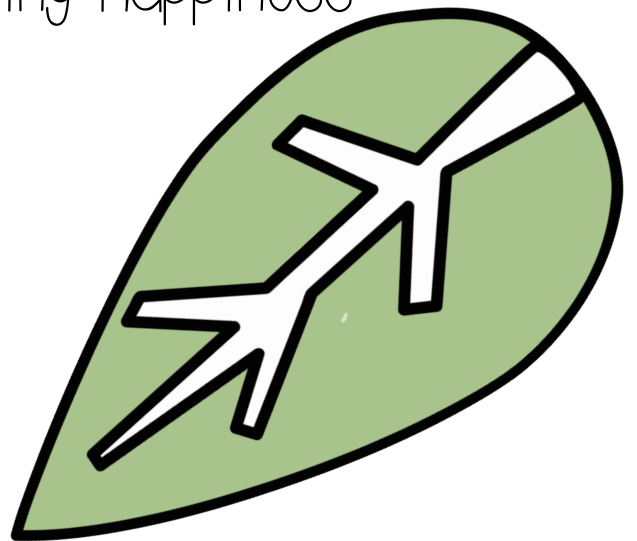
And let's not forget about the role of the little bird in this story. Sometimes a kind word can turn a person's whole day around. If you are grateful for a person, or something someone did, be sure to tell him or her. You might just change their whole day, too!



Do you remember what the bird said
to make the tree feel better about himself?



As you make your leaf to add to the gratitude tree, think of things you are grateful for and write them on the leaf. Decorate your leaf with bright colors and patterns. Let the tree be a reminder to you, each time you pass it, to have an “attitude of gratitude”, which will bring happiness to your life.



CREDITS

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