

# Total Mangala Family

## The attitude when judging others:

1. Adopt a **merciful and compassionate heart**, wishing that others will change for the better after realizing their weaknesses.
2. **Assess** things as they really are, only judge the matter and not the person.
3. **Don't be contemptuous** towards other people's weaknesses.
4. **Embrace** other people's weaknesses.
5. Point out other people's weaknesses **courteously and respectfully**.

## The attitude when accepting other's judgments and criticisms

1. Adopt a **grateful heart**, understand that others only want the best for us, hoping that we can change and improve.
2. **Accept whatever that comes**. Accept other people's judgments and criticisms and not be overly bothered by it.
3. If we are bothered/troubled by it, we should **pay wise attention** and work hard to overcome it.
4. **Be humble**, understand that we are all imperfect, admit our mistakes and turn over a new leaf.
5. **Have an open and forgiving heart**. If people wrongly accuse us, we must be able to forgive them.

## 1. GIVING

- to be able to give is blessing; the best giving is selfless, with true heart, courage and loving kindness
- 'Giving' is the cause of 'getting'/'receiving' it is the source of happiness. Hence, 'giving' makes us wealthier. 'Giving' is better than 'Receiving'.
- By giving, we develop and nurture our generosity; it also frees us from attachment.
- Giving is not only sharing of happiness, it is also sharing of unhappiness. For example: A smile from someone will give warmth to another who is depressed.
- Giving does not necessarily require one to do a lot of things or give the most precious gifts to others. The most effective and beneficial one should be the giving of the right thing at the right time. "Doing Just right" is also a kind of wisdom in our daily life.
- Giving may not necessarily be an active act, it could be passive too. For example: we can just sit quietly next to our children, accompanying them, letting them know that we are supporting them silently, making them feel the serenity, peacefulness and the positive energy.
- Giving may not necessarily be in material form. What many people are lacking and aspiring for is something intangible and of non-material form, such as some caring and forgiving words, a sweet smile, or a warm hug. However, most of the times, we forget, we neglect, we are not used to or even we have no courage to do it, especially to our closest and dearest family members. All these intangible and mental support are like the rafters to a happy and harmonious family, a house cannot simply be built with just the beam, which is similar to the material needs of the family.
- To maintain and sustain a happy and harmonious family, it is not depending on the material giving but it is the warmth given to one another from our inner heart. This can be nurtured and developed through the mindfulness training via action, speech and mind.
- Of course, appropriate material giving is still necessary, but it doesn't mean to satisfy all the family's "wants" blindly.
- Unlimited material giving not only will increase the financial burden of the family, this will unknowingly affirm the greediness of the family too. Being parents, not only should we live a simple living, we should also let our children understand that 'Contentment is the supreme wealth'

## **1(a) Give Beneficial Speech**

- Beneficial speech is expressed with a lot of loving kindness and compassion.
- Beneficial speech should consist of these four conditions:
  - i Gentle words
  - ii Truthful and factual,
  - iii Beneficial
  - iv It could be words that others like or dislike to hear. However, regardless of whether they like or dislike hearing those words, we should find the right timing to say them.
- When expressing beneficial speech, it does not necessarily have to be soft, but it can be firm if it can bring out a more effective results.
- When saying beneficial speech, not only loving kindness is required, wisdom is required as well. This is to avoid going overboard. Say it moderately. Besides, it has to be said at the right timing, right place, right words and descriptions, to avoid opposite effects.
- Beneficial speech that is full of wisdom and loving kindness will boost up the person's life. It will motivate the person to face all his/her challenges and changes himself/herself. When a person changes, it is equivalent to 'changing the world' because naturally everything around him/her will be better, happier and more harmony, a total blessing.
- Through caring words, we can show and express our concern and love to others.
- The most important thing we need to bear in mind: "When you are emotional, please don't speak."
- Your willingness to give beneficial speech to others is an act of 'selflessness'. This is because in certain circumstances, due to our pride, we are reluctant to use beneficial speech to others, as we are afraid we may embarrass or disrespect them. We are also afraid this kind of speech can cause us to be unpopular. This scenario will most likely occur between father and child, or between the older generations towards the younger generations. Actually, if we can let go of our 'ego self', the person who said those words (the father) will immediately be happier and relaxed and the recipient (the child) will be able to feel the care and concerns of the father. Thus, family members in such a family environment will be more harmonious.
- Beneficial speech can be just a simple greeting, comforting or motivating words.
- One of the weaknesses of humanity is that "Familiarity breeds contempt", we always take our love ones for granted. This is common among old couples (husband and wife). When they have spent a long time together, they tend to see the weakness of one another and forget the good qualities that they once admired. They will start criticizing and blame one another. As a result, the relationship will suffer. However if couples can be more

understanding towards one another, accept and forgive each other, beneficial speech will naturally flow from the heart. Naturally their relationship will be better and compatible, just like an old friend. So, please remember to greet each other with beneficial speech every day or every morning when you wake up, be it a simple greetings like, “Good morning my dear, did you sleep well last night?”

- Parents can say beneficial speech to their children when they are back from either school or working place. For example ‘What new knowledge did you learn today?’; or when the husband is back after a hard day’s work, the wife can bring him a cup of hot tea and said: ‘The whole family feels proud and glad to have you around!’ The husbands on the other hand, should minimize his criticism on his wife’s cooking skills. He should express his gratitude towards his wife by praising her in words like ‘Your cooking skills have improved. Thank you for all your sacrifices and for looking after the health of our family. We really appreciate it.’
- When children’s school results are poor, during this time they need words of concerns and comforts from their parents, not blaming. With that, the children will be able to stand up again bravely to face their failure and try harder to succeed in the future. Even when the children do succeed in their academic achievements, parents have to praise them by saying that ‘Son/Daughter, you are so great and intelligent! Everything is worthwhile and is rewarded after you put in the necessary effort. Keep it up!’ Then, the children will feel motivated and recognized, will be more focus and happier in continuing their studies. Therefore, parents no longer need to worry so much about their children’s academic performances, and the parents-children relationship will be established in a more harmonious way. Children will not be afraid to communicate with the parents and this will lead to a better, brighter and more understanding relationship among the family members.

## **1(b) Smiles**

- The body and mind are inter-related. Therefore, the one who always smiles will bring lots of happiness to oneself and will also affect the surroundings and the people around them. With that, the whole world will be filled with laughter and happiness, which suits the statement of ‘A smile can dissolve all worries.’
- In addition, with a smile and sense of happiness, it will establish the effect of ‘share the happiness together’ and the world will be so much better to live in.
- Smile is a tool to achieve better relationship with others.
- We can even defuse animosity among enemies, or during awkward situations
- Every morning, give yourself a smile, as only when you are breathing, you can live another day with Dhamma.

- “Smile” is the world’s most excellent cosmetics and beauty products as it comes with zero side effects. Moreover, smile is something priceless since it doesn’t have an expiry date.
- When family members are exhausted due to work, remember to give them a grateful smile. When they are sad, disappointed or lost, remember to give them a bright and encouraging smile. When your family members achieve success in their life, don’t forget to grant them a smile of congratulations and a reminder to continue their hard work. Learn to share burdens and responsibilities are a family’s total blessings.
- Everyone loves to see a smile from others, so let’s start with ourselves!
- A caring smile is a priceless contribution towards our own family members as action speaks louder than words.
- A happy and contented smile, always fill the children with memories of gratefulness, list down the people and things that they are grateful for. Naturally this will make them feel they have abundance in life, loved and encouraged. Automatically, everyone will smile from the bottom of their heart.

### **1(c) Embracing**

- Firstly, people have to acknowledge that every family member in a big family, including your own self is imperfect. One will make mistakes in the past and future due to the inability of oneself to cut off from the roots of greed and hatred. Therefore, to establish a family that is wise in all aspects, the very first thing one has to learn is to embrace them.
- People usually forgive individuals from the external circles (ex, friends, colleague, customers), but find it hard to forgive own family members even due to small and tiny mistakes. Why? ( People tend to have less tolerance towards their love ones)
- Embracing includes: Understanding, acceptance, forgiveness and letting go.
- When we embrace others, they will feel they are being understood and forgiven. Thus it will motivate them to stand up and turn over a new leaf. Therefore, embracing others means giving them a new lease of life.
- When we learn how to embrace other people’s mistakes, someday when we ourselves make mistakes, we will also be easily embraced. This is because, the truth will prevail. When you give someone a new lease of life, similarly, others will also give you another chance.
- In the process of embracing someone, we can actually help him to forgive and accept himself and indirectly learn how to embrace others in the future.
- Words like ‘It’s ok’, ‘never mind’, sometimes will bring comfort to others and help them release their burden.

- The real kind of embracing means these past mistakes will not be brought up again in any future arguments to hurt the other person's feelings.
- Most of the time, if we can establish a good bilateral relationship, trustworthy communication, understanding each other's perspectives, put ourselves in others' shoes and see their helplessness; we will be easier to embrace them.

## **2. Mutual**

The existences of fate/conditionality allow people to bind as family, under the natural law of cause and effect and the conditionality, every family member is linked together and only through continuous/on-going interaction, harmonious relationships can be established. However, to establish an effective and beneficial parent-children relationship, the effort from only one party will not work. It always takes two hands to clap.

### **2(a) Mutual respects**

- Mutual respect is the best foundations of relationship in the world and also a platform to establish the basic of a harmonious family.
- To be able to have mutual respects, firstly, one have to be able to understand each other, be patient and be tolerant, be selfless, put yourself in their shoes, and not only concern with your own feelings and perspectives.
- In a harmonious family, we need to allow others to have the rights to have different opinions in making decisions. If we could not agree to other family member's decision or opinion, at least we need to learn how to overcome the situation by using a more gentle and tactful way to settle the disagreements.
- If we have mutual respect, we will not take others for granted or find it hard to forgive someone who is very close to us. To others, one needs to have proper attitude and attire when it comes to confronting or greeting people. The younger generations should have proper manners in greeting the older generations.
- Respect comes from observations and understanding, and the wisdom to choose the right word and place to voice their own opinion. If the parents blame and scold their children loudly in public, it will raise more anger from the children towards their parents. Besides, the children will avoid admitting their mistakes and denying it. Restrain own self during bad emotions is an act of respect too.
- When a child receives respects from others, they will eventually learn how to respect others. A child that learns the virtue of respects possesses more self-confident, more courtesy, more humble, easier to teach, good interpersonal skills and are easier to communicate.

- How parents can respect their children?
  - i Parents should respect their children's daily schedule.
  - ii Parents should respect their children's choices. (Contribute suggestion, helps and supports .For the above 2 points, parents must make sure the children decision is wise. If their decision will bring harmful effect/consequences, parents should discuss firmly and softly with them in order to reach a mutual agreement)
  - iii Parents should respect their children's pride.
  - iv Parents should respect their children by not favoring any of them. (For example, diligent children should be rewarded, likewise the lazy ones shouldn't be rewarded.)
  
- How do children respect parents?
  - i Children ought to respect parents.
  - ii Do not look down on parent's education backgrounds, careers or financial ability
  - iii Do not contradict or refute parents, listen to parents' advice with patience
  - iv Do not hurt oneself, look after one's own safety, health and academic studies
  - v Do not engage in activities that will hurt parents' feelings
  - vi Notify parents where you are going and what you are doing when you leave the house. Greet parents in the morning and night with "Good Morning" and "Good Night"

## **2 (b) Mutual Encouragement**

- Mutual encouragement is the spiritual driving force in the growth of every person. It helps to elevate confidence, enthusiasm and diligence, to be able to identify and develop strategies to overcome obstacles and move forward with full effort.
- A person who encourages others has a dynamic life, full of humanity, rejoice in others' achievements, bring out potentials in people, and offer pointers towards personal development to others.
- A person who encourages others knows how to appreciate your achievements, but at the same time advises you not to be complacent and seek excellence at all times. When you are down, he does not add salt to the wound and advices you not to lose your direction. When you experience setbacks, he offers you confidence and hopes. He happily shares his knowledge and life experience.
- A child who receives encouragement develops self confidence and motivation, optimistic, able to face pressures and setbacks, expresses his opinions and consults others, responsible and possesses ability to solve problems.
- Parents who receive encouragements carry out their parental duties righteously, upgrades themselves in order to give their children the best support and care.
- How do parents encourage children?

- i Praising and encouraging your children will affirm their good qualities and virtues.
  - ii Encourage your children to keep trying their best
  - iii Persuade your children to correct their mistakes
  - iv Do not give up hopes on your children
  - v Don't give your children pressure and don't compare with neighbors' children
  - vi Be your children's faithful listener
- How do Children Encourage Parents?
    - i Children should praise their parents and rejoice in their good qualities and achievements
    - ii Be their parents' faithful listener and share their happiness and worries. (When the child is still immature, it is inappropriate to expose them to too much negativity)
    - iii When parents' relationships are on downhill, encourage them to reconcile
    - iv Encourage parents to quit their bad habits such as smoking, drinking alcohols, gambling and the likes.
    - v Encourage interactions among parents, relatives and neighbors in order to foster closer ties and help out each other in the neighborhood.
    - vi Encourage parents to participate in charitable causes and leisure activities, relax and expand their friends' circle.
    - vii Encourage parents to learn Buddhism, to do charities (donation), to observe precepts and to meditate, accumulate their merits and develop the right faith.

## **2(c) Helping Each Other**

- Helping each other is the key to our daily lives.
  - With the power of cooperation and teamwork, it uses minimal resources and achieves maximum results.
  - A helpful and compassionate person is good at observing. He is able to feel others' pains and sufferings. Possesses the passion to help people to gain happiness, and does not ask for anything in return.
  - He feels happy for being able to help others.
  - A person who likes to help others is a people person, a humane character, showing gratitude, very helpful and at the same time he is ready to accept help from others. Through helping one another, they develop reliable friendships, loyalties and trusts.
  - In a family who helps out one another, each family member will have a strong sense of belonging. With ample love and support from the family, they have confidence and strength to face all kinds of stress and challenges.
  - Apart from helping them on the 'problem' (effects), we should also learn to help them on the 'causes' of their problem. Especially in helping them to develop the right view, differentiate between good and bad karma, correct bad habits and cultivate loving kindness and virtues.
- How do parents help children?
    - i Teach your children family values, cultures and wisdom in dealing with people
    - ii Teach your children valuable practical life lessons, develop the right beliefs, respect living beings and love everyone around you.

- iii Teach your children to carry out good deeds (for example donations, serving others, caring and sharing)
- iv Teach your children practical life lessons (sewing, laundry and cooking)
- v Teach your children your languages, including your mother tongue and others.
- vi Help your children in their school homework and studies, help them to develop good lifestyles and schedules.
- vii Teach your children to know their ancestors, elders, relatives and neighbors and so forth.
- viii Help your children to expand their horizons, knowledge, understand their specialties and potentials.

- **How can children help their parents?**

- i. Help to reduce parents' burden at home, keeping the house clean, sharing housework and taking care of younger brothers and sisters.
- ii. Help to reduce the family expenses by not wasting electrical and water supply at home and be thrifty and not spend unnecessarily with the pocket money from parents.
- iii. Help parents to serve and entertain guests or visitors at home.
- iv. Help parents when they are exhausted and tired. Children can give them a body massage or buy them medicine when they are sick.
- v. Encourage their parents to free up their schedule (time) for self-cultivation and enhance their life especially with Buddhism teaching.
- vi. Help parents to have right faith, associate with the right friends, cultivate and practice good deeds and moral values, learn the Dhamma, and accumulate good merits.
- vii. Help in providing best living environment for parents.
- viii. Help old-aged parents in fulfilling their dream, succeeding the family business and protecting and sustaining the family possessions.

### **3. ABILITY**

- “Ability” is a positive energy, an act of brightness and courage in life.
- This energy can help to resolve all hardships, conflicts and challenges faced by the family.
- “Ability” can help us to learn to avoid danger and give us means to overcome difficulties and solve problems, which in turn can greatly enhance our own life and that of our family too.
- “Ability” gives our mind more positive energy to carry out more tasks in life, assume a heavier responsibility and to face all different scenarios in life (good times, bad times and neither of both).
- “Ability” helps develop our patience and forgiving nature, it will make us a person with big heart and virtues.
- “Ability” makes us less susceptible to (mental) injury, and thus making us a joyous person. Only a happy person can bring happiness to others.
- When the ability and virtues of a family get stronger and better, the whole family will be more united and harmonious. Thus, the happiness index in the family will be increasing. At the same time, all troubles and problems will be getting less.

#### **3 (a) The ability to be corrected.**

- This is the practice of Non Self. If we feel bad when being corrected, this is due to the “I or Ego-self” in us. In this situation, one should practise wise attention: Anything arising from greed, hatred and delusion are all bad, these should be restrained by all means.
- This is also a practice of “accepting whatever that comes”. This trains us to accept judgments and criticisms in a calm and peaceful manner when being corrected.
- Always bear in mind, out of loving kindness, others correct us in order to get the best out of us. Therefore, when we are corrected, not only should we reflect on our fault or imperfection, we should also be grateful to those who correct us. The Buddha once said: “We should follow closely those who point out our mistakes, just like following closely those who lead us to the treasure.”
- A person who is willing to be corrected is easier to be taught, others will be more willing to share knowledge, experience and suggestion with him. In this way, he will be well liked by people and his social network will automatically be good.
- As parents, they should not misuse their parenting right to exert pressure on their children. Conversely, they should be modest and always listening humbly to their children’s opinion and thought, then to reflect and accept correction by their children and change for better, so that they can assume their role as better parents.

- If children want to correct their parents, they should tell them in a very respectful manner, polite and soft spoken, addressing the issue but not the person, giving opinion in a suggestive way.
- When a child is throwing tantrum while being corrected of his behaviour, the child should realize that his action is not right. He should then apologize to his parents and repent. If the child does not accept the correction, he should explain by giving reasons in a proper manner.

### **3(b) Acknowledging One's Mistakes.**

- Don't only focus on other people's mistakes. Life's turning point is when you are able to see your own problem.
- When we identify the mistakes and accept them, only then we have the opportunity to change. Therefore, accepting mistakes that we made is a key point in uplifting our lives.
- Do not feel that admitting mistakes is shameful or it will make others feel uncomfortable, or even look down on us. Instead, it is an act of the brave one as it requires courage from within. Whenever someone admits his/her mistakes, we ought to give compliment and encouragement. Other than that, we must forgive him with a heart of benevolence and forgiveness, and accept him again.
- Acknowledging one's mistakes is an act of being responsible too. It signifies the person's willingness to take up responsibility for his error.
- Parents should establish themselves as role model at home, and develop in the family the culture of admitting mistake. Parents should let children know that they themselves are imperfect, but they are able to address their wrong deeds/mistakes positively, accept it and move forward. This sets a good example for them. When they make mistake, they would have the same courage to address, accept and move on.
- When children see their parents acknowledging their own mistakes, they shouldn't be arrogant or disrespectful to their parents. They should instead learn to be humble, forgiving and to emulate their parents' virtue.
- Children should take their parent's correction of mistakes with a positive attitude. If they are not able to realize where they have done wrong in the beginning, they should respectfully ask their parents to explain in details so that they can understand.
- The culture of acknowledging one's mistake increases the level of trust and honesty among family members, eventually leading to a harmonious family relationship.

### **3(c) Taking initiative/being proactive**

- Taking initiative is a manifestation of Non-Self or Selflessness. Only if we can let go of the "I/Ego-Self", hope for the best for others, can we unconditionally sacrifice for the family. With this, we can be rewarded with better merits.
- Being proactive/taking initiative is a reflection of care and love. It makes other feel warm and gives a sense of belonging.
- Being proactive/taking initiative brings warmth to a family. In this way, family members will like to stay at home and will not keep thinking of going out for fun. This will prevent

incidence of family members returning home late at night and cases of members running away from home.

- Family members should show more care and love for one another. They should lend a helping hand and give moral support to one another when encountering hardships. Take for instance:
  - i. Parents should pay attention to their children's academic, health, curriculum activities and the friends they are close to. Be ready to listen to them and care for their feelings. Guide them appropriately when they go astray or feeling lost.
  - ii. A child on the other hand should greet their parents daily (for example, good morning, good night), care for them, to lend a helping hand by offering to do housework automatically and willingly in order to reduce their burden. We should be obedient, study hard and diligently so that parents will not worry about us. A little surprise sometimes such as handmade greeting cards, flowers given as gifts during special day would be great for parents as well.
  - iii. Siblings should always help one another. The elders should teach and lead the younger siblings. Help to solve their problems, protects them from any harm and so on.
- Taking initiative to reward, this helps others understand that they are doing the right thing or heading towards the right direction.
- Taking initiative to understand others' needs, develop and nurture the ability of observation.
- "Ability to take the initiative" enables parents to understand their children and their feeling and vice versa. In this way, everyone will be more understanding and more considerate, the relation within family members will be more intimate, harmonious and united. This will eventually form a "Total Mangala Family".