

## Generations



# Powerful phrases that help inspire all

By Peg DeMarco - Special to The News Herald

According to an article I read recently online, courtesy of [www.msn.com](http://www.msn.com) and [www.popsugar.com](http://www.popsugar.com), there's a list of phrases that children need to hear from their parents in order to feel loved, valued, and special. It's geared toward young children, but I think it should apply to all children, no matter how old they are or what stage of parental rearing parents may be in. Even though children may be grown and have left the nest, college graduates or parents of cuddlesome grandchildren need coaching and a boost once in a while and it doesn't take much from the older generation to help them out.

I wish I had seen this list decades ago when my children were growing up. It's not that I didn't feel blessed to have them and so very proud of each one of them, but it might have been more beneficial if they had heard some of these phrases more often and not just when the report card was good, the goal was made, or the garbage was taken out without a reminder.

The article explained that when parents praise their children for a variety of specific attributes, instead of just telling them that they're the best, their words are empowering and phrases can positively affect their self-love.

The article listed close to thirty key phrases, ranging from, "You're incredibly thoughtful," to, "You're a great teammate," but, naturally, I had my own favorites. And to those of you who may not have children, you could easily turn these phrases around and share them with your parents the next time you talk to them on the phone, see them, or just say "hi" on Facebook.

My favorite was, "You make me proud every day," because that about sums up my own special feelings towards my children. Sure, there were rough spots along the way and as they were growing up, I was growing, too, as a parent. No one gives you a "How to Do" book on being a parent and a lot of it is trial and error, with the first born paying the price of parental mistakes and the last born reaping the rewards of parental experience.

Dr. Spock was famous for his wisdom and I've got dog-eared copies of his books to prove that I followed a lot of his advice. But we're living in a new age now, so these simple phrases might be as valuable today as the chapters of his famous books written a long time ago.

My second favorite was, "You're unique," because I think that's what makes each one of our children special to us and, as a parent, it's probably the greatest gift I've tried to instill in my three: be distinctive, with a compassionate, passionate voice, and always with a kind heart and soul.

Would children in school work harder if they heard, “I’ve noticed how hard you’ve been trying to conjugate those French verbs?” Perhaps. And would high schoolers, whose math homework was far more complicated than you remembered high school math, slyly grin when you handed the math workbook back saying, “Too tough for me. Show me how you got the answer.”

I also liked the phrase, “You inspire me,” because pictures and videos, so easy to obtain in today’s electronic age, truly does inspire a parent when he or she witnesses happy times and faces of their children on Facebook and other forms of social media. And that, in turn, rewards parents with a symbolic thank you because happy faces prove that you’ve done something else right.

“You’re not afraid to dream big,” was another favorite because no dream is too big if a child knows that you are always going to be there to support him or her.

Another was, “You make me want to be the best person I can be,” and I think any child, young or old, and any parent, young or old, would glow inside upon hearing this phrase.

Years ago, when my mother was alive, we used to talk on the phone frequently and, on one occasion, she ended our call with, “I love you.” It was strange because she hadn’t ended a call like that before, but it started a trend that strengthened the bond between us. And today, that’s how I end every call with each of my children and my brothers and sister.

It’s a simple phrase, but more powerful than any other three words I know.

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