

3 December 2019

Four A's of love

Good morning, teachers and students. As the school theme of this year is “In love we care, In God we cheer. (關懷鼓勵，以愛相繫)”, today, I would like to share with you the Four A's of love. In the book “How to be a hero to your kids”, Josh McDowell introduces the concept of the Four A's of love. **The Four “A’s” are: affection, availability, appreciation and acceptance.** Affection is the feeling of liking or loving somebody very much and caring about them. Availability means you are free and willing to spend time to see or talk to somebody. Acceptance is to make somebody feel welcome, and part of a group. Appreciation has three explanations. First, appreciation is the pleasure that you have when you recognize and enjoy the good qualities of somebody. For example, I appreciate your kindness. I appreciate your work ethic. I appreciate your good character. Second, appreciation is a full or sympathetic understanding of something, such as a situation or a problem, and of what it involves. For example, I appreciate and understand your difficulties. I appreciate and understand that you have sorrow in your heart day after day. Third, appreciation is the feeling of being grateful for something. For example, I am thankful for your help. I am thankful for your kind words. I am thankful for your assistance.

According to Josh McDowell, the formula for the Four A's of love are as follows: You start with acceptance. Then you add appreciation. Then add liberal amounts of affection and availability. In general, you must use the four A's in the correct order. As a result, other people will feel your love and care.

Boys and girls, if you really want your parents, teachers and classmates feel that you love them, try to follow the formula. Try to make them feel that you accept them. Then try to appreciate them. Try to recognize their good qualities. Try to show sympathetic understanding for their problems. Try to be grateful to them. Try to show your affection and availability.

In general, to use the Four A's correctly, you must start with **acceptance**, because it is the absolute foundation of a good relationship

with your parents, teachers and friends. The ideal to aim for is unconditional acceptance. The implication is: no matter what the others might do or say, no matter how badly they fail, we still love and accept them anyway. When people sense true acceptance from others, they feel secure.

According to Josh McDowell, if acceptance is the foundation of a good relationship with other people, **appreciation** is the cornerstone. Appreciation adds a sense of significance to others. It implies that “you are great” and “I am proud of you”. To practice appreciation, you should be a “good finder”. In other words, you should always try to find the good aspects of other people, instead of pointing out their mistakes and weaknesses.

Apart from acceptance and appreciation, you should also show your **affection and availability** so that other people feel your love. Try to show your affection and kindness to your parents, teachers and friends verbally. Verbally, you should tell others you love and appreciate them. Verbally, you should tell others “you are lovable”. Last but not least, to show your love to others, you must be available and willing to spend time with your parents, teachers and friends. Instead of spending so much time on games, try to spend more time talking with your parents. Then they will feel your availability and love. Try to remember, while quality time is good, there is no substitute for quantity time. You have to spend a significant amount of time with your parents, teachers and classmates, otherwise they will not feel your love.

In conclusion, boys and girls, try to practice the formula of the Four A’s of love and show your love for others. Start with acceptance. Then add appreciation and liberal amounts of affection and availability. Then, the other people will feel your love and care.