

Modeling Appreciation for the Gift

By Kathy Slattengren, M. Ed., [Priceless Parenting](#)

I was so excited to receive this special gift. It was everything I ever wanted! When the gift arrived it was the most beautiful gift I'd ever seen. It simply sparkled like a shiny, brilliant star!

I immediately fell in love with my gift. Who cares that there was no gift receipt! I certainly would not be interested in returning it.

As I familiarized myself with the gift, I realized it was more intricate and complex than I imagined it would be. I couldn't help but notice there were thousands of pages of instructions. How could it possibly be this complicated?



I soon realized that part of the complexity was because every single product was slightly different. Who designs a product like that? Honestly, it was ridiculous how much I had to read through to locate the one piece of information I needed.

One of the first things I wanted to figure out was how the silent mode worked. Guess what? I followed the instructions exactly with jiggling and rocking it just right. Did it work? No! It kept right on squawking.

Fine. If I couldn't get silent mode to work, at least it should be able to go into sleep mode. There were detailed instructions with multiple ways to enable sleep mode. How hard could it possibly be? Let me tell you, it was frustratingly difficult! I tried all the suggested methods and it refused to go into sleep mode.

Although I was struggling a bit, I felt surely airplane mode would work. Airplane mode is a very important feature due to needing to stay safe and sane while being trapped in a relatively small space while cruising at 30,000 feet. As we took off and started climbing, I excitedly tried getting it into airplane mode. Once again, painful failure.

It was supposed to be relatively easy to use and clearly mine was broken. I carefully followed the instructions but did it work? No! Is there a 1-800 number to dial for help? No!

Another surprise that I was not at all pleased with was maintenance. I was under the impression that maintenance was not that difficult. Liars! This gift needs continual maintenance. Also, there are leaks that were not mentioned in the advertising. If something leaks this badly, certainly it should be mentioned upfront.

What's really exasperating about this gift is that it doesn't operate consistently. Just when I have everything working perfectly with it, something happens and things fall apart. Upon reading the fine print, I learned that being extremely touchy and easily unbalanced are actually features, not defects. Who builds in those kind of features?!

I hate to sound like a complainer but the fuel costs are also an issue. Initially it operates with limited fuel but over time it continually needs increasingly expensive fuel. Again, this fact was not highlighted in any of the marketing material.

It probably seems that I'm not being very appreciative of my amazing gift but I didn't think it would be like this. I actually find myself getting angry at times with this gift. In fact this gift has triggered a large range of emotions - all the way from elation to despair.

If I'm completely honest, I may have not listened carefully to the possible side effects rattled off in the commercials. Side effects like heart ache, drowsiness, sleep loss, hair loss and increased blood pressure. I was sure those side effects were for others, not me!

Given all the time and energy I'm pouring into this gift, I decided to try focusing on the positive aspects it brings to my life. One cool thing about this gift is that it does a lot of neat things I didn't expect it could do – things that aren't even mentioned in the manuals! It's constantly surprising me with new ways of performing. It definitely appears to have a mind of its own.

Despite all the difficulties, I find myself hoping and praying that I will always have this gift in my life. This gift brings me joy, makes me laugh, challenges me, helps me grow, and fills me with awe, wonder and love.

Does this gift sound like any gift you've also received? My children are a unique gift. Yours are too. If we can appreciate them for who they are without trying to change them into someone they can never be, we will delight in seeing their brilliance shine through. We will be modeling appreciation for the precious gift that they are.

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