

2023 Tuesday Tips for Parents

Jan 3

Happy New Year! What if this year we parents strive to accept our mistakes and learn from them so I kids do too? Step out of our comfort zone and let go? Actively listen to our kids versus the control. Be better parents to build better relationships with our kids. Could we do that or something like it?

Jan 10

The only person you should try to be better than is the person you were yesterday, last month, last year or ever!

Jan 17

“My success and happiness lie in me. I resolve to keep happy, so my joy and I can form an invincible host against the day’s tantrums... and doldrums, endless chores, spilled snacks and sticky floors!”

By: Sue Lively - <https://onetimethrough.com/>

Jan 24

If you have a new baby in this new year (or practically new) then John Ortiz, Ph.D., has this idea from his book: “Nurturing Your Child with Music”

“Don’t hesitate to imitate or mimic your infant’s attempts at sound exploration. From the very first coo to the magical first word, you are acting as a reflective and unconditionally accepting “sounding board” to your children’s loving efforts at speech will help them to stay in tune with their own progress. As your children hear and observe your mimicking of their sounds, you will help to set a foundation for social communication. It will also provide you an early leadership experience.

Jan 31

Family Game to Play at Dinner

Emotional Charades Game

Materials:

List of emotions (attached)

2 or more people

Dry erase board or chalk board

How to Implement:

1) Number the list of emotions

- 2) Pick a number and view the emotion to be presented independently
- 3) Play charades with facial expressions or body movement
- 4) If playing Pictionary; try to show a story that would create the

emotions, instead of drawing a face

- 5) Be sure to take turns, and don't give up guessing

Goals:

- To model a variety of emotions with your client
- To retrain the limbic system and association cortex
- To develop a wide variety of emotions beyond Happy, Mad, Sad & Glad

Primary Emotion	Secondary Emotion	Tertiary emotions
Love	Affection Lust Longing	Adoration, affection, love, fondness, liking, attraction, caring, tenderness, compassion, sentimentality Arousal, desire, lust, passion, infatuation Longing
Joy	Cheerfulness Zest Contentment Pride Optimism Enthrallment Relief	Amusement, bliss, cheerfulness, gaiety, glee, jolliness, joviality, joy, delight, enjoyment, gladness, happiness, jubilation, elation, satisfaction, ecstasy, euphoria Enthusiasm, zeal, zest, excitement, thrill, exhilaration Contentment, pleasure Pride, triumph Eagerness, hope, optimism Enthrallment, rapture Relief
Surprise	Surprise	Amazement, surprise, astonishment
Anger	Irritation Exasperation Rage Disgust Envy Torment	Aggravation, irritation, agitation, annoyance, grouchiness, grumpiness Exasperation, frustration Anger, rage, outrage, fury, wrath, hostility, ferocity, bitterness, hate, loathing, scorn, spite, vengefulness, dislike, resentment Disgust, revulsion, contempt Envy, jealousy Torment

Sadness	Suffering Sadness	Agony, suffering, hurt, anguish Depression, despair, hopelessness, gloom, glumness, sadness, unhappiness, grief,
Fear	Horror Nervousness	Alarm, shock, fear, fright, horror, terror, panic, hysteria, mortification sorrow, woe, misery, melancholy Anxiety, nervousness, tenseness, uneasiness, apprehension, worry, distress, dread

Above game taken from: *Over 75 Quick, "On-The-Spot" Techniques for Children with Emotional and Behavior Problems* by Jennifer Wilke-Deaton, M.A., L.P.A.

Feb 7

Hunting the Five Senses

Find at least one thing from each of your 5 senses that make you feel calm. Then if you can retrieve them put them into a box or bag, if you can't take them then take a picture of them, or write them down, write a story about them or draw them and include a memory with them.

Sight –

Sound –

Touch –

Taste –

Smell –

When you are feeling anxious or depressed or just not feeling the best, pull out the box or bag or picture or drawing or writing and hold it, imagine with it and really be part of it even if just for a moment.

Feb 14

Apple Tree Meditation

Close your eyes

Imagine an apple tree ripe with fruit

Try deep breathing during this time

On the tree the fruit is your feelings and thoughts

Picture the bright colors of the apples

So, imagine that there are some rotten apples and a lot of beautiful, colorful apples

The apples represent your feelings and thoughts

Now imagine picking the good apple (like good feelings and thoughts) and putting them in the basket

Now imagine dropping the rotten apple (the thoughts and feelings you don't want) to the ground.

You can make anything you want from the good apples (just like your thoughts and feelings)

Feb 21

Contrast: This is what I believe is one of the most important parts of life. Contrast in our life helps us grow and mature. Think about this, we can't really know what we want until we understand and know what we don't want. We need contrast to do that.

Simple Example: If everyone on earth was exactly 6 feet tall, no more or no less, we would not really know it defined as 6 feet tall. It would be just that that is. But if suddenly someone came up that was only 5 feet tall then we would see a difference, there would be us and them. We would then have to define each to understand each and thus a definition of the contrast. One is 6 feet tall and the other is 5 feet tall.

In other words we have to understand bad vs. good, left vs. right, up vs. down, white vs. black, etc...

Until we see the contrast, feel the uncomfortableness, or start to question things we don't grow and learn.

Feb 28

Parent Care and Calm Cards

On 4 3X5 Index Cards (optional put on one sheet too, to post around the house)

Card One – write on the front side the word “STOP” and on the back write these questions:

1. What am I feeling?
2. Where am I feeling it in my body?
3. It is ok to feel this feeling.

Card Two – write on the front side the word “BREATHE” and on the back write these statements:

1. Breath in slow and deep 5 times and notice your breath
2. Repeat “I am letting go and doing ok”
3. Observe, accept and begin to release the negative thoughts and feelings

Card Three– write on the front side the word “REFLECT” and on the back write these questions:

1. How have a reacted in the past?
2. How far back can I remember reacting that way?
3. Who can support me here and now?

4. What are my options?

Card Four – write on the front side the word “CHOOSE” and on the back write these questions:

1. What are my choices/options?
2. What is my best choice?
3. Choose that now.

Use these cards/sheets to assist you in remaining calm and choosing how you want to respond to your children.

Above card idea was adapted from: *Over 60 Techniques, Activities and Worksheets for Challenging Children and Adolescents* by Susan P. Epstein, LCSW

March 7

Using a calendar to organize your family. My family uses Google calendar because it allows so many functions that are helpful for a group or family to organize our days and lives. There are other calendars that do similar things so that is your choosing. So what can you do using Google to organize:

1. You can connect each person's own calendar on yours so you can see what others are doing each day.
 2. You can have flexible blocks of time to do certain important task or projects – weekly family meetings, certain jobs, duties or activities. It should be flexible to move around in case something comes up that you need to move it. Just don't forget it or delete it, change it.
 3. I set up on a time when there normally isn't anything scheduled (for me that is 7am) a calendar appointment for tasks that need to be done on that day. I will set one up for each day of the week and make each repeat ongoing. Then I can put in on each task for each day the stuff that must be done regularly each week on that day as a reminder. I then on Sunday or Monday each week I will go through each day and write my To-Do list. Making sure to save it for that day appt only. Each morning I check my list to start my day. I can also put events or task that I have to do in the future on the day in the future that I have to do it and I will see it that day when the day comes.
 4. You can set reminders that will pop up on your computer for events and activities
 5. You can tie in your contacts so that when you plan an event, activity or appointment you can add them into that and they will get a notice.
 6. You can tie in other apps like zoom to work with appointments easily.
 7. You can have multiple calendars for different needs – work calendar, school calendar, home calendar
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March 14

THE SEVEN DROPS

Taken from Taken from “The Out of Sync Child Has Fun” by: Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A

When your child is having a bad day, consider these "Seven Drops." In the next six emails we will be revealing each of the “Seven Drops”. Here is Drop #1

1. DROP YOUR VOICE.

When your child is explosive, demanding, and loud and needs immediate emotional first-aid, lower the volume of your voice. Then you whisper, people will listen.

March 21

THE SEVEN DROPS

Taken from Taken from "The Out of Sync Child Has Fun" by: Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A

When your child is having a bad day, consider these "Seven Drops." Here is Drop #2

2. DROP YOUR BODY.

Research about stress and early brain development shows that children relax when caregivers are physically on their level. Megan R. Gunnar, Ph.D., at the University of Minnesota's Institute of Child Development, shows that children's cortisol level goes down when caregivers are responsive and close. (We need cortisol to survive because it readies us to protect ourselves. Too much cortisol, however, makes us anxious, aggressive, and unable to calm.) Grown-ups standing over a child, arms akimbo, or sitting in a chair, reading, can potentially raise the child's stress. Grown-ups on the floor can reduce the child's stress.

Another proponent of being on the floor with a child is child psychiatrist Stanley I. Greenspan, M.D. FloorTime, based on his work, is a systematic technique that fosters children's healthy emotional development through intensive, one-on-one interactions with adults who are literally on the child's level. Drop your body, and you will see your child relax and relate.

March 28

THE SEVEN DROPS

Taken from Taken from "The Out of Sync Child Has Fun" by: Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A

When your child is having a bad day, consider these "Seven Drops." Here is Drop #3

3. DROP YOUR TV REMOTE.

Certainly, you cherish your precious few moments to watch television, read the newspaper, or concentrate on a task without interruption. Still, when your child approaches you in an undemanding way and makes an observation or asks a question, seize the moment. This is your chance to relate in a positive and meaningful way. You will never have another opportunity just like it again.

April 4

THE SEVEN DROPS

Taken from Taken from "The Out of Sync Child Has Fun" by: Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A

When your child is having a bad day, consider these "Seven Drops." Here is Drop #4

4. DROP YOUR GUARD.

Let your child take risks. Risks, that is, that are SAFE. Taking calculated risks is how we learn new skills. Every now and then, let your child fall down on a padded surface. You cannot protect him forever from the ups and downs of life. He most certainly will stumble, and he must learn all by himself, in his own way, how to cope and recover.

April 11

THE SEVEN DROPS

Taken from Taken from “The Out of Sync Child Has Fun” by: Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A

When your child is having a bad day, consider these "Seven Drops." Here is Drop #5

5. DROP YOUR DEFENSES.

So your mother-in-law says you're too lenient, the teacher says your child must learn how to get along, and the next-door neighbor shakes her head when you're dealing with your child's meltdown in the front yard. People like order; your child is disorderly. What should you do about the blaming, misunderstanding, and head shaking? Don't ignore it; meet it.

April 18

THE SEVEN DROPS

Taken from Taken from “The Out of Sync Child Has Fun” by: Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A

When your child is having a bad day, consider these "Seven Drops." Here is Drop #6

6. DROP YOUR BATTERIES.

Batteries are required to turn on a flashlight, but to turn on a child they can't hold a candle to hands-on experiences. Battery-operated toys, which often serve as electronic babysitters, can dim a child's appetite to gain new physical and mental skills. Active bodies and brain cells are a child's primary energy source. Give "kid power" a chance.

April 25

THE SEVEN DROPS

Taken from Taken from “The Out of Sync Child Has Fun” by: Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A

When your child is having a bad day, consider these "Seven Drops." Here is Drop #7

7. DROP YOUR MISCONCEPTION THAT FUN IS FRIVOLOUS.

We are all born to be pleasure-seekers. We gotta have fun-or else we rust. Good sensations are neither an "extra" nor a reward; they are a necessity. Let's put our best resources together to help out-of-sync kids savor pleasurable experiences-SAFE, of course!

May 2

Warnings

We are programmed to remind children to be safe by telling them to be careful. Being careful is different in every situation. Saying "Be careful is like saying "Don't". It doesn't teach them how to be careful. By the time children are older they have heard be careful so many times they resent the implication that they don't know what to do. They respond to the reminder with "I know, I know! I'm not stupid."

We keep children safer by giving information than by giving warnings. Young children need to learn how to be careful. Example: "Hold onto the railing. Take small, slow steps. Use both hands" older and we have already taught them how to be safe, instead of saying, "Be careful" we ask them to tell us how they are going to be safe. Example: "Tell me how you will stay safe riding your bike to the store."

Asking older children to tell us how they will stay safe is a win-win. When we ask children to tell us how they will be safe they feel less annoyed than when we say, "Be careful" We still meet our need to remind them to be safe because, by them telling us how they will be safe, they remind themselves.

Above taken from the book "Connection Parenting" by Pam Leo

May 9

Other Communication Programming that Breaks Connection :

Lecturing, being sarcastic, accusing, blaming, shaming criticizing name-calling and teasing

The above communication styles not only break connection, but they also damage self-esteem and self-worth. We interrupt those connection-breaking programs the same way we interrupt yelling.

Ask children to help you stop speaking in those ways by giving them permission to remind you to stop, by covering their ears, or by saying, "Your words are hurting my feelings or please talk to me like I'm someone you love" Respond to the child's reminder with rewind, repair, and replay.

Above taken from the book "Connection Parenting" by Pam Leo

May 16

There is a thought process out there that says when we are in a negative place or anxiety situation, we are flowing against our soul and the purpose that the soul sees for us. When we are uncomfortable with where we are and we begin asking questions it is a beginning. That is a place of change, we are not in sync with our soul but understand that we are not. From there we can make changes and begin a journey to our soul's purpose. When we are happy and joyous then we are in tune with our soul and in the flow that we came into this world to be.

May 23

“Processing Aggressive Media Material”

Materials:

Any watched television program, video game, Or internet exposure to violence or aggression

How to Implement:

- 1) Begin by discussing the actual content of the show
- 2) Discuss each role and what might happen to that person in "real life" if they were to behave in that way
- 3) Frame as non-reality by recognizing that normal consequences did not occur
- 4) Be sure to process the perpetrator's perspective as well as the victim's perspective (we often miss the opportunity' to develop empathy in BD populations)
- 5) Repeat this activity over and over again for all aggressive media exposure (Especially aggressive 1st person video games, such as Grand Theft Auto)

Goals:

- To create a fantasy and reality distinction
- To create better Cause & Effect processing
- To recognize consequence for behaviors
- To engage the left and right hemisphere for better associations

Above “Processing Aggressive Media Material” taken from: *Over 75 Quick, “On-The-Spot” Techniques for Children with Emotional and Behavior Problems* by Jennifer Wilke-Deaton, M.A., L.P.A.

May 30

Bubble Meditation

- Close your eyes
 - Envision tiny bubbles floating all around you
 - Try deep breathing during this time
 - Slowly the bubbles get larger and more colorful
 - Imagine yourself being in a bubble and floating
 - Feel the lightness and freeness of the floating bubbles
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June 6

Parental Self-Work

It is so important to recognize our own emotional responses and how we process and manage stress. If you're a parent of young kids, you'll notice how their behavior often mirrors yours and vice versa. If you approach your child in a highly anxious or overwhelmed state, how do you think they are going to react? If you find your child has separation anxiety, perhaps examine your beliefs and experiences from your own childhood.

- Are you fearful of not meeting all their emotional needs? Tap on that fear using the “Specific emotion tapping” sequence above.

- Is your own anxiety fueling their behavior? Tap on that too! Often tapping on our own issues (using the methods above) can have a flow-on effect to our child so while you're healing yourself, you are healing them too – talk about killing two birds with one stone!

Create an atmosphere where all emotions are valid and acceptable for all family members. For example, hang up posters with the quotes as reminders

June 13

Describing Energy

One of the best ways to describe energy to someone is using the example of a house and the energy (better known to all as electricity) that goes through it. Everyone's house (like their bodies) nowadays has electricity (energy) which runs your appliances (organs), air conditioning systems, lights and so much more. The power comes from outside the house itself from a company (universe) that supplies everyone around you. The energy is distributed through wires (meridians – the pathways of energy in the body) throughout the house to the outlets and helps to run the appliances (organs), lights, etc...

What happens if the wires get crimped? What happens if the wires get cut? Energy stops. So too does it happen in the body. When a pathway or meridian gets blocked or disrupted, energy is not going to the parts of the body which need that energy.

Tapping uncrimps the wires and reconnects the broken wires of our body to let the energy flow. When our energy flows well, our body and mind can start to heal and perform at their peak.

June 20

Eleanor Roosevelt said, "I think, at a child's birth, if a mother could ask a fairy godmother to endow it with the most useful gift, that gift should be curiosity."

When we start to question things that is when change begins. It doesn't have to show all at one time. Change is how we grow so encourage your kids and yourself to always be curious and ask questions. Then teach them how to be curious and ask question while being cautious at the same time.

June 27

Get your kids (starting if possible at a very young age) involved now not just in extracurricular activities like sports or scouts but in everyday happenings. Get them involved in doing laundry, making food, dealing with money, cleaning the house, paying bills, fixing the car. This doesn't mean treat them as if they are your slave but make it fun and educational. We worry and fret over their school knowledge, but many times forget about the everyday skills needed by kids when they get older.

July 4

Celebrate your child's independence and freedom from control. Children's independence does not equate to separation and the earlier you realize that the more independent they will be when they need to be. Society teaches us that in order to have an independent child you must separate them as soon as possible. It is said to: "Let them cry it out." "They need to sleep in their own room." "You are spoiling that child by hugging them too much." "Spare the rod, spoil the child."

REALLY!!!

It is the exact opposite, new borns, toddlers and even adolescence need to feel safe, secure, loved, respected and happy. They need to know you are there for them. They need to have their own space when they are ready to have their own space. So follow your heart and I believe you will understand what this is saying.

July 11

Teach your kids manners, civility, and common sense. School has established as its core teaching math, science and english and pays less attention to the basic needs of children. It is a matter of showing your kids how to socialize and be in this world getting along with others. Our relationship to others is extremely important to our growth and development as a human. Studies have shown how vital it is to have other human contact for our mental, emotional, spiritual and physical beings. So let's show our kids how to be around others successfully.

July 18

Parents as Good Role Models for Teen Drivers

Before you drive anywhere in your car this morning, think about some of the messages you are sending to your kids (no matter their age) and start acting like you want your kids to act.

- Wear seatbelts.
- Don't exhibit road rage.
- Don't use the cell phone.
- Avoid distraction.
- Don't tailgate.
- Don't drink and drive...ever.
- Be courteous to other drivers.
- Take care of your car inside and out.

Write up a contract with your teen that explicitly states the rules and responsibilities of driving.

Issues to address are:

Consequences for drinking/using drugs while driving

Speeding and cell phone use

Curfew with the car

Who pays for what (gas, insurance, upkeep, etc.)

Insist that driving and use of the car is a privilege and not rite of passage into adulthood.

Parents and teens will sign the contract and then post it in a prominent area of the house SO there are no arguments, no exceptions. Break the rules, lose the privilege.

Above *Parents as Good Role Models for Teen Drivers* was adapted from: **Over 60 Techniques, Activities and Worksheets for Challenging Children and Adolescents** by Susan P. Epstein, LCSW

July 25

We are examples to our children and those examples happen 24/7/365. Parents are always on with their kids showing them through their own acts and words. What type of example are you for your kids? Are you the type that says “Do as I say not as I do!” Are you one that curses but expects your kids to have a clean mouth? Parents are always worried that they are screwing up their kids because of the mistakes they make and have made in the past. Or they are worried that they are not doing it right?

Parents relax! Your mistakes, if you have handled them or resolved them coming out of the other side of them, then you are really giving kids lessons. Sometimes the lessons are how not to do something or sometimes it is how to do better or just how to correct it after the mistake. Kids learn better by experience not so much by talk. So what are you showing your kids?

August 1

Adjust your parenting to each of your children. It feels like you wear so many hats as a parent – bread winner, housekeeper, taxi driver, counselor and there are more. Think about how many hats do you wear for your parenting style. Do you wear just one hat for all your kids? Parents are best to wear a different hat in their style of parenting for each child. Each child acts differently, learns differently and is different than his siblings and especially all other kids. So, get a good sense about each of your children on how they learn, how they socialize, how do they take in their atmosphere and how do they handle things. In knowing and understanding each child you can shift your style to match each of your children. Children are like snowflakes, each child is different and needs to be approached from that perspective.

August 8

“Both Stephen Schoenthaler, Ph.D. from California and David Benton, M.D. from England have published studies indicating that appropriate nutrients can increase IQ of some students by as much as 30 point. The behavior and activity levels definitely improved in children studied by Dr. Schoenthaler.”

Taken from book: “Is This Your Child’s World?” by Doris J. Rapp, M.D.

Note here that finding the right nutrients and nutrition would be found best with some deep testing to see what nutrients are best for each child and what they may not be able to tolerate.

August 15

Foods Highest in Pesticides

Celery, Peaches, Strawberries (little toxic bombs), Apples, Blueberries, Nectarines, Spinach, Lettuce, Cucumbers, Potatoes, Grapes

Foods Lowest in Pesticides

Onion, Avacado, Sweet Corn, Pineapple, Mango, Sweet Peas, Asparagus, Kiwi, Cabbage, Eggplant, Cantaloupe, Watermelon, Grapefruit, Sweet Potato, Mushrooms

Above Pesticide list taken from book: "Eat To Live" by Joel Fuhrman, M.D.

Suggested Notes

Watch processed foods with these same ingredients

Buy organic

Rule of thumb: If your budget is tight and it is hard to buy everything organic choose the soft skinned items like strawberries as organic and buy the hard skinned or shelled items as regular.

August 22

"One controlled study found that listening to Mozart was helpful for children dealing with ADD. Rosalie Rebollo Pratt, (Professional Harpist and Music Medicine Researcher and Educator) and colleagues studied nineteen children, ages seven to seventeen, with ADD. They played recordings of Mozart for them three times a week during neurofeedback sessions...The group that listened to Mozart reduced their theta brain-wave activity (slow brain waves that are often excessive with ADD) in exact rhythm to the underlying beat of the music and displayed better focus and mood control, diminished impulsivity and improved social skills."

Taken from the book: "Change Your Brain, Change Your Life" by Daniel G. Amen, M.D.

August 29

Lavender oil and scent are known to help calm nerves and ease depression. It also works well to calm for sleep, simply putting a few drops on a pillow before bed can many times make for a more restful sleep. Understand lavender is made to be taken in by smell. Digesting lavender into the digestive system can be dangerous. Pleasurable smells and scents can have medicinal affects if done properly. Check with a natural or functional doctor or nutritionist to make sure you get it correctly and safely.

Sept 5

Take just 15 minutes a day to learn something new for yourself and journal it for memory sack. Talk to your kids about writing down just one thing from each class that they have learned. School puts a lot on a child and so expecting them to remember it all is tough. So, if each day they can take a way 6 or 7 things from their day at school they are doing well. Have them journal it too while they are in each class.

Sept 12

According to “The New Health Rules” book by Dr. Frank Lipman and Danielle Claro these are the simple secrets to a good night’s sleep. (Paraphrased)

- A cool room (60 to 68 degrees)
 - No screen time an hour before bedtime
 - Total Darkness in the bedroom
 - No food or drink two hours before bedtime
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Sept 19

According to “The New Health Rules” book by Dr. Frank Lipman and Danielle Claro you need to get your hands dirty. “So, dig in the garden, play in the sand and do cartwheels on the lawn whenever you can.” Apparently, we need the microbes from the earth.

Sept 26

Casey O’Brien, Expressive Arts Therapist states “One of the very best things a parents, caregivers and educators can do is to model healthy coping skills. Just telling kids what to do is not enough. We need to walk the talk, too.”

Oct 3

Encourage unstructured playtime, spontaneity and social interaction, while allowing kids to also value solitude and the enjoyment of their own company.

Taken from an article written by Marlaina Donato in the Natural Awakenings magazine August 2022 edition.

Oct 10

With the holidays quickly approaching now is especially time to check-in on yourself make some expectations for yourself about how you are going to communicate with yourself, your family, relatives, and friends during the stressful time of the holidays. Start tuning into how you are going to handle your words, anger, actions, thoughts and feelings. Get acquainted with some of the common words that come out with those issues so that you can pay attention to when they come up and begin to trigger things. This way you may be able to avoid going down the wrong path with all of it.

Oct 17

Holidays: Plan Events Early and Wisely: Nowadays with the advent of the internet you have so many sites that give you the events going on around your town. The holidays are no exceptions, the internet is a

wonderful place to find events around the holidays: decorated houses to see, parties to attend, holiday shows, Santa Claus visits and so much more. So it is easy and wise to plan early to see some of the best events. It is recommended to get your kids involved in these plans. Do what your kids want to do and then plan something without them for you and your significant other on a separate occasion. Just don't overdo it by trying to attend an event every night or by filling all of your weekends. Burnout, exhaustion, stress and anxiety can result from trying to do too much. Pick the things that you and your children really want to do and be sure to allow down time.

Oct 24

Holidays: Know Your Limitation: You want to do it all and have the perfect Christmas so therefore you pile on the expectations with a long to-do list. You have to stand in line on Black Friday to get the best deal on all the "must have" gifts. You want to make the biggest and most elaborate Christmas dinner. You want to decorate the house, have the best neighborhood light display and attend all of the holiday gatherings. Yet, you have all of your regular responsibilities that already take all of your time such as your job, housework, helping your kids with homework and getting them to their activities. So how do you do it all? You need to understand your limitations, learn to say no, and prioritize based on what really matters to your family.

Oct 31

Holidays: Get Your Kids Involved: What I find so touching are parents who involve their kids in the holidays. You just want to get it done: the cooking, the wrapping, the planning, the shopping. You want it done perfectly, whether it be the prettiest packages or picture perfect pies. If you involve your kids in the process, it allows their energy to be channeled in a constructive way and we can learn from our children how to appreciate the simple things and enjoy the process of preparing for the holidays.

In my family we wrap most of our gifts in brown paper bags and then decorate the package with stickers, drawings and messages of holiday cheer. You can also decorate the paper first including painted hand prints and then use it to wrap the gifts. By letting the children wrap the gifts, you engage them in the process and free up some of your time. They might not look perfect, but those receiving the gifts will know they were wrapped with love. You can also wrap the gifts together creating memories and even a holiday tradition that will remain with them longer than the gifts you give them.

Nov 7

Holidays: Tap: EFT tapping is an excellent tool to eliminate the stress, anxiety and depression that can happen during the holiday. EFT tapping is the process of self tapping on the meridians or acupressure points to improve your physical, emotional and spiritual functioning. EFT is about aligning your energy for your best functioning and health. That is why it is said "What you sow, so shall you reap!" This can also be said as "the energy you put out is the energy you get back". Giving out good energy gets back good energy. Having a positive and uplifting energy at Christmas is especially important because there is so much that takes our energy that we need all we can get. What energy do you want for the holiday?

In order to help you with your energy, I have included with this a "How To Tap instructions" and a Holiday tapping script. Try this tapping for the holidays to relax and enjoy the holidays. To find out more about EFT tapping and what it can do for you go to: www.focusedhealthyfamily.com

Nov 14

Holidays: Don't Rush Your Kids: One big lesson my wife taught me about my kids is not to rush them. That is not easy for me because of my type A personality. I often want to just get moving and get it done. When you are visiting friends, family or fun places, it is helpful to allow them enough time and to know how much time is enjoyable for them. Many kids find a 15 or 30 minute warning prior to leaving useful as well as further reminders of how much time is left, i.e. 10 minutes, 2 minutes. Would you like to be pulled from a meeting or from a project you are working on with no notice or time to prepare? Children don't like to be yanked out of a situation and told, "it's time to go now", especially when they are having fun. Some children need time to warm up and might not be able to enjoy themselves with people they do not know or unfamiliar family members or a new activity until they have had adjustment time. And others may only be able to handle a short visit. Pay attention to your children and know what they need for all the holiday gatherings and events.

Nov 21

Holidays: Respect Your Kid's Feelings: It is so easy to say to a child "not now, can't you see I am busy" or "I have got to get this done in order to have a good Christmas" or just the simple "I don't have time now". Even worse in my book is when they come to you with an idea or a specific gift they want or a problem and your reply shuts them down. "We can't afford that", "that is not true" or "that is just stupid". Those messages can damage a child's self esteem and undermine their initiative and independence. Your children are humans too and deserve some respect. Listening to them and their feelings can make a world of difference. One example my wife and I use for Christmas wishes, especially ones you know you cannot afford is to respond to their wish by simply saying "Oh, that is a wonderful idea, why don't you make a list of things you would like". Many times the act of creating the wish list satisfies their wanting and sometimes they forget or move on to something else by the time the holidays come.

Nov 28

Holidays: Eat Right: Grandma's famous pumpkin pie, those wonderful gingerbread cookies, colorful candy canes and all the delicious and exotic treats you have during the holidays can be some of the biggest disruptors of the holidays. Sugar, gluten, hydrogenated oils, dyes and all the chemicals in food can turn an adult or child into a wild beast. You want to give your kids the joys of the taste, smells and feelings of the holidays but to what cost. It is important for you to watch labels, make your own treats and plan ahead. Feeding your kids healthy, nutritious food before going to grandmas or that holiday party will minimize eating the unhealthy, processed foods. Cutting back on sugar or eating sugary items earlier in the day can help in the evening when it is time for sleep. Nov 23
After a large holiday meal, take time to do an activity such as walking or playing outside. Do this along with your kids to encourage the activity and maintain your health. It might not be easy to do but the results can last a lifetime.

Dec 5

Holidays: Don't Overdue Travel: "We have to visit both sets of grandparents and our great Aunt, and..." What would the Holidays be without those trips? Pack up the car once more, cook one more pie and don't forget the gifts. Did you remember the airline tickets? Should you leave two hours early for the flight? What about the memories they create? Visits with family and friends do create good memories. They can also create horrible memories of exhausted parents, stressed out kids and family arguments. Would it not be better to stretch out the holiday travels over several months and not try to make all of those trips within a month or a week? Christmas and the holidays do not have to be about a particular day. My own extended family now celebrates "Thanksmas" between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Holidays are a time to enjoy family, friendship

and love no matter when it happens. And keep in mind that winter travel can be delayed, interrupted and cancelled due to weather conditions. Create your own personal holiday traditions.

Dec 12

Holidays: Remember: It is easy to get lost in the commercial holiday expectations and pressures. You want to do it all and have the perfect holiday. In doing all of this, you often forget the real meaning of the holidays. No matter your religious beliefs, it comes down to love and spending time with the people you love. If you put love at the top of your list, as well as foremost in your mind and remember to keep love a priority throughout the whole season, I believe your holidays will be the best.

One particular Christmas when I was a small child, my family was enjoying the holidays and yet, if we would have known what was coming would we have changed how we did our holidays? It wasn't that we weren't loving and thoughtful of each other but we were wrapped in the gifts and hype of the season. That holiday was the last holiday we would spend with my sister for she passed away from a heart condition shortly after the holidays. So an important lesson is to remember what the holidays are truly about and be in that place always.

Dec 19

Holidays: Laugh and Breathe: It is easy to forget with the rush, pressure and excitement of the holidays that you need to breathe and laugh to really enjoy it all. Taking big deep breaths throughout your whole day and especially when you are panicked or stressed is extremely important. Teaching your kids to properly breathe can help them to manage their emotions too. Good, deep breaths can increase blood flow, lower stress and rejuvenate cells in the body. Belly breathing can also help during panic attacks to take pressure off of the chest and relieve the panic. I like to use raspberry breathing to help get kids to breathe and giggle at the same time.

Holidays: Spend time not money: The best gift you can give to your kids and anyone is the gift of yourself: your time, energy and attention. Memories made together will be remembered and cherished more than an iPhone, video game, or any toy.

Dec 26

Holidays: Create your own New Year Traditions: Our family has participated in a Burning Bowl and Letters to God (or the universe) ceremony each New Year's Eve at our local Unity Church. The ceremony involved writing down something(s) that you wanted to release from the year, like negative or self-limiting beliefs. We then paraded outside to a fire pit where we released our papers into the fire. The second part of the ceremony involved writing a letter to God, or your future self. You write the letter as if it is now the end of the next year and write about all the good that has happened over the year, all the things you have manifested which can be both physical like a new home as well as things like feeling healthier, exercising regularly, or spending more time with your family doing things you all enjoy. Unity would hold onto our letters sealed in an envelope that we self-addressed. They would then mail it to us in late October or early November. The first time we participated in this ceremony, our oldest child was about 4 years old and we wrote down his items for him. When our younger children were small, their letter might be a picture or just scribbles. It has always been exciting to receive the letters in the mail later that year and then read them together.