

Tuesday Tips for Parents – 2024

Jan 2 - *"Today I will not put that which is urgent in front of that which is important. Today I will look at opportunities that are staring me in the face with big brown (or blue or green) eyes. And when I see a chance to love, listen, sing, dance, laugh, or rest, I will seize it. This day could be checked off or it could be lived. I choose to use these hands, this heart and these eyes to let it live."*

Hands Free Life Daily Declarations from the book: Hands Free Life, 9 Habits for Overcoming Distraction, Living Better and Loving More by Rachel Macy Stafford

Jan 9

Today I will seek two empty-handed moments, two complete-silence moments, and two fully available moments. I will avoid setting expectations for what is to happen during these moments. Instead, I shall allow these moments to unfold naturally so there is room for them to flourish, evolve, and transform into fuel for my connection-hungry soul.

Hands Free Life 9 Habits for Overcoming Distraction, Living Better, & Loving More by Rachel Macy Stafford

Jan 16

Today I will set aside my insecurities and ask my spouse, child, parent, or loved one if I can hold them close. I will listen to their heartbeat, breathe in their scent, and tell them how much I love them. There will be obstacles and challenges that will interfere in carrying out those moments of connection, but I will not let the distractions of my life stop me from investing in what matters most- at least not today.

Hands Free Life 9 Habits for Overcoming Distraction, Living Better, & Loving More by Rachel Macy Stafford

Jan 23

Today I will be at peace with who I once was and feel hopeful for the person I am becoming. I will not view the mistakes of yesterday as failures but instead as stepping stones to the lovingly imperfect, grace-filled life I've always wanted to live. Who I am becoming now is more important than who I was then.

Hands Free Life 9 Habits for Overcoming Distraction, Living Better, & Loving More by Rachel Macy Stafford

Jan 30

Today I will stop looking at images and news feeds that take my focus off what really matters. Today I will distance myself from people who cause me to question what I know is right for me. Today I will discard or destroy items that open wounds from a dream never realized or a past hurt. Today I will offer myself a clear, unfiltered view of the beautiful life that I am meant to live.

Hands Free Life 9 Habits for Overcoming Distraction, Living Better, & Loving More by Rachel Macy Stafford

Feb 6 - *"Being strong and teaching a child to be strong. I am constantly having clients working with me who are dealing with the issues of being weak. Too many children are taught that showing most emotions is considered weak. We might be ok with showing anger because it looks strong but don't bother showing the rest of your emotions because those are weak.*

In truth, I believe the ability to show all emotions and manage those emotions is where real strength lies. We are stronger when we can handle our emotions and manage them because that takes strength."

Don Grothoff - Focused Healthy Family

Feb 13 – *"Whatever you choose for yourself, give to another. If you choose to be happy, cause another to be happy. If you choose to be prosperous, cause another to prosper. If you choose more love in your life, cause another to have more love in theirs."*

Neale Donald Walsch

On this day before Valentines Day help someone else find love within themselves and there you will find love for yourself.

Feb. 20 - Norman Vincent Peale wrote the book on positive thinking and I am all in on positive thoughts and affirmations. What I encourage people to do is pay attention when thinking positive or doing positive affirmations is there resistance or negative back talk going on in the mind. When I was in sales many years ago I was taught to stand in front of the mirror and do positive affirmations. Unfortunately, I had my little

negative munchkin on my shoulder reminding me about the sale I screwed up last week or that I was not good enough to do the work or I wasn't smart enough to make it in sales. This wrecked my self-esteem and self-confidence and just about killed my ability to sell. So it is important to recognize the self talk and if it isn't working for you, accept the message and work through it.

Feb 27 - Sandwich Generation – Parents that are sandwiched between raising kids and being a caregiver for an aging parent. Now, when you parents are of good mind is the time to talk about their future care. Plan for what you should do if one or both decline in health and need your assistance. If they are resistant to talking about it, let them know that you would like to talk now while they can be a part of the planning instead of when they are not able.

Mar 5 - Sandwich Generation parents if you talk to your parents about their future care try to imagine how it feels for your aging parents knowing that they having to think about their mortality. Then let them talk and really listen to their thoughts and feelings.

Mar 12 - Think about this; would you rather have a 15 minute conversation with your kids or an adult or a hour long argument? The difference there is how you respond and talk to the kids or another adult. Do you fire back, to you try to fix, do you justify your position or do you truly listen to let them vent out? Communication can make a huge difference in the outcome of a conversation.

Mar 19 – If they can't get this at school then as parents it would be helpful to get this from us:



Mar 26 – *Prime Time: When is your Prime Time? Most people are either “larks” or morning people or “owls” afternoon or evening people. The term refers to when your energy is at its peak. The scientific reference is to “circadian rhythms.” About 20 years ago the pop psychology term “biorhythms” exposed thousands to the concept that everyone has a peak time during the day. By understanding when your peak time occurs and trying to schedule some stressful experiences during the peak time you are better able to withstand the stresses. You are essentially matching your most difficult time with the times when you are the strongest.*

Tip #39 from the Book “Caregiver 101: A 101 Ways to Keep Caregiving From Making You Crazy!!” by Mike Collins

Apr 2 – “Our wisdom comes from our experience, and our experience comes from our foolishness.”
Sacha Guitry

Coming on the heels of April Fool's day Sacha reminds us that experience not only comes from foolishness but messiness. We don't always do things right especially the first time. We learn from foolishness, maybe how not to do something but an experience and lesson nonetheless. People learn more from experiences than from

books, teachings or what people say. Not all experiences work but they are lessons of contrast teaching us hopefully how to do it better the next time.

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

Why do eggs like April Fool's Day?

They love a good practical yolk!

Apr 9 – In his book Mike Collins suggest when dealing with anger to *Try these 3 R's: Relax, Reflect and Redirect. First slow down and relax when you feel yourself getting hot under the collar. You might want to remember the 5-5-5 rule: Will this matter in 5 minutes, 5 weeks or 5 years? Then reflect on the situation and ask yourself if you are so stressed that you are blowing this out of proportion. ...Finally, redirect your thoughts and emotions. Can you seek information and guidance to help you solve your problems? Can you laugh it off? Can you distract yourself by looking at something else, humming a tune or counting to 10. Can you seek some emotional release?*

Excerpts from Tip #80 from the Book "Caregiver 101: A 101 Ways to Keep Caregiving From Making You Crazy!!" by Mike Collins

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

What did DNA strand say to another DNA strand?

How do these genes look on me?

Apr 16 – Music for the caregiver. Whether you are the caregiver (parent) of a child or caregiver for an aging relative or parent music can help. Music-care raises spirits, distracts from anxiety and brings up memories long forgotten. Children like music because it is fun, they can dance and sing, laugh and have fun. Aging parent, spouse or relative can have part of their brain activated and alive with music. It can bring about memories, enliven their spirits and can bring back skills and words even if it is short lived. The caregiver too, can relax and release stresses and anxiety listening to some of their favorite music. Music has healing properties.

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

What do you call an ant that fights crime?

A vigilante!

Apr 23 – The compassionate “NO”: Caregivers tend to be what I would call “givers” or “pleasers” and find it difficult to say no. That ability to not say no may initially feel good that the person is helping someone but with time it becomes a burnout place. All the givers “fuel” is given out and there is nobody refueling them or they are not letting anyone refuel them. It is important for the givers to learn how to give compassionate “NOs” to people. Also, it is important that the givers understand that by not allowing others to give to them they teach all around them not to give to them. So, another important step for givers is to retrain those around them to support and give to them. They can do this by learning to ask for what they need and allow the receiving of it.

Don Grothoff – Focused Healthy Family

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

How can you tell a vampire has a cold?

He starts coffin!

Apr 30 – One of the principle teachings from the book **“How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk”** is about giving information instead of scolding or yelling. For instance, when you find your child writing on the wall and your first instinct is to yell. Try making a statement firmly that says “the wall is not for writing, paper or the chalkboard are the proper places to write.” That can be followed up by having them help clean the writing off or painting over it.

From the book “How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk” by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Check out our workshops based on this book go to:
<https://www.focusedhealthyfamily.com/workshops>

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

Why is the mushroom the life of the party?

Because he is a fungi!

May 7 – “Motherhood is the biggest gamble in the world. It is the glorious life force. It’s huge and scary – it’s an act of infinite optimism.”

Gilda Radner

Parenting is the toughest job there is and mothers take the biggest part of that.

Wishing all mothers all over the world a happy and joyous mother’s day.

From Gina and Don Grothoff – Focused Healthy Family

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

Why did the baby strawberry cry?

Because their mom was in a jam.!

May 14 - Consciousness: con·scious·ness

['känSHəsənəs]

NOUN

1. the state of being awake and aware of one's surroundings:

"she failed to regain consciousness and died two days later"

- the awareness or perception of something by a person:

"her acute consciousness of Mike's presence"

- the fact of awareness by the mind of itself and the world:

"consciousness emerges from the operations of the brain"

Google Dictionary Search

In my practice with EFT working with patience in the Naturopathic center or with my own clients I talk about Consciousness a lot. I tend to refine the definition because I find a lot of people find the word rather “fluffy” and hard to really know what the meaning is. I bring it down to the idea of awareness or even better to “tuning into oneself”. In the Naturopathic practice I find that the people come into this practice have tuned into the body to know something is not going the way they would like or they just feel sick. My job is to have them tune into the minds too. As I tell them the mind is controlling the body and so getting the mind flowing in a better way enhances any healing of the body. That is one of the reasons that consciousness is so important.

Don Grothoff – Focused Healthy Family

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

Why are frogs so mindful?

Because they always eat what bugs them.!

May 21 – “a person’s a person no matter how small” Horton repeats that line in the book ***Horton Hears A Who*** by Dr. Seuss. Those are very powerful words written in a children’s book. Yet for parents it is particularly important to remember that your child is a small person and deserves respect. Yes, we are the parents and have an obligation to give our kids structure and discipline yet those are not mutually exclusive from respect. Respect is a two-way street and in order to get respect it has to be given as well. It is about building a relationship with your kids not a boss and subservient.

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

What do you call an alligator who solves crimes?

An investi-gator!

May 28 – Capital “S” Selfish – People feel guilty when they feel they are being selfish. Many people are raised being told that they are selfish if they do anything, say anything or believe anything good about themselves. I believe there are two kinds of selfish, selfish with a lower case “s” and selfish with a capital “S”. The lower case “s” selfish are those that do or say things for themselves at the detriment of others. Capital “S” selfish is when someone does or says something for their own self-improvement or growth to no one else’s detriment or hurt. I believe that Selfishness with a capital “S” is what God, Devine or Universe wishes for us; to take care of ourselves. It is important to take care of ourselves if we are even supposed to help others.

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

I don't trust stairs.

They are always up to something!

Jun 4 – *How to quit being an extra in other people's movie and become the star of your own.* This is the subtitle of the book ***Dare to Be Yourself*** by Alan Cohen. So many of my clients built their lives on other's expectations and desires. They have done this so much so that they don't know their own expectation and their own life. It is hard to keep up with the expectation of so many others' expectation and it is exhausting. Coen dares you to be many things to yourself – believe in yourself, respect yourself, forgive yourself and on and on. So, it becomes a journey of discovery of who you really are, what you desire and your own expectations.

Excerpt taken from the book: *Dare to Be Yourself: How to quit being an extra in other people's movie and become the star of your own.* by Alan Cohen

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

I told my doctor that I broke my arm in two places. He told me to stop going to those places.

Jun11 – Father's Day is coming up and I wanted to share a poem my daughter wrote for me some years ago that I found as my most treasured gift ever. Here is what she gave to me:

not everyone has a dad
sure, everyone has a biological relation typically considered as 'the father'
but that's not what makes a dad
dad isn't a title you receive for taking part in creating a life
it's something you earn by taking part in nurturing a life
in loving that life unconditionally
and that's not something everyone has
not everyone has a dad
because a dad isn't defined just by blood
but instead defined by moments
moments spent with their child
bouncing them as a baby
because they won't sleep otherwise
singing them lullabies
and leaving spaces for them to sing along
reading them to sleep at night
to keep the bad thoughts away

or holding them close
when they need to cry
not everyone has a dad
and how very lucky am i
that not everyone is not me

thank you, dad, for being there for me and being an amazing dad.

Happy Fathers Day to all the dads all over the world from Gina and Don Grothoff –
Focused Healthy Family

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

Knock Knock... Who's there?... Olive... Olive who?... Olive you Daddy!

(That is a tribute to our dog Olive who past this past year and was my daughter who wrote the poems, her loving dog.)

Jun 18 - Taking your power back. Many times, as a child our parents through their words and action tend to take the wind out of our sails. They control so much of their child's life that it is difficult for a child to find their own way. They steal the child's power of decision making, problem solving and creating life they way they want. As we come into adulthood we are still battling with our own control and power. We have to find that power again and give ourselves the opportunity to become who we desire.

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

What state is known for its small drinks? Minnesota.

Jun 25 – Engaging cooperation with your kids takes creativity and an open mind. We can yell, scream, threaten and blame them into doing things yet in doing so what you may be gaining is anger and resentment. You may get instantaneous results which seems good but the damage you do for the long term maybe horrible. So how do you engage your child to get results that do not lead to resentment. In the book How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish give these techniques

- Describe what you see or describe the problem (don't go after their character)
- Give information

- Say it in a word
- Talk about your own feelings
- Write a note

Each of these can be done with humor, creativity and compassion!

From the book “How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk” by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Check out our workshops based on this book go to:

<https://www.focusedhealthyfamily.com/workshops>

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

What do you call a line of men waiting to get haircuts?

A barberqueue.

Jul 2 – 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, newborns, toddlers, and even adolescents 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.

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

What’s the difference between a duck and George Washington?

One has a bill on his face, and the other has his face on a bill.

Jul 9 - Further, (John) Holt said louder and more often than most educators then and now that children are far better at learning than we give them credit for. ...John Holt developed a philosophy of education based on his personal observations, reading, experiences, and conversations with children, as well with adults who did not use grades, bribes, threats, punishment, or other forms of control to make children learn. ...John Holt hit a nerve and became, without a teaching credential or graduate degree, a public intellectual and bestselling author. His books have been translated into over 41 languages and his first two books, [How Children Fail](#) and [How Children Learn](#) have sold over 1 and half million copies. Eight of his ten books are still currently in print, 31 years after his death.

As you start the new year, however your children are learning through homeschooling or regular school maybe you can understand better the way your kids learn and let go of the stress of parenting and teaching your kids. Knowing that it is in the nature of a child to want to learn, it our job as parents to get out of their way.

Excerpts from an article written by Patrick Farenga from:
<https://www.johnholtgws.com/the-foundations-of-unschooling>

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

Why did the student eat his homework?

Because the teacher told him it was a piece of cake.

Jul 16 - *“the simple truth is that when communities nurture parents and families, we provide our children with lifelong health. **This is how we aim to spark cycles of child, family, and community flourishing.**”*

“What we do is based in broad research that shows supportive social ties are not optional. They're health requirements. When we bring communities and parents together, we aim to fill that essential health-giving requirement for them and for their children. But that's just the start.”

Excerpts from <https://www.attachmentparenting.org/about-us> (Dr. William Sears)

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

What does the Statue of Liberty stand for?

Because it can't sit down.

Jul 23 - Recently someone told me about an elderly lady who was upset because she hit and knocked over someone's mailbox, she tried her best to get them to answer the door to no avail but instead left a note with her name and number. It upset her day that she did that and wasn't able to talk to them about it.

Later that day the owners of that mailbox called her. After her passionate apology, they actually thanked her because they had bought a new mailbox kit, had not installed it and actually forgot about it. So her hitting the box did two things for them, reminded them about replacing it and easily removed the old one from the ground. She was relieved.

Coincidence or Divine intervention? I don't believe in the first one and strongly hold to the second. Be on the lookout for divine interventions of the things you desire.

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

I stayed up all night and tried to figure out where the sun was. Then it dawned on me.

Jul 30 - Last week's tip reminds me of the idea of contrast, understanding we have that which we marked as bad or not right could just be the next step leading us to the right stuff. Edison went through around a 1000 light before he got the one that worked. He did not consider any of them as failures just the steps he needed to get to the right one. We need the opposite or what we don't desire to know what we truly do desire.

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

Why doesn't fire get to enjoy a day off on the 4th of July?

Because fire works.

Aug 6 -Create a Safe Haven: Find a place in your home in which you can relax. Surround yourself with pictures, books, keepsakes, and anything that has a positive meaning for you. Even if it is only a corner in a room, create a small haven in your home to which you can retreat and relax.

Tip #60 from the Book "Caregiver 101: A 101 Ways to Keep Caregiving From Making You Crazy!!" by Mike Collins

Maybe that could even be the bathroom!

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

Who built King Arthur's round table?

Sir Cumference.

Aug 13 – Having trouble focusing? Can't concentrate? Yardstick Exercise: Take a yardstick (can also use a 3ft tall Ostrich feather, baseball bat, broom (those two best used outside) balance the yardstick in the center of the palm of you hand vertically. Now to keep it from falling you have to watch the top end of the yardstick. As soon as you look away from the stick it falls. The object is to try to keep the yardstick from falling as long as you can. Slowly increase your focus and attention span over time.

This exercise helps to improve focus, concentration, attention

This is an excerpt from the book: *Have A Ball Learning* by Paul and Susan Phariss

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

Why did the teach write his lesson on the window?

Because he wanted to make his lesson clear.

Aug. 20 – **Favorable and Unfavorable Sheet.** Helping your child or anyone solve a problem or decide, having a Favorable and Unfavorable Sheet can be very useful.

Take an 8 x 10 sheet of paper preferably with lines on it. Draw three vertical lines down the paper dividing it into three vertical columns. On the first horizontal line at the top of the first vertical column write the heading "Favorable", on the same horizontal line at the top of the second vertical column write the heading "Unfavorable" and on the same horizontal line at the top of the third vertical column write the heading "Not Sure".

Now sit down and think through all the components of the situation, person, place or thing you have a problem with or trying to decide about. Try to come up with as many as you can, think clearly on each one deciding which column it fits under. Of course, if you have one component that you just can't decide immediately place it under the "Not Sure" column to look at and review later. Try to place as many as possible in the first two columns so that the list is just one big, long list of "Not Sure"!

Once everyone has exhausted the components they can think of, then go through each one without judgement and double check that each component is in the right column. Now one way the decision can be made is by which column is bigger than the other. Another way to decide is based on how you feel about the decision after that process.

Tuesday Family Joke To Share

Did you hear about the ice cream truck that had an accident?

It swerved to miss the cones and crashed on Rocky Road!

Aug. 27 – **Everything would be fine...** Wouldn't it be great if everything would just be fine, unfortunately not everything is fine all the time. So how could we change that so things would be better? Make a statement list between people to work things out. The list would consist of two statements to fill out by each person:

Everything would be fine between (Fill in with person's name) and me if only he/she might be willing to (Fill in the issue and what might they do)

Everything would be fine between (Fill in with person's name) and me if only I would be willing to (Fill in what might you do)

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.

Sep 3 – **Something About Me** – Take two sheets of paper (they can be as fancy as you would like to create these sheets. On the first sheet you are going to put these statements with space to write underneath each:

Something Great About Me...

Something Special About Me...

Something Important About Me...

Something Different About Me...

Then on the other sheet you are going to put these statements with space to write under each:

Something Great About You...

Something Special About You...

Something Important About You...

Something Different About You...

Each person fills the first one out on themselves and for the second one each person picks one of the other people to fill the second sheet about that person. Make sure that each person gets chosen within the family or group (in other words a person can't choose the same person someone else has chosen. Then share each sheet out loud or privately with the person or the group or family.

Above exercise excerpt 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.

Sep 10 – Elements of Helping a Child:

These 4 Elements are needed to help us help a child (or anyone for that matter) solve a problem:

1. Observing
2. Listening
3. Interpreting
4. Taking Action

These four elements help us develop and appropriate approach or action from the context of the current situation.

Take a look at these four basic elements that lead to a natural action:

1. Observe what requires immediate attention.
2. Listen to what is being said, asked for or needed
3. Interpret what your hear is needed and combine that with what is yours to do. If not yours to do, what or to whom it should be passed?
4. An appropriate action plan organically flows from answers to the above three elements.

Taken from the book: Emotional First-Aid. How to quickly help in times of trouble. By: Deborah D. Miller, PhD and Jondi Whitis, MToT

Sept 17 Morning Checkin': Each morning I take a few moments first thing in the mornings to do this morning checkin' (really can be done at any time doing it in the morning starts my day out fresher).

Start by taking deep, slow breaths in through the nose, hold for a count of 4 or 5, and release very, very slowly (like a leaky balloon) through your mouth. As you exhale the breath let your body melt into the chair where you sit (you can close your eyes and imagine your body melting like butter).

Add to your breathing a gentle tap using your pointer finger and the finger next to it to gently tap on your collarbone.

As you continue to take those deep breathes begin to tune into yourself notices any pain or discomfort you may have and also noticing any emotional stuff going on – anxiety, stress, sadness, happiness or anything else.

What to do with what comes up?

For any pain you might feel, as you continue to breath in and out imagine as your breath and the oxygen you are taking in going to the specific spot of the pain and as you exhale imagine some of that pain going out with the breath.

For the emotional issues that you are feeling as you continue to breath gently use Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) tapping to shift the issue for you. If you are unaware of EFT then make sure to visit: <https://focusedhealthyfamily.com/eft-tapping>