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Joyful Living

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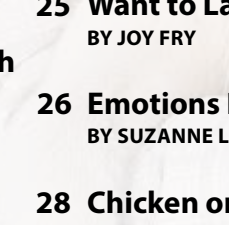
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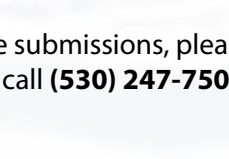
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Joyful Living Magazine is committed to embracing a lifestyle of joy and abundance. We are a platform for beauty, goodness and grace. We value inspired thinking and embrace changing seasons. We honor your legacy and where you are from. Our desire is to serve and respect our community.

Our intention is to bring valuable resources as our diverse natural surroundings. We devote this magazine to you and bless your journey today, tomorrow and always. Grateful is our foundation. Love is where we live. We are Joy. We are Full. We are Living.

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Good Conversations

I'm not sure why this continually surprises me, but God answers prayer. Some of these prayers are "big" prayers about crucial issues in our lives. Some are "little" prayers, having to do with some of the more mundane aspects of our existence. My very human experience is that I pray, and many times I simply hope that God hears me and answers in some knowable way. And then when God answers – it's like I am thoroughly surprised that He did! I had this experience just the other day...



BY DR. BOB BOYLE

Dr. Bob Boyle has been practicing as a licensed psychologist in Redding, CA since 1991. Currently, he is the staff psychologist at Far Northern Regional Center and maintains a part-time private practice. He also works with businesses and athletic teams around leadership and team-building. Dr. Boyle is co-author of *A Hitchhiker's Road Map to Leadership*. Dr. Boyle is married with four grown children, and enjoys coaching basketball and playing golf. Dr. Boyle can be reached at: drbobbyle@gmail.com

I have written quite a few things in my life, including graduate school papers, a dissertation (I like to refer to the act of trying to read my dissertation as a little-known cure for insomnia), innumerable reports for work, and articles like this one for various magazines and periodicals. But I was having trouble coming up with something to write for this edition of *Joyful Living*.

So I prayed that God would place on my heart what would be worthwhile for me to share.

After about a week in the Sahara desert of absolutely nothing coming to mind, I went on my Saturday morning walk and listened to one of my favorite podcasts, "On Being". The guest was Dr. Atul Gawande, who is a surgeon, writer, and public health researcher. In this podcast episode, Dr. Gawande talked a lot about the important conversations that physicians should have with their patients who are dying.

Listening to this podcast really juiced my thought processes. I got to thinking about the

lost art of the conversation. More specifically, I got to thinking about the lost art of the GOOD (life-giving, human-connecting, intimacy-achieving) conversation. We have plenty of conversations in 21st century life, of both the face-to-face and virtual/digital variety. But if we are honest with ourselves, most of these conversations are not very life-giving. Some are brief conversations, necessary to get things accomplished in our life. Others are surface-level and "throw-away" conversations. At worst, some of the conversations we have are gossipy, mean-spirited, and unhealthy. But the number of GOOD conversations in 21st century life has dwindled.

We need to resurrect the "good conversation". Allow me to offer a simple three-step process to get us headed in the right direction. And then we can begin our series of good conversations with each other.

The first step is to create/choose/craft a good question. Good questions are the necessary

beginning point. A good question has several different qualities. It isn't easily answered immediately. It makes you pause and think. The outcome to a good question is important and valuable. The second step is to reflect. This quality is sorely lacking in our world today. But we need to take the time to quietly, prayerfully, and thoughtfully reflect on our own individual responses to the crafted question. The third step is to converse and connect with others in a conversation about the question. Talk to God about it. And then have a meaningful, "good" conversation with the person/people in your life that you choose. Simple, right?

1. Craft an important question.
2. Reflect on your responses to the question.
3. Have a conversation with God and others about the question.

Although this list is by no means exhaustive, here are some examples of mine that seem to be "good" questions.

- What is important to you in your life?
- What does a good day look like for you?
- What does a "life well-lived" look like?
- What does a good marriage look like for you?
- What does being a good parent look like?
- What brings you joy?
- What does a full and satisfying spiritual life look like?
- What would you do (today, this month-year-lifetime) if nothing would get in your way?

Good luck crafting your questions and reflecting on them. And I hope and pray that you truly enjoy and find meaningful the GOOD conversations that will ensue! JL

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Spicy Cranberry Cups

Winter is full of potlucks. With my coworkers pulling out their crockpots, I'm planning something different this year. A finger-food appetizer that keeps my kids asking for more.



BY JENNA INGEBRETSEN

Prep time: 5-10 minutes
Cook time: 20-25 minutes
Rest time: 5 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 bag Fresh cranberries (approx. 8 oz)
1 Orange, zested and juiced
1/3 cup Sugar
1/3 cup Water
1 Jalapeno, seeded and diced
1 tsp Ginger, zested or grated small
1 pinch Cinnamon

2 sheets Puff Pastry dough
1 wedge Brie cheese (or substitute Cream Cheese for a creamier texture)

Garnish with pomegranate seeds, optional.

DIRECTIONS

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees.

In a medium sauce pan, bring the orange juice, sugar, and water to a boil. Over medium high temperature, add the orange zest, ginger, cinnamon, cranberries and jalapeno (or, for a milder flavor, omit the jalapeno - but just know you're missing the adventure). Cook for 8-10 minutes,

stirring occasionally, until cranberries have burst and the juices have combined to make a syrup. Let the sauce cool while preparing the dough and cheese.

Roll out the thawed puff pastry dough on a slightly floured surface and cut into 3" x 3" squares. Place one square in each mini-muffin cup and press to form the dough around the bottom. I use my mini-muffin pan for these, but a muffin pan works adequately as well. Dice the cheese into 3/4 inch cubes, and place one in each cup. Pour about a tablespoon of the cranberry sauce over the cheese, and bake for 12-15 minutes, or until the puff pastry is a beautiful golden brown.

Let cool for at least 5 minutes. It's hard to wait, but it's worth saving your taste buds.

Recipe makes 18-24 cups. **JL**

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BY KRIS VALLOTTON



Differences Between

Rich People and Wealthy People

My father drowned when I was 3 years old, leaving my mother penniless and with two small children to feed. It was the late 50s and the social welfare programs in America were bare sustenance. We moved into the projects surrounded by other people stuck in

the same system of poverty for various reasons. I soon learned that there was a kind of camaraderie among poor people fueled by our common enemies. We all despised wealthy folks, railed against big business, and we blamed Uncle Sam for our deprived condition, to name just a few. We were little, powerless people; lost in the sea of humanity, paddling hard but getting nowhere. The winds of financial adversity pounded against our tiny boats, and as if that wasn't bad enough, wealthy cruise ships passed us in haste, leaving us to contend with their wake. This further reminded us of the inconsiderate ways of the rich, and cemented in our minds the stone wall of indifference that divided the "haves" from the "have nots" of the world.

I grew up poor and hating the rich. I didn't know how to move out of that poverty thinking. It took years of understanding my worth, my identity in Christ, and God's heart for abundant life (John 10:10) to learn what a wealth mindset is. It's something that comes from the inside and works its way out in your life. I'm happy to say that I don't think the same way as I did when I was a kid. The thing that I had to grasp was the fact that being rich and being wealthy are two completely different things. Here are some specific things I've learned along the way.

- 1. Rich people get their identity from the things they own; their houses, cars, yachts, money etc.** Wealthy people's identity comes from who they are, not what they own.
- 2. Rich people either spend a lot of time trying to not lose their money or they waste it on themselves.** Wealthy people's money is just an expression of who they are, so they are confident in their well being.
- 3. Rich people work for money.** Wealthy people's money works for them.

- 4. Rich people think of their assets,** while wealthy people dream of their legacy.
- 5. Rich people give to people.** Wealthy people invest in people, with an expectation of return on investment; measured by a predetermined outcome. Examples: A changed life, transformed neighborhood, a business profit.
- 6. Rich people think their money protects them;** they have a sense of being above the law. Solomon put it like this in Proverbs 18:11, "A rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his own imagination. Wealthy people are inherently humble because they are thankful, knowing that the source of their provision is the Lord."
- 7. Rich people have a desire for the things they can buy.** Wealthy people have a vision for the legacy they are leaving.
- 8. Most rich people's money was given to them;** they received an inheritance, won a lottery or a lawsuit, got lucky in the stock market etc. Therefore they don't know how to reproduce it... how to make more. This creates a lot of insecurity in their souls. Wealthy people have wisdom and power to create wealth therefore they live with confidence, and aren't afraid of the future.



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These similes are not meant to be the last word on poverty, riches, and wealth. They are simple contrasts to help explain how people in each of these mindsets think. Similes also help to explain why many people are rich but far fewer of them are wealthy. Furthermore, because true wealth is first a condition of the heart that affects the world around you and is not necessarily related to how much money someone has in the bank; there are many wealthy people that don't have a lot of assets. So where do you stand? How can you adjust your inner world to start thinking as a wealthy person instead of just dreaming of being rich. **JL**



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Teaching Our Kids To Be Grateful (In A Sometimes Ungrateful Culture)



BY GABBY HEUSSER

Here is a little information about me: Gabby Heusser is the author of *In His Footsteps*, and lives in Redding, California with her husband and two daughters, Sarah and Emily. You can find more of her articles at: www.GabbyHeusser.com

Jesus came and turned everything upside down by telling us, *"it is more blessed to give than to receive"*. The message of heaven goes against much of what we have learned on earth. The earlier we all learn to follow God's ways, the better! Here are some ways that we can help our children be humble and grateful, releasing them into their God-given destinies:

If you are a parent, it comes as no surprise to you that your kids can sometimes, be.....*ungrateful!* Let's face it, we all have been from time to time. But, God has actually designed us to function from a place of humility, recognizing that everything-every breath, every blessing and good gift comes from Him, our gracious heavenly Father. The challenge is to have our children grasp that revelation so that they are able to thrive.

The holiday season is the perfect time to further instill the quality of gratefulness into our children's lives. No matter how young (or old) they are, it is never too early (or late) to help them mature into humble, grateful people. This time of the year provides us parents with ample ammunition to fight the ugly attitudes of entitlement, greed, and selfishness.

1. Expose Our Kids To Need. This holiday season, when media ads are running wild, telling our kids what they "have" to have in order to have a merry Christmas, we need to purposefully help our kids become aware of needs that are around them. This may look like taking them to the inner city or to an area where there are the homeless or people who have less than them. We can also challenge them to be aware if there are kids/families in their class or school that do not have enough money to buy presents for Christmas. Also, giving our kids information about local charities/ministries who are helping meet needs are practical ways that show them the world is larger than them.

2. Empower Your Kids To Meet Those Needs. Jesus was the greatest leader and modeled this by giving power to His disciples meet the needs around them. Remember the story of the loaves and

fishes? Jesus responds to the disciples' desire to send the hungry people away with, *"you give them something to eat"*. Jesus was teaching them their power, authority, and identity in God. He needed them to see firsthand what they were put on earth to do, so He placed need in front of them to show them what they were made of. Instead of only giving our kids ideas on how to solve the problems that they see, ask them to come up with ways they can meet those needs.

3. Provide Your Kids With Creative Outlets For Giving. This is going to equal your family expending time, energy, and money (all of which seem taxed during the holiday season). If your church/ community center has an event to serve a holiday meal to the needy in your community, sign up the entire family to help out. It may mean a Saturday is spent serving others instead of Christmas shopping, but the reward will be far greater. When your kids come up with ideas, whether it is taking sandwiches to or baking Christmas cookies for the homeless, be ready to follow through, encouraging them in their efforts. Our kids possess amazing talents such as painting, dancing, or playing an instrument. They can use these God-given talents to bring a smile to an elderly patient at a nursing home or a lonely shut-in living in their neighborhood. The possibilities are as endless as our imagination to be a blessing to others is!

These are just a few practical ways to get our kids (and ourselves) out of "me" mode. Once we experience the thrill of putting a smile someone's face, we will never want to go back to living selfish lives. The goal is that these habits that are being developed in our kids will transfer into life-long attitudes, remaining embedded in their hearts forever. *JL*

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Working Through **BIG** EMOTIONS With Your Kids



Children need to know their parent will love them unconditionally and that we understand their position, even if we do not approve of their actions or decisions. Knowing they live in a safe environment, where mistakes are part of the learning process is important to a child's development and security. Kids have meltdowns and temper tantrums for many reasons (they are hungry, tired, needing to vent emotions, etc), and they make lots of sad choices as they begin to learn and understand the process of decision making.

BY EMILY SCOTT, PHD

Emily Scott, PhD, is a wife, stay at home mom of three, and part time parenting consultant and blogger who has written and spoken on various parenting topics including child development, ACEs, and tips on raising responsible kids. She has lived in the Redding area her whole life, and together with her husband help parents navigate the difficult aspects of parenting at Renewed Hope Parenting. Her website is www.renewedhope-parenting.com

When we respond to these situations with loving empathy, a child can be soothed in knowing we understand and care. They can learn the importance of remaining calm in stressful situations, showing how to handle big emotions with self-control.

Controlling our own big emotions shows our children how to develop self-control over their own emotions. How we respond is a choice and we need to teach our children ways to make wise choices in how they respond to big emotions.

Adults can experience anger when dealing with children, just as children experience anger when dealing with overwhelming parts of life. Allow your child to express their feelings, and if the child is young and does not have the words for what they are feeling, help them out. It is ok to feel sad and it is ok to get angry. It is ok to cry. Repressing emotions or burying our feelings is unhealthy. However, how the child handles these emotions is what is important, and this is an important teaching and growth opportunity for both kids and adults.

We can choose how we respond to our emotions, just as we choose how we respond to our children. Be mindful to listen to them and help them manage their emotion in a healthy manner.

The best way to do this is with modeling healthy emotional regulation ourselves. Kids look to their

parents and other adults for cues on how to react and handle life.

Not only this, but empathy is a crucial aspect in developing the emotional intelligence of your children. When a child is upset, their minds are in a state of chaos. Having an adult add to this chaos with anger or distance will not help the child create calm or deal with the situation in a healthy manner. As an adult, we need to help the child find calm instead of adding to the chaos. Using sincere empathy is an effective way to help the child manage his or her emotions, while also helping the adult to stay calm when we may also want to have our own meltdown, and modeling an effective method for dealing with emotions.

When our kids press our buttons, keeping calm and cool can be extremely difficult. But we need to model healthy behavior to our kids. They will learn more from our actions than any lecture we will give. We can preach empathy and calm all we want, but if we do not model this behavior in front of our kids, they may never learn how to handle these situations. They are more likely to learn when we remain calm instead of yelling or responding with anger. Do not respond in a manner that may damage your relationship or models an unhealthy method of emotional self-control. JL

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BY BENI JOHNSON

Author of *Healthy and Free* and *40 days To Wholeness*

were screaming at me to take a break and to heal. But, in order to heal my adrenals, I was going to have to change the way I was living. He insisted that I needed to rest.

With this new information, I had to make some difficult decisions. In the moment, all I really wanted to do was just throw in the towel and hide away in my home.

You see, this fatigue had drained my entire being—body, mind, and spirit. I wasn't just tired; I was at a place where even just looking at my emails was an overwhelming task. From this place of fatigue, I started my own research on how I could naturally heal from adrenal stress.

As I began to research, I found three main things that I could apply to my life to bring healing.

The first surprised me: eat meat. Yep, you read that correctly. I

Several years ago, I was told by my naturopathic doctor that I was having issues with my adrenals. At the time, I didn't even know what adrenals were, so my doctor explained that they are very important hormone-producing glands located directly above the kidneys. The adrenal hormones are imperative to stress recovery, among other things. My doctor went on to say that I was putting too much stress on my adrenals with my busy lifestyle and travel schedule. He told me that my overworked adrenals

was supposed to eat meat. Even my friend who has written many books on the importance of juicing vegetables and fruits has stated that, if you are struggling with adrenal issues, it is good to eat red meat. Of course, if anyone chooses this route, I highly suggest eating organic, grass-fed meat—MUCH better for you than chemical-laden commercial meat (the evils of which we can discuss another time).

Anyway, after more adrenal-fatigue research, I also found solution number two: laughter. Like the "eat meat" solution, this one surprised me when I first read it. However, looking back on my own experience, laughter truly had made a difference for me. When I really needed to feel better, I would intentionally put funny things in front of myself. Funny movies and T.V. shows became a part of my prescription. I think I've watched every Andy Griffith show ever made! This solution is right in front of us in the Bible. Proverbs 22:17 promises, "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit drains one's strength." We need to prioritize laughter in the healing process.

Finally, back to the title I have chosen for this article, "The Power of Rest." The final solution for adrenal fatigue is the one which might seem most obvious: get some REST. Sometimes, you have to work hard to get 7-8 hours of sleep at night and to take naps whenever possible, but this is something you must do. Not only does sleep give rest to our bodies, but it provides rest for the mind. Resting also means

taking time to sit, relax and think on good things. Throughout my own journey, I reminded myself to set my mind on things above (*Colossians 3:2*). Aligning your thoughts with the thoughts

of God will always result in perfect peace and rest. I love to read the Psalms (especially 139-150) or to listen to beautiful worship music. The lyrics of worship music allow your inner self to rest, like a vacation for your soul. Did you know that if you take time to practice deep breathing, it can relieve stress and bring your body into rest mode? I actually have a reminder on my watch to tell me to stop and deep breath for one minute at regular intervals in my day. Just remember, sleeping, meditating, and deep breathing all provide the rest you need if you are suffering from fatigue. [Here's a deep breathing tip: Imagine a square box in your mind's eye. Take a deep breath at the top corner of the box. Hold it for four seconds, and then exhale. Now, repeat this on all four corners of the box. Do this several times a day. Your mind will love the break and your heart will thank you.]

To this day, I still practice these principals. I realize that not everybody has adrenal problems, but regardless of what your "condition" is, I can't stress enough the importance of strengthening the pillars of your temple (i.e., your whole person). To be healthy in spirit, mind and body, you must real-ize and implement the practices of eating right, laughing hard, and resting well. This kind of

rest relieves stress and allows your hormones to balance. This is the rest which has the power to heal.

There are so many things in our lives pulling on us for attention. Many of those things are important, but they can also bring us to a place of exhaustion. For us to give of ourselves fully and effectively, we first need to take time to love ourselves, giving ourselves the chance to refresh so we can love others and live more productively. Allow yourself to rest. You won't be sorry, and neither will those around you. JL

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it downstream, allowing rainbow trout to feed and grow year round. According to Redding's own The Fly Shop, the largest fly fishing specialty shop in America, "the river's controlled flows, combined with northern California's temperate climate, result in near-optimum fishing conditions nearly every day of the year. The average size of the rainbows on the Lower Sacramento is 16 inches, while fish over 20 inches are relatively common, and they are all fat and healthy."

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December 9th - 10th & 15th
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 Redding, CA 96002

Sunday December 10th
North State Symphony:
Holiday Concert

Admission: \$15-\$30
All Saints Episcopal Church
 2150 Benton Drive, Redding, CA 96003

Olivia Newton-John

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Tortoise Acres
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Saturday January 6th -
Sunday January 7th, 14th, 20th, 28th
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23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th
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Sunday January 28th
North State
Symphony:
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Music Concert

Admission: \$10 - \$25
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God, Why Didn't You Do Something?



BY CYNDI BARBER

Cyndi Barber is a Pastoral Counselor at Redding's Transformation Center where she specializes in relationships and inner healing. She also writes for iMom.com, a parenting website. Her own blog is upandovercomers.com.

God, why didn't you stop them from hurting me? Why didn't you keep that person from abusing me, beating my mom, cheating on me, leaving me, being an addict? How can it be that an all-powerful God doesn't intervene in situations to prevent people from hurting other people? This can be disillusioning and leave a person feeling unprotected.

My dad committed suicide when I was nine years old. I asked God the question of why He didn't stop my dad from doing something that would have long lasting repercussions in myself and in my family. He used that question to show me a vulnerable side of Himself.

We've all heard people conclude, "Everything happens for a reason" to explain this seeming lack of divine intervention. None of us would stand idly by and watch something tragic or painful happen to another person. So, why would God?

Perhaps it's not as simple as we think. Perhaps God's perspective is different than our own. Perhaps He's not passively keeping a distance.

God doesn't love through control. He doesn't love one person while controlling the other. His love has a core of choice. For Him to step in and control someone to prevent them from hurting someone else He would have to violate the law of His love. He would no longer love. He would then be the abuser. Control is abusive. We have a choice. We are not controlled. We get to decide things for ourselves. We aren't machines. We are His beloved children.

His love has risk. His love for us comes at the risk of Him being rejected, misunderstood, or hated by us. He

loves fully and completely, giving us His whole heart. He holds nothing back. And we can choose to hurt Him in that wide-open place in His heart. When He loves us He risks it all by giving us a choice to give love back.

Human beings use control to manage fear. We will use a myriad of ways to cajole, manipulate, or hustle for the supposed guarantee of reciprocation of love from those we bring in close. We will use bargaining and coercion to get others to handle our hearts well. But true love, God's love, is the invitation to love and be loved without any guarantees of never being hurt.

For Him to grab an abuser by the scruff of the neck and make them behave would no longer be love. This control would now be removing the person's ability to choose. This is not love.

God established love through choice by creating two trees in the Garden of Eden. He gave Adam and Eve a choice by putting the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil where they had access to it. Why did He put it there in the first place? He put it there to establish that His children have a choice. We are not robots.

God showed me where He was that fateful night of my dad's suicide. He was standing behind my mom, my little sister, and I with giant wings enfolding us. He was there protecting our hearts and covering us with Himself. He had a plan of redemption for us. While He had restricted Himself with love that doesn't control, He was very present and very protective. He was loving my dad and grieving his choice as he ended his life. And he was loving me as He held me in His embrace. **JL**



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Because **I SAID SO**



BY SUSAN RHYNE

My background is in medicine. I practiced as a Physician Assistant for almost 20 years in the Redding area. After transitioning out of that, I taught high school science for 6 years before returning to school and obtaining my Master's degree in Counseling Psychology. I am a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with Dunamis Center for Counseling and Wellness. I do still teach, though in adult education with the ASPIRE program at Simpson University, and at National University in their Master's in Counseling Psychology. I have been married for 36 years, and my husband and I have raised two successful adult children. Our daughter is an RN in the emergency room at a local hospital. Our son works full-time at a local grocery store with the intention of returning to school to study law enforcement.



There were lots of things that my parents said to us, that I swore I would never say to my own kids:

“Because I said so” and “You’re the oldest, you should know better” always drove me nuts. Most young parents (and pre-parents) think they will be different. No sooner did my oldest turn 3 that I first told her those dreaded words in answer to the never-ending “Why?” questions. “Because Mommy said so” slipped out before I could think about it. Oh, no! My parents’ words echoed in my head and out of my mouth.

In reality, sometimes in dealing with kids, “Because I said so” is the only logical answer. After you have patiently explained all the reasons why the room must be picked up, the laundry put inside the basket (instead of the general direction thereof), and the dog fed, it comes down to your authority. As parents, most of us would strive to be an authoritative parent who gives boundaries and love in equal portion. Research tells us that kids crave structure and guidelines to feel safe. This is tempered with love and affection, and those kids will thrive. Authoritarian parents on the other hand are those super strict ones who wield power and control while warmth and comfort are in short measure. Again, research tells us that kids from these households have less self-confidence and poor social skills.

I knew I was raising future adults. I wanted them to say “Please” and “Thank you” and “Excuse me.” My kids saw my husband open doors for me. They saw me thank him for help with a project. Many times when they were growing up, other parents would compliment me on how respectful and polite my kids were. They weren’t always that way at home,

but it would make me feel good that they were that way out in the world. The thought crossed my mind frequently that it sounded like my kids’ manners were the exception and not the rule. How sad for those future adults to be thought of as rude and disrespectful. There has to be guidance for our kids to be successful adults who are nice to be around.

I believe most parents try hard to guide their children toward adulthood. Some days are successful, some are stressful, and some just deteriorate right after the alarm goes off. That’s life, right? Just as we as adults have some great and not so great days, so do our kids. But if the overall effect is forward progress, we are all doing ok. So we explain, we guide, and sometimes cajole our kids toward the goal. We give boundaries because we love them. They will push those loving borders from the time they are tiny: oh, yes, they will.

I believe most parents try hard to guide their children toward adulthood.

Parenting is tough and its natural to have a short temper at the end of the day when you are on the receiving end of a whiny, irritable kid. Kids are always worse for their parents than for other adults. You might hear from the teacher, “Johnny had such a good day!”, and then minutes later in the car everyone is cranky. I think that kids melt down at the end of the day because they feel safe enough to do so. They know that you will still love them when they don’t want to do their homework or forget (again) to feed the dog. So you explain, you remind them of the rules, and then you might melt down, too. Some days “Because I said so” has to suffice because that’s all you have to give. And that’s ok. JL

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Tatum loved her job. She knew her work as a social worker was changing lives every day. From meeting with prospective parents, to home studies, to finalizing the adoption in the courthouse, each part of the journey had its own distinct elements of joy and inspiration.

The problem was at her office. Her coworkers were so negative, many days she didn't even want to go into the office. The office gossip was continuous, the backstabbing perpetual, and any positive outcome was quickly spun into the most negative event of the week.

The good news is that there are some things we can do to minimize the negativity and stay engaged.

It was discouraging, depressing and frankly, Tatum was sick and tired of fighting it. It was easier to take her work to the local Starbucks and avoid the office like a plague.

Long term, she knew this strategy wouldn't work. But she didn't know what else to do. It was paralyzing.

I hear about office negativity regularly. Companies and organizations are dealing with this scourge on a daily basis. There's even a name for people addicted to negativity. They are called "Negaholics."

We know the real reason why. It's called sin. And as long as there is sin in this world, there will be negativity and bad attitudes. Proverbs 16:28 puts it this way, "A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends."

The good news is that there are some things we can do to minimize the negativity and stay engaged.

- 1. Be Proactive with Positivity.** Smile. At everyone. Be lavish with recognition. Reward good work. Compliment your coworker on her fresh haircut. Smile some more. You have tremendous power to set the tone of your workplace.

When you come in with a positive mindset and contagious energy, you bring life and love to the office. Proverbs 16:24 reminds us, "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." I say slather on that honey generously.

- 2. Return the Negative with a Positive.** The problem is that negaholics feed on the negativity. The more it's engaged with, the more of it they do. If you don't respond the right way, the negaholic will just dig deeper. So the key is to respond correctly.

When you hear your co-worker Melanie say, "Did you hear how Sarah got called into the boss's office this morning?" Calmly answer, "I really appreciate how Sarah is so diligent with her work." Then smile. Your positive response shows Melanie you're not playing her negaholic game.

- 3. Make sure you're not contributing to the problem.** I hate to mention this, but sometimes we fall into looking at things with a negative perspective. Often we don't even realize it! So before you chime in or add on to a conversation, check yourself, and make sure you're bringing life not death.

"He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin." Let's be diligent with speaking the truth in love.

It's never easy to combat negativity, but it's so worth it! Let's remember once again the truth. "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit." As Christ-followers, it's our privilege to be positive speakers of life. Try it next time, and enjoy the difference you make. **JL**



BY CHRISTY LARGENT

Christy is a **Professional Speaker** focused in the area of **Engagement**. She specializes in opening events getting audience members energized and engaged or closing events helping them leave empowered to act.

Her clients would tell you their audiences love her funny stories & real life examples illustrating practical ways to apply what they've learned to bring about lasting positive change.

Christy has a **diverse background** having worked both in the US and internationally.

Christy is the co-host of the PBS-TV show, **The Forum**, has a podcast, **Encouraging Words for Working Moms** and is the author of the bestselling book, **31 Positive Communication Skills for Women**.

When she isn't speaking or coaching clients, you can find Christy sneaking in a workout or a quick lunch with her husband in between chauffeuring her 2 school aged kids to and from basketball and tennis practices.

- Website: www.christylargent.com
- Phone: 530-949-3646
- Email: christy@christylargent.com



BY JOY FRY

Want to LAUGH MORE?

I was out walking recently with my newly retired neighbor, Nancy. She asked me "what have you experienced more of since you retired a year ago?"

I said, "Being able to laugh more often. Prior to my retirement, I was surrounded by ambitious and serious co-workers who neither smiled nor laughed." I now look for reasons to laugh every day. I am reminded of the quote by Nicolas Chamfort "The most wasted day of all is that on which we have not laughed".

Then, Nancy asked, "How did you add more laughter?" Here are five tips I gave her for more daily laughter:

FIRST, take time to read your favorite comic strips. If the strip for that day is especially humorous, clip or print it out and display on your desk where you can reread it. Or, share it with a friend. I use gocomics.com for finding the strips I enjoy the most, such as *Peanuts*, and *Cathy*.

SECOND, learn to laugh at yourself. This may involve letting go of silly mistakes that could get you down. While camping, I dropped and then retrieved my cell phone from a chemical toilet. When I told the story at a party and asked the group to vote on whether they would have retrieved the phone, everyone burst into laughter.

THIRD, watch a funny movie. Invite a friend, family member or a child to join you for the movie. Afterward, recount the funniest scenes from the movie by asking each person what made them laugh the most. Be ready to enjoy the laughter all over again. Some of the movies which bring a smile to my face are those with talking dogs or stories about dogs, such as *100 Dalmatians* and *Beverly Hills Chihuahuas*.



FOURTH, observe wildlife, birds, or a pet. The squirrels outside my back window often hang upside down on my fence or from a tree branch trying to reach an acorn. Seeing the furry head and belly hanging in the air gives me a chuckle as I wait for my morning coffee to brew. My dog, Jody, also brings a smile to my face. On my cleaning day, she likes to tear around the house chasing the vacuum cleaner while barking and taking breaks to try to bite the upright bag.

FIFTH, encourage others to share their funny stories with you. When I am catching up with a friend by phone, skype, or in person, I will ask: "Tell me something funny that happened this week". Then, we both get a good laugh together. I've discovered children can also be valuable contributors for providing a funny story.

In addition to the immediate joy and overall sense of well-being from a good laugh, it can be beneficial to your health and draw others to you. Who wants to miss out on a good laugh? **JL**

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EMOTIONS REVEAL Identity



BY SUZANNE LUIS

Suzanne is a counselor at The Redding Transformation Center, I have a Lay Christian Counseling Certificate from Regent University, I am also licensed with the State of California as a Drug and Alcohol Counselor.

I have learned over the years that emotions tell us who we are from an early age, for instance, I hate tap dance, but I love ballet. The most basic emotions are clues to who we will become. If as a child our experiences with our parents reflects a negative sense of self it can take many years to undo the damage done to us as children.

Self-love is at the core of answering the riddle of who we are in the emotional part of our being. People love themselves to the extent they can forgive and accept themselves, and this is also the place where many discover the need for God, the need for a fresh start.

How much we love ourselves and experience love emerges when we face threats posed to us by other people. When we meet people who have a better job, better house or more status, we can quickly feel ourselves “less than” and not valuable. If we have a strong sense of identity and are “enough” we can remain assured of our place in the world. When another person embarrasses us, we may be able to let the

insult go and even shrug it off, confident in who we are, or we may feel the need to enforce respect from others by becoming defensive and devastated. Faced with risk, the potential of failure, i.e., making a fool of ourselves, may be too high; to be able to withstand the disapproval of others.

Our love for ourselves can be seen by looking at how vulnerable we are in front of others. Is it OK if we cry or say we’re afraid? Do we need to show others how healthy we are? Or are we confident enough to dare to be weak? How good are we at apologizing for things that may be our fault? If we have sizeable reserves of assurance, we might feel we can afford to admit mistakes and still believe in ourselves. If

we are unable to love ourselves no admission of guilt or error is possible; it would sap the last of our limited self-assurance.

Our Emotional Identity is revealed when we look at the way we communicate. Can we express our disappointments, frustrations, and annoyance so that others can see our perspective?

Or do we internalize pain, act it out or project it onto others? In other words, when we don’t get the response we need to experience being understood, do we give up and become passive aggressive? Or can we consider the thought that the other person isn’t necessarily judging us but instead have not had the life experience we are trying to describe and we can explain it further or let it go?

When it comes to Emotional Identity, trust concerns our instinctive feelings about how dangerous – or safe – we, other people and the world are likely to be. We can have greater or lesser degrees of Trust in our capacity to survive challenges.

Around others, how much do we suspect that people are – at heart – out to get us? Are strangers generally nice or likely to reject us? Do we imagine new acquaintances will like us or wound us? How fragile are others? If we are a touch assertive, will oth-

Our love for ourselves can be seen by looking at how vulnerable we are in front of others.

ers collapse and break – or remain more or less fine. The way we perceive others has a lot to do with how we experience the world; if we are fragile we imagine others are also. How ‘controlling’ do we need to be to feel safe, controlling behavior stemming from a lack of trust in the other person.

At work, how resilient are we? Failure is not a fun experience for anyone but does the world seem to be a forgiving place in which it is normal to get second and third chances?

Do we believe we have a chance to succeed or do we believe the world is against us?

Loving ourselves is the by-product of being loved from the moment we enter the world if we can allow ourselves to learn and grow we can find ourselves healing from the wounds of the past and finding people are pretty wonderful.

There is a scripture I have always loved, and it is “perfect love casts out fear” the word “perfect” is not the way we understand perfect in today’s language it is more like “genuine heart-felt” love casts out fear. I think there is something about love in general, loving ourselves and others that make the world an easier place. **JL**

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BY LAURA BURWICK

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Chicken or the Egg

Addiction is a complicated issue. Everyone has a different opinion of what they believe is the root cause. People would argue that it is a disease, a result of trauma, a lack of will, and/or people are selfish and don't care. Part of the problem with understanding addiction is the negative effects that naturally occur to family, friends and society. We all want to find the answer to addiction so it will stop hurting and costing us all dearly. Unfortunately there is no easy answer.

There are some compelling scientific facts that claim addiction is a disease. Most people object to calling it a disease, they claim it releases the individual from the responsibility of their actions, however this diagnosis can actually provide the freedom to seek and find treatment. Addiction treatment models require individuals to take responsibility for their actions and make amends.

Research and statistics indicate that 85% of people who have addictions have been exposed to trauma. It is common, and in my experience if left untreated, definitely contributes to relapse and the cycle of addiction. Trauma informed care provides quality of life and long term freedom from addiction.

Anyone who has ever been exposed to addiction can testify that lack of will is not an issue. People with addictions can and will go to great lengths to obtain money to support their habit. I have a friend who ran guns and drugs back in the eighties. She is a very strong willed and powerful woman. She no longer uses drugs and has built a number of very successful and legal businesses. Lack of will doesn't seem to be the issue.

I have had the opportunity to work in addiction treatment with individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds. I have witnessed many people come face to face with the consequences of their actions. They are broken and ashamed of their actions. Often the harsh reality of how they have hurt themselves and others is more than they can initially face. The guilt and shame are overwhelming and often trigger them into relapse.

To those on the outside looking into the lives of families who are dealing with addiction, it may seem obvious. Once treatment is received the families and individuals affected by addiction, may feel the same. However, denial is very real means of protec-

There are some compelling scientific facts that claim addiction is a disease.

tion. I have personal experience with the power of denial. A loved one was addicted to Meth and I was powerless to protect them. I lived in fear of the possibility that they could be in jail or dead. The truth was so horrific to my heart that I chose an alternate reality to live in, just so I could breathe. I could not answer my phone, "Ms. Burwick we're sorry to inform you...". This is how denial works for the individual who is addicted, as well. The

truth of their lives and the damage they have caused is too devastating. So, they lie to themselves and everyone around them.

Breaking the cycle of addiction requires an open mind and an understanding that not one way works for everyone. Families can be restored; with God all things are possible.

Everyone in the family plays a role in working towards restoration. It is not just the person who has an addiction who needs to recover. Everyone has lost a sense of their self and consequently needs to rediscover their identity. We as lovers of Jesus, have the answer to the pain and disconnect addiction brings.

It is time for us to stand together in love and grace. It is time to step out of judgment. It is time to walk in freedom. It is time to educate ourselves and not be afraid of addiction. It is not only the people on the street who suffer. There are individuals and family members sitting next to you in church who are suffering. The stigma of addiction is alive and well in all spheres of society. It is time to embrace without shame that addiction can be treated and overcome.

Jesus died for us to live in Freedom. But like a friend of mine says, "You can't heal from something you are not willing to admit you have". We are all in this together and together is the only way we will get out alive. JL

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BY IVAN COREA

Ivan Corea is an educator, writer, contributing author and broadcaster. Together with his wife Charika and son Charin, he founded 'Autism Sunday,' now a global event

'Redding? Why are you coming to Redding all the way from London?' asked a passenger on board the airline taking us as a family to a whole new future. Why? We took a risk, radically changing direction, forsaking all, to pursue a theology course. We jumped off the cliff.

So why be a risk taker? The definition of taking a risk means the act or fact of doing something that involves danger or risk to achieve a certain goal. Starting a new business can lead to risk taking on many levels. All of us face risk taking – they may be small, medium or large risks. Should I stay or should I go? Should I send my children to this school? Should I buy or should I rent? Should I move out of my State or remain here? Tough questions require tough decisions.

Every risk is different and we are always on a learning curve. Risk taking also has its ups and downs - it could lead to failings, making mistakes, on the other hand it could lead to real success and completely change your life – for the better. There are those who are reckless and don't really assess the risks before they jump, others hold back – fixed in their views, not daring to move from their comfort zones. As you stand on the edge of your personal cliff – you need to make the key decision – do I jump or do I pull back?

Here are 7 keys to assist you in risk taking:

1. Be irrational. If you feel this is the vision you need to pursue - go with your gut instinct. Build courage and be a dream chaser.

*Every risk is different
and we are always on
a learning curve.*

2. This whole exercise will help you to learn important lessons. This will lead you to 'internal growth.' Treat it as a learning opportunity.

3. Leave your 'comfort zone,' even if you see the scenario before you as being very scary – there are times that you may need to leap into the unknown to realize your potential. Sir Richard Branson said: 'No one has ever reached for the stars from the comfort of their couch.' Don't be a 'couch warmer.' You have got to take risks if you are to succeed.

4. It's ok to fail. Don't fear failure. Don't let it define you as a person and don't let the fear of failure be an obstacle to your future. Entrepreneurship is all about taking risks and it could lead to change, progress and success in your life. Learn from your mistakes – if you get things wrong, that's fine, get up and give it another go.

5. Ignore what I call the 'doom merchants.' In my case they said it would lead to disaster as I was leaving behind 'career prospects, a pension, a home.' They did their best to try and dissuade me from leaving. Don't listen to the negative voices of people who will try to persuade you not to chase after your calling, your dreams, your vision, your future.

6. Do your homework. Research, research, research, as our son would say. Look at the pros and cons, look at the issues, avoid being haphazard – think things through and then make your move. Never look back. Look forward.

7. Be prepared to take up the challenge. Be bold, be strong. When an opportunity comes your way, don't sit on the couch, rise to the challenge. Go forth and prosper! **JL**

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