

in this issue

- :: Coaching Skill Of The Month: Support
- :: Parenting Workshops
- :: Tips For A Great Holiday Season
- :: New Year's Resolutions For Children

Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love. ~Hamilton Wright Mabie



Greetings,

I hope that you and your family enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving!

I am pleased to say that November was another exciting month for me. I had the privilege of working with inspirational clients who are making great changes in their lives. I also thoroughly enjoyed presenting and hosting a number of rewarding parenting workshops and seminars.

While the holiday season can certainly be a joyous time of year, for many of us it is fraught with undue anxiety and sadness. This year, in particular, as so many families face possible unemployment, foreclosure, or general financial insecurity, parents have the added burden of reconciling their children's holiday wishes with their own financial reality.

I know that there are practical steps that we can take to make the most of this very special time of year. I have written this newsletter in the hopes of sharing this information with all of you.

I wish you and your family all the very best for a happy and a healthy holiday season.

Elizabeth

**Coaching Skill Of The Month:
Support:**

When we support our children in a meaningful way, we let them know that they can



Parenting Workshops:

Classes For Families Of Children With Special Needs

I have very much enjoyed presenting some recent



depend upon our support no matter what.

Support does not mean that we will turn a blind eye to inappropriate behavior, or that we will bail our children out of a mess of their own creation with no consequences.

Supporting our children means that we will see a situation from their perspective, and that we will work with them as a non-judgemental partner to identify possible solutions to the challenge at hand. True support communicates to our children that we believe in their ability to solve their own problems, and that they can depend upon us for guidance along the way.

Ten Tips For Making the Most of the Holiday Season

Despite the battered economy, strained family relations, and the general stress of trying to please everyone, we can enjoy a wonderful holiday season. We deserve it! I hope these tips help you to create a memorable holiday filled with joy and peace.



1. **Choose happiness.** Make the decision to do everything in your power to be joyful. Celebrate small victories, appreciate small pleasures, and consider maintaining a gratitude journal.
2. **Get rid of the guilt.** Guilt is one emotion that serves little or

classes for families of children with learning, developmental, or emotional differences. Through this venue, the opportunity to inspire other parents through personal experience has been most gratifying of all. In my life I have learned that no obstacle is insurmountable, that it is impossible to predict how far our children will go in life, and, most importantly, that we must never, ever give up.

Some of the topics that I address include the following:

- Effective parenting strategies for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, ADHD, PDD, or ODD
- Behavior management 101
- What to do once your child is diagnosed
- Developing and implementing successful behavior modification programs
- Parenting strategies for teaching social skills and life skills to our children with special needs
- Building a successful team of teachers, therapists, and other professionals to bring out the best in our children
- Tools for helping our learning challenged children succeed in school
- Effective rules, routines, and structure for the family of children with special needs

Please note that I will be offering parenting workshops in Scarsdale on January 7th and January 21st, and will be presenting programs in various locations in New York and New Jersey during the month of January.

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no constructive purpose. If a transgression is severe enough to rise to the level of shame, we may need to make changes or reparations. Otherwise, we can toss aside useless guilt, allow ourselves to accept the choices we have made, and move on. We cannot be in two places at the same time and we cannot please everyone we love all the time.

3. **Our children do not need toys that do not fit within our budgets.** They need us. They need a happy holiday with warmth and love that they will remember and recreate with their own children one day. It is okay not to buy every item on their Christmas List. The most important gift that we can give to our children is our presence. Homemade gifts can be very special. Consider getting the family together, turning on some holiday music, and making a special homemade keepsake or treat for close family and friends.
4. **Shift the focus from gift giving to memory-making.** Explain the true meaning of the holidays to your children. Help them to develop realistic expectations about gifts. Plan fun family activities for before and after gifts are given, such as baking, building a gingerbread house, or playing together outside.
5. **Plan ahead and stick to your plan.** Decide which events you wish to attend, where you wish to spend Christmas, what gifts you intend to give and to whom. Write it all down and stick to it. **Remember that you have the right to say "NO."** The

New Year's Resolutions For Children

One of my favorite activities during the holiday season is to sit quietly with my Chai tea and journal to write my New Year's Resolutions. I love the process of reflection and envisioning my better self in the future. This year I have resolved to include my children in this tradition.

Children of all ages and abilities can decide upon resolutions that they can keep. I believe that this habit can help children to reflect upon themselves and to independently stick to a plan of their own creation.

To simplify this activity, I have put together the following list of age appropriate resolutions for children to choose from:

For Preschoolers

- I will put my toys away when I am finished playing
- I will wash my face and brush my teeth every morning and every night
- I will say my prayers before I go to sleep
- I will help my Mommy or Daddy
- I will remember to say please and thank you

For Elementary School Children

people who matter most will understand.

6. **Enjoy in moderation.** Try to maintain your usual eating, drinking, sleeping, and exercise habits, and keep overindulgence to a minimum. You will feel better and will have more energy to enjoy the holidays.
7. **Choose to get along with extended family.** When attending family gatherings, avoid stressful topics, don't try to heal old wounds, and keep things light. If getting along is simply impossible, choose other plans.
8. **Be Prepared.** If you are traveling a long distance with children, be sure to have enough snacks and activities on hand. Prepare a schedule that you can stick to in advance and build in down time for everyone. If your child has special challenges, let hosts know what to expect in advance, and try to arrange for a quiet room where your child can go to decompress if the celebration is just too much.
9. **Create New Family Traditions.** These may include special foods, activities, stories, visits with friends and family, or religious celebrations. Developing special traditions gives children a sense of belonging and security, and provides them with memories to last a lifetime.
10. **Teach your children the joy of giving through your words and actions.** Our children model our behavior. When we give generously of our time, energy, or possessions, our children learn from our example and create wonderful habits that may last a lifetime.

- I will be nice to others. I will be friendly with other kids and I will try to include everyone when I play
- I will eat more fruits and vegetables and I will eat less chips and cookies
- I will do my chores at home without having to be reminded
- I will try to do something nice for someone else every day
- I will help my parents whenever I can
- I will do my best to control myself, and I will manage my feelings and behavior to the best of my ability
- I will play outside more and I will play Nintendo DS, Game Cube, or Wii less
- I will put my things away when I am finished with them
- I will take care of washing my face, brushing my teeth, and taking my shower without needing to be reminded
- I will watch less t.v. every day
- I will call my grandparents (or aunt, uncle, cousins, etc.) at least once a week
- I will read every night for thirty minutes
- I will make a special effort to get along with my brother(s) or sister(s)

For Middle & High School Children

- I will make an effort to get along with my parents. I will speak to them politely even if I am angry, think they are clueless, or am feeling frustrated
- I will be a better person. I will be accepting of people who are different from me and I will do my best not to hurt other people's feelings
- I will eat more fruit and vegetables and less chips, cookies, and other unhealthy snacks
- I will never text or IM anything that I would not want printed on

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this newsletter. I cannot begin to tell you how much I appreciate your interest and support.

I wish you and your family a very happy and healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

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