

# Joyful Living

Spring 2022



BY SHAWNA BOURQUE

Feature story  
**WOMEN IN  
BUSINESS**

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# 30<sup>th</sup>

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# Joyful Living

SPRING 2022

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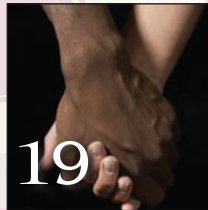
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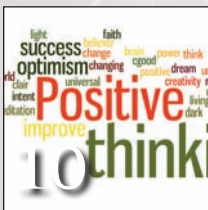
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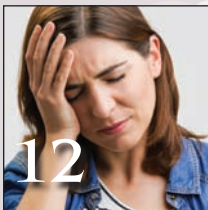
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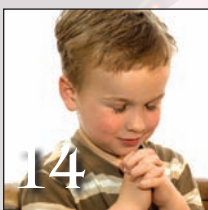
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# Thoughts on an Unlikely Long-term Marriage



BY DEBRA CELOVSKY

The year is 1973. The place is Kaiserslautern, West Germany in a large, Bavarian-style building with signature cross-beams, and grounds surrounded by a stone fence. Originally constructed by a wealthy businessman in the early 20th century, it is now known as Bethel and leased as a missions training center. Soldiers from nearby military bases come and go, es-

pecially on weekends when they travel in for Sunday services.

Now, in August, the summer Bible Seminar is in progress. Students are here from Belgium, Holland, France, West Germany, with the largest group traveling in by bus from Yugoslavia. I am a 19-year-old Redding, California native, proficient in the German language, here with a year-long mission's team.

The mosaic tile floors, curving hardwood staircases, and paneled walls ring with pounding footsteps, laughter, and

loud conversation in an array of languages throughout the four weeks of the seminar. It is a banquet of youthful friendships for me, a pastor's daughter, raised in a small church with few friends my age.

One late afternoon, with classes over for the day, I am standing outside the large kitchen preparing to go upstairs, when I glance down the hall. On the left, a door opens onto basement stairs that lead to the boy's dorm. On the right is the boy's bathroom. A Slovak student emerges through the basement door, with a towel thrown over his shoulder. He is not tall, but is muscular, and the light touches his auburn hair as he steps toward the bathroom.

We meet later. His name is Sam and he is fluent in 4 languages. English is not among them, so we converse in the only one we have in common—German. A friendship develops. He was raised in a tiny Slovak village in northeastern Yugoslavia. His circumstances are light-years from my own American middle-class upbringing.

He moves down to Kaiserslautern from northern Germany where he has

We experienced our share of better and worse, richer and poorer, sickness and health, and made up our minds to do it all side by side.



been working since his release from the Yugoslavian army. We marry 2 years later.

Who would have believed that such a union would last? Certainly not my parents who reluctantly consented, assuming, I'm sure, that disaster was only a few years away. Not the missionaries with whom we worked in the early years of our marriage in Germany. Probably not anyone who knew us well.

So we sit across from one another on this anniversary in a lovely Italian restaurant. I look at his familiar face and my mind scans the years since that glimpse in the hallway. There were the early years of tight budgets and few frills. One son arrived, then a few years later, another son with a twin sister. Sam worked all day, then got up in the middle of the night to put a bottle in the microwave to share the night feedings. He built a business, and then assumed a pastorate. We bought homes, traveled through the years to visit his family in Europe and Australia, and raised three children who would make any parent proud also grandchildren to fill the house with energy and joy.

Along the way there were tears and resentment and compromise. There was anger, too, that at times threatened to drown us in its flood. Yet we refused to part, refused to let any battle be the one that ruined us. We experienced our share of better and worse, richer and poorer, sickness and health, and made up our minds to do it all side by side. And here we remain, 46 years later, sitting across from each other. Laughing and making plans.

My 83 year old grandmother was asked one time about the secret of her own long term marriage. "Well," she said, eyes large behind her glasses, "you make up your mind and stick to it." It isn't possible, of course, for every marriage, but it is great gift and a blessed thing when you can. JL



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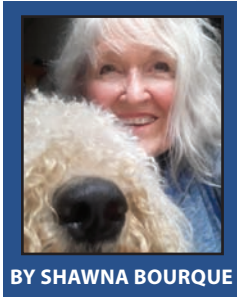
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BY SHAWNA BOURQUE

# WOMEN *In Business*



**S**hawna Bourque is an entrepreneur who is passionate about business ventures, helping people, and animals.

She wants to create a positive, comfortable and cozy experience when entering her establishment.

In 1981 Shawna arrived in Palo Cedro from Diamond Bar, California with her son, after the loss of her young daughter. She left her salon of 10 years named Hair Country, and purchased a

salon on Deschutes Road where her second Hair Country was born!

In 1983 Shawna became involved with the Honey Bee Festival and began helping to raise money for the Palo Cedro Park that exists today.

In 1989 Hair Country added a western retail business named Rhinestone Cowgirl. This business bloomed to include Creative Entertainment Shows with the Country Gold Dancers;

**Shawna Bourque**

~

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In 1993 Hair Country and Rhinestone Cowgirl moved to the Palo Cedro Shopping Center. Shawna collaborated to initiate the Country Christmas Celebration

Shawna and her late husband Jim Davis established Consignment Corner in 2011, dedicated to quality consigned merchandise. Shawna owns and manages Hair Country and Consignment Corner, plus a small clothing boutique currently offered today.

Shawna sums up her passions as follows: "I have been a cosmetist for over 50 years. I own a Salon because I get to choose my co-workers and clients! They are the best! Some of us have worked together close to 30 years. I am supported in my efforts with a wonderful location and a great landlord. Aside doing hair, I get to help people sell special pieces of furniture, art, jewelry, gifts, décor, and crafts. It suits my creative side to display the merchandise in a pleasing manner, as it is a feast for your eyes including many treasures. Unlike a warehouse or a thrift shop Consignment Corner displays good quality merchandise at fantastic prices. The business exchange is a winning experience for everyone and provides

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Miz Daizee  
Says Come Get Your  
Treasures  
Here



enriching interaction among delightful people. It is a privilege to support some of our local talented artisans, helping folks restyle and repurpose quality merchandise and sell crafts. It is also a joy to find the perfect match or style for you!"

"After the loss of my beloved husband, Miz Daizee Doodle is now my partner. See her in our ads or come by to meet our loving trickster. I am surviving these crazy times with the talent and goodness of those around me, My Earth Angels! I have been told we must do three things to be happy! LOVE - I have blessings of love around me. I love my animals! I love what I do! DO - I get to cut, color, style hair and maintain a Consignment business! GOAL - My Goal is to continue to serve you... Retire at age 95,.....maybe!" "Come by to see us! We are excited to meet new people and share our store treasures." JL





**BY MYRA PERRINE**

**Dr. Myra Perrine** has worked for 25 years with an international humanitarian organization called NOVO, coaching, teaching, and mentoring leaders all over the world. A former teacher at Simpson University, Myra has written several books, and currently lives in Redding with her husband and their beloved pets.

# Angels

## AMONG US

**Part 2**



Last Fall, I wrote about meeting an angel named Peter in Mexico (Joyful Living, Fall/Winter 2021). He was driving a shiny, red truck and, to my knowledge, Peter was the first angelic being I'd ever encountered. But after that incident, I began wondering if I'd been helped by other angels along the way—like the time I was flying into Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, to visit friends.

After boarding a plane from L.A. to London, I flew onto Moscow, then was taken to the domestic airport to catch my flight to Kyrgyzstan. Now I hadn't anticipated the massive difference between the International and much smaller Domestic airport in Moscow. In the latter, people didn't speak English, and all the departing flights and gate numbers were written in Cyrillic. I honestly had no idea how I'd find my gate, but with ticket in hand, I sat and waited... and prayed.

Eventually, I heard the announcer say two words in Russian I understood: "Zdravstvuyte" (which means HELLO), followed by "Bishkek" (the capital of Kyrgyzstan). At that moment, I saw a well-dressed man stand and walk toward a gate, so I jumped up and followed him. As we reached the ticket counter, I inquired, "Bishkek?" to which he responded, "Da" (yes). Although his English and my Russian were almost nil, he seemed happy to communicate using the universal language—hand gestures and head nods!

This Kind Man led the way to several more counters where we showed our documents. Eventually, I was standing behind him on the tarmac in a foot of snow, boarding a small Aeroflot plane with 40 other passengers. I stayed right on his heels as we went aboard, inching our way through the crowded aisle. Then the Kind Man stopped at my row, convinced the young lady who was occupying my seat to move, and motioned for me to sit down. I wasn't expecting him to pick up my carry-on and take it with him to his seat in the front of the plane, but reluctantly I acquiesced, since there was no place for my bag near my seat.

Thankfully, the flight was uneventful. Once we landed, the stewardess dismissed his row first. Then the Kind Man walked toward me, handed me my carry-on, and motioned for me to follow him out onto the dark, snow-covered tarmac near the small Bishkek airport. Obviously, I was excited to introduce him to my friends who could adequately thank him for me in Russian. But as soon as we passed through the doorway into the terminal, he was... gone. I had been directly behind him, but he was nowhere in sight once we entered the airport. The narrow corridor opened only into

a larger room where people were awaiting our arrival, but the Kind Man wasn't there. I was absolutely stunned!

I greeted my friends and told them about the Kind Man. Together we looked around the airport—restrooms included—but there was no sign of him. A fleeting thought crossed my mind that maybe he was an angel, but I quickly dismissed it. It wasn't until years later when I met Peter (the angel in Mexico), that I started to suspect that the Kind Man in Russia might also be a heavenly being sent by God to help me during my time of genuine need.

A few years (and international trips) later, it happened again... on two separate occasions—once when I was mistakenly dropped off in a deserted part of an airport in Australia where out of nowhere, a man appeared offering to carry my suitcase to a distant terminal at 5 a.m., and again when I was wandering through a residential neighborhood in Hungary at dusk, and a cab just happened to drive up to take me to where I needed to go (although my directions were incorrect). After these encounters, I became a believer in "angels unaware"—heavenly beings who appear just when we need them. And yes, I do believe these literal angels are very much among us. So... shall we be on the lookout? JL



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**Emily Marszalek** graduated with her B.A. in International Studies from Whitworth University in 2013. She enjoys the simple pleasures in life with her best friend Nick and their two Goldendoodles, Charlie and Lucy, in the Pacific Northwest.

BY EMILY MARSZALEK

WANT TO  
 CHANGE?

I was what many referred to as a “Negative Nancy.” Saddled with pessimism, silver linings seemed invisible. Although I was desperate to change, the task seemed virtually impossible.

“What if,” I asked myself, “I just pretend to be a positive person? If I mimic the attitude and behavior of a truly positive person, would I actually become more positive myself?”

Pondering the question, I recalled an experience over ten years prior that reminded me that not only is genuine change possible, it happens just one step at a time.

As I concluded the last minutes of my interview for an Army ROTC scholarship in 2008 with a hard-faced lieutenant colonel, he looked at me and said, “You will struggle physically.” Internally mortified, I nodded in understanding.

Selected for the scholarship, I gratefully accepted. My apprehension, however, was difficult to conceal. Rappelling, rucksack marches, and field training was only the beginning. I would take an Army Physical Fitness Test during my first week of school, involving two minutes of pushups, two minutes of sit-ups, and a two-mile run, which I needed to pass in order to remain in the program.

I was no athlete. I had never done a pushup and viewed running as more punishment than pastime. But I knew the lieutenant colonel was right. With things as they were, I would struggle. Determined to transform my physical condition, I adopted the kind of training program I figured a fit individual followed.

Beginning the morning after my high school graduation, I arose at six am and commenced my day with a run. My parent’s house was located two miles away from a grocery store, and my goal was to make it to that grocery store and back.

That first day, it was four miles of pure horror. I failed to run even a quarter of the way there and struggled to catch my breath anytime I broke into a jog. By the time I reached the grocery store, my hamstrings burned, my feet ached, and my heart thumped ferociously. Despite yearning to tap out, I continued until the four miles were completed. Attempting to ignore my sore muscles and the doubts flooding my mind, I arose the next morning to repeat the venture, and the next day, and the next day, each day running a larger portion of that four-mile trek.



Before I knew it, I was able to run the whole route with ease. To my surprise, instead of pain and loathing, I felt excited for my morning run.

Adding a variety of calisthenics and strength training following my run each day, including the dreaded pushup, I was gripped by the mounting strength and endurance I began to feel in my body. By the end of summer, I was in the best shape of my life.

My efforts were much rewarded. Not only did I have no issue keeping up with the rest of the cadets, I led them. I was the only freshman to score well above the maximum 300 points on the Army Physical Fitness Test, clocked my two-mile run at 12:20 and could perform more pushups than many of the males.

Recalling this journey toward athleticism, I gleaned inspiration for my present journey toward positivity. Formulating and adopting a list of behaviors I envisioned a genuinely positive person performing, many of those behaviors have become well-ingrained.

Now, each day when I get ready for work, I verbalize things I'm grateful for. In stressful situations where it seems everything is going wrong, I focus on just one thing that is going right. I deliberately look for one opportunity every day to express kindness, appreciation or a compliment to another.

Just as I slowly grew in physical strength and endurance all those years back, I'm slowly morphing into a more positive person. While I still have a long way to go, I know genuine change is already underway. All it took was that first small step in the right direction.

Is there an area of your own life you've been longing to change? Take that first step today. JL

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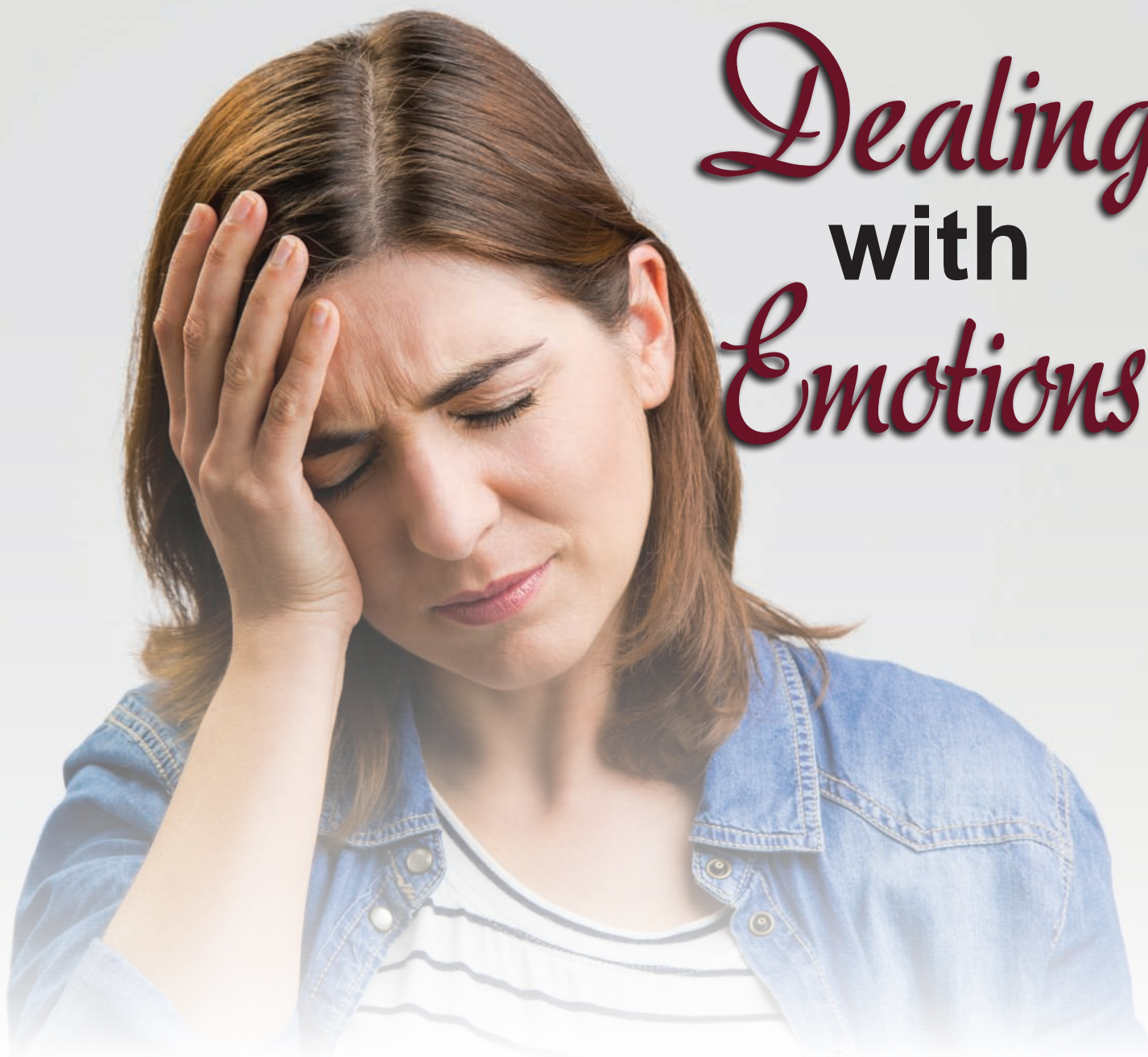
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# Dealing with Emotions



BY LAURIE GLASS

**Laurie Glass** has a Master's Degree in Christian Counseling. She has been through a number of difficulties in her life. As a result, she has a heart for encouraging others through her writing. Laurie has had many poems and articles published in both print and online publications.

**W**hat do you do with your emotions? Have you found some healthy outlets, or do you bury your feelings? Perhaps you never

learned healthy ways to process your emotions, but you can learn now. Below you'll find insights to help you examine, and perhaps adjust, your perspective about emotions as well as tips to help you express your feelings.

## Perspective about Emotions

Consider your attitude about emotions, such as they're irrelevant, scary, make you weak, or should be buried. These are some common perspectives. But if you change these beliefs, you can step toward healthy ways to deal with your feelings.

1. Realize that emotions don't make you weak; they make you human. It's okay to feel.
2. Remember that when you shut off your emotions, you not only suppress negative feelings, but you also deny yourself



positive ones. So, as you release the anguish, you might notice positive emotions begin to seep in.

3. Recognize that if you bury painful feelings, it's like sealing in the hurt. Even though it may be painful to release your feelings, letting them out will eventually diminish them and their effects on you. Think of it as a path to healing. It may seem like a lot of effort to learn to deal with your emotions, but it also takes a lot of work to keep your feelings buried. When it comes to emotions, it's better out than in.
4. Keep in mind that having negative emotions doesn't make you a bad person. Instead of feeling guilty or berating yourself over what you feel, accept these gut reactions and release them. Whatever you feel isn't a matter of right or wrong. It's a matter of learning what to do with your emotions.
5. Understand that you don't have to be afraid of feelings. They can feel more and more frightening the longer you keep them inside. In time, however, you can learn to manage your emotions so they don't feel as scary anymore.

Allow yourself to feel, and be honest and patient with yourself. It may take time to adjust your perspective about emotions, and that's okay. Do your best, and then explore some different ways you can release your feelings instead of stuffing them or numbing them.

### Tips to Express Emotions

There are several ways you can express your emotions, and some are more direct than others. Even if you aren't sure about some of the suggestions below, perhaps reviewing them will help you think of your own ideas. You may find it helpful to have different ways to release different emotions.

1. Write in a journal. Choose an emotion you often feel, describe it, and explore the thoughts or events that evoked it.
2. Learn how to identify your feelings. Make a list of emotions, and then review it to see what resonates with you.
3. Find a poem or song that describes how you feel. Reflect on it and use some of its words to write about how you feel.
4. Compose stories, essays, poems, songs, or prayers. Draw, color, paint, sculpt, sew, do a craft project, or something else creative.
5. Sing or play an instrument.
6. Tear up old magazines or other paper.
7. Write down something you're upset about. Then, scratch it out or tear it up.
8. Talk to someone you trust, and describe what you feel. Tell this person you aren't looking for advice, but for a sounding board so you can talk through your feelings.
9. Do something physical like scrub the floor or mow the yard. Take a walk or engage in other outdoor activities such as gardening, hiking, or exploring.
10. Let yourself feel the good feelings. Smile and laugh. Raise your hands, clap, or jump up and down.

Choose one idea and see if it's suitable for you. Try something else another day. If it feels like too much, take a break, pray, and discuss things with a counselor or someone else you trust. You don't have to navigate this process alone. And remember this: once you've learned healthy ways to express your emotions, keep your heart open, and then embrace the peace and joy that comes. JL

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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 [emily@renewedhopeparenting.com](mailto:emily@renewedhopeparenting.com)

## Importance of Instilling an **ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE** in Our Kids

**W**e see it all the time. Being thankful or expressing gratitude for the good things in our life is good for us. We heard it from our grandparents, and now we see it from researchers and scientists. It's all so true. Gratitude and thankfulness are good for us. Not only for us, but we can instill this attitude of gratitude in our kids to help them.

A habitual practice of expressing gratitude or constantly paying attention to what we have to be thankful for can wire our brains in a more positive way. Expressing gratitude can help our brains release the oxytocin, dopamine, and serotonin (the so-called “happy

hormones”), all important for mental health and happiness.

This long-term practice has been shown to have many positive health benefits, from better **sleep**, to **stress reduction**, to the ability to **overcome challenges**, to healthier **relationships**, to more **contentment**. Researchers have also found that gratitude can lead to better physical and mental health.

Researchers have also found that gratitude can lead to better physical and mental health.

When we are thankful for those we share our lives with, we greatly enhance our relationships. Thankful people also often have a higher **self-worth** and can appreciate their own and other's accomplishments. People can increase their **happiness** and reduce symptoms of depression.



(Gratitude alone is not enough to treat depression. Please seek support from a therapist or medical doctor if you or your child are dealing with depression.)

Helping our kids make this part of their daily routine can help instill this important attitude. It can become part of their mindset. Making it part of our daily conversations makes it become real. I think most parents want their kids to be happy and content. Helping them create a habit of gratitude can help with this goal.

### Kids who express gratitude typically:

- Have a high self-worth
- Feel more positive emotions
- Have the mindset of optimism
- Have a growth mindset
- Can overcome challenges
- Have stronger social skills
- Can have empathy for others
- Can foster relationships
- Are kind
- Sleep well
- Are mentally and physical healthy
- Can find the “silver-lining” in hard situations

### Real Life Example:

You wouldn't think it would be easy to have an attitude of gratitude when bad things happen. When our family lost our home in a California wildfire, we quite literally had nothing. We were homeless, with no toys or clothes or any of our sentimental things. It was true devastation. But in the midst of all that, we found reasons to be thankful. Even as small as a friend stopping by the hotel room we lived in for two weeks, with mac-n-cheese for our toddler. Or another friend stopping by with new coloring books. And then bigger things, like watching our home be rebuilt. It was all about perspective and how to choose to look at the situation. Finding something good in hard times can be really hard, and there are times we can't find anything good while struggling through a hard time. Fostering resilience in ourselves and our kids can help us get through these difficult times.

### Putting it into Practice:

So, how can we make this a habit in our families? Here are some ideas. If you already do something, we'd love to hear what it is!

- Share Bedtime/Dinnertime Daily Highs and Lows of the day (the good parts and the bad parts)
- Find the good in the bad. Try to find something good that came from a hard time.
- Journal daily blessings, good things.
- List 5 things you are thankful for each day.
- Thankful photo book. Make a photo album with pictures of various people or things you are thankful for.
- List one big thing you are thankful for, and one small thing. This helps us see that even small things are reasons to be thankful.
- Make a habit of telling others you are thankful for them. Send them notes. Leave lunchbox notes. Expressing gratitude for someone else to that person as even more added benefits.
- In the morning, tell yourself what you will do today. In the evening, remind yourself of everything you got done.
- The key is finding what works for you and your family. JL

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# Lamb Butternut Stew



BY SUSAN U. NEAL  
RN, MBA, MHS

Susan U. Neal, RN, MBA, MHS, is an author, speaker, and certified health and wellness coach whose background in nursing and health services led her to seek new ways to educate and coach others to overcome health challenges. Check out her award-winning best-seller *7 Steps to Get Off Sugar and Carbohydrates* at [SusanUNeal.com](http://SusanUNeal.com).



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## LAMB BUTTERNUT STEW

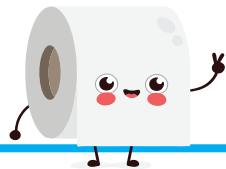
(Makes 6 servings)

<p>2 pounds lamb cubed (or substitute beef) 2 tablespoons olive oil 1 onion, chopped 2 cups water 1 small butternut squash, cubed 2-inch piece of ginger, peeled and minced 4 cloves garlic, minced 1 bay leaf 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon 1/2 teaspoon salt 2 firm pears, chopped 2 cups kale, chopped</p>	<p>Peel and chop butternut squash. Chop onion. Peel and mince ginger. Brown the meat in oil and remove it from the pan. Add the onions and cook for five minutes on medium heat. Add the minced ginger and garlic and cook for two minutes. Add broth, butternut squash, and bay leaf. Simmer for 15 minutes. Add the chopped pears, kale, and cooked lamb. Simmer for 10 more minutes. Remove the bay leaf and serve in bowls. JL</p>
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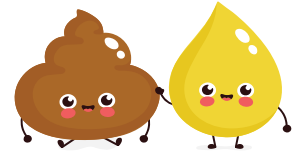


# All Clogged Up!

Help! The Triple Threat Gang got into the City of Redding's Sewer system and clogged up all the pipes. Can you help TP reach the exit below by checking off each of the 3 clogs in the maze?

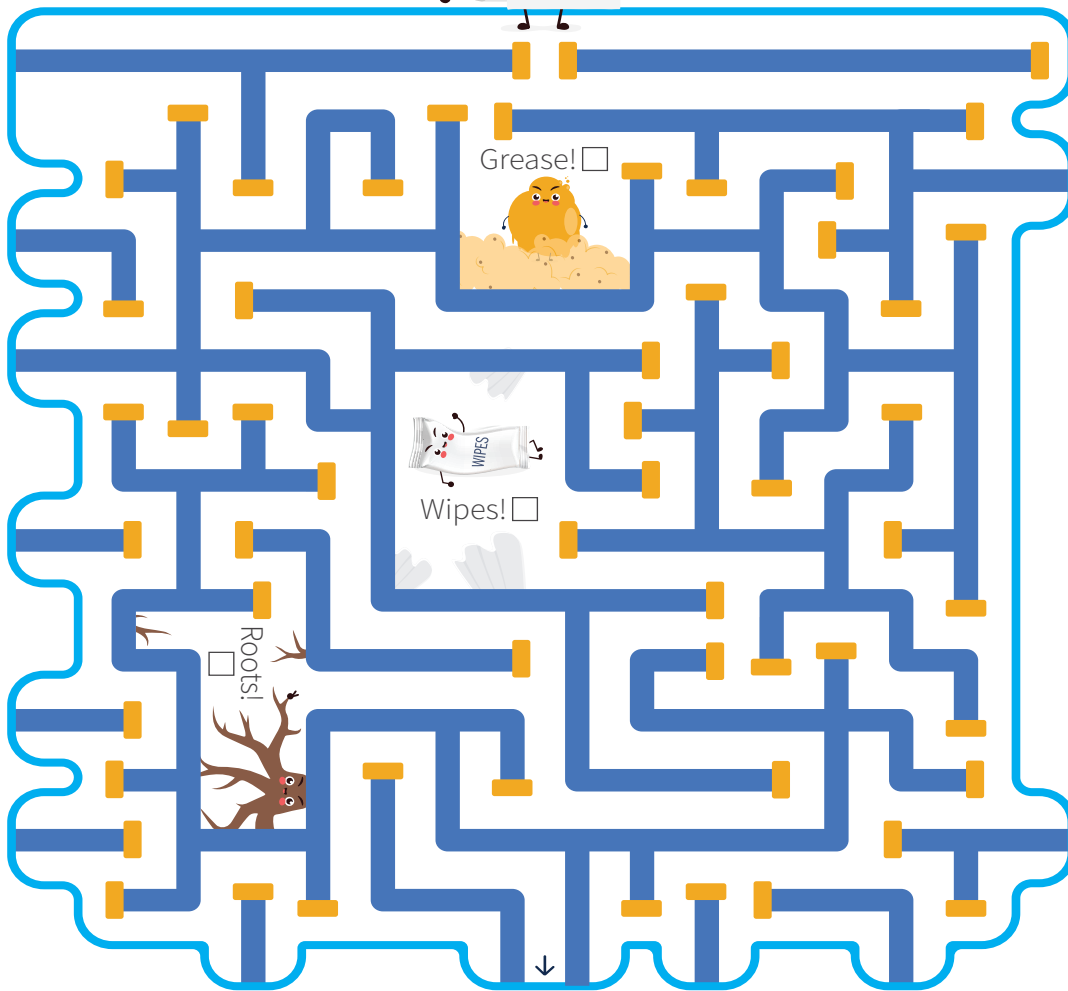


**Start here!**



Can you find these words in the grid below?

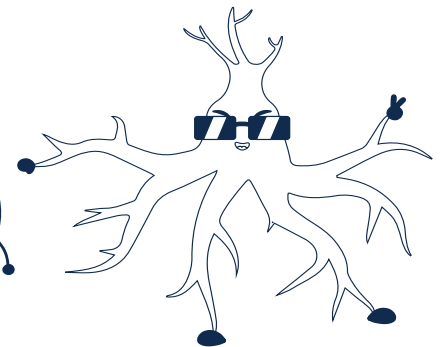
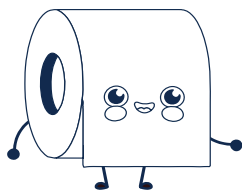
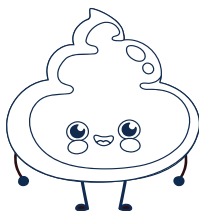
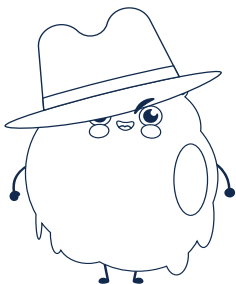
- CLOG**
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- GREASE**
- PIPES**
- ROOTS**
- SINK**
- WIPES**



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F R L T W L K P T Z D P  
W U O X I Q H I J S R D  
F Y G E P S P P D O A O  
S R S F E J A E J S I B  
R O O T S F P S F P N U  
F F L U S H L U A V B J

## Imposter!

The Triple Threat Gang is hiding in the group below. Identify the Flushable Friends by coloring them in. Call out the imposters by crossing them out!



# "What's CRITICAL About Critical Race Theory?"

Dear Dr. Carol,

Recently, I've been hearing a lot about Critical Race Theory (CRT) being taught in our schools. Can you tell me what it is and why parents are speaking out against it?

J.R.

What a timely topic to explore as we kick off the new school year! I, too, was wondering what this was, and did some digging into the origin. Critical race theory, at its heart, is an approach that seeks to assure that systems do not have racist policies in place. The term emerged in the 1970's and 80's to examine whether the policies of institutions and organizations contained racist practices in spite of many civil rights laws having been passed to prevent them.

This seems like a good thing to do, right? But is this what is being taught in schools? For help in that arena, I went to Mike Freeman, assistant superintendent at the Shasta County Office of Education. In his words, "CRT is not a written curriculum. It is a theory that says we need to examine our unconscious biases and be aware when we do something, even though it's not intentional, that has racist implications." He stressed that people are not racist, but policies often are.

As so often happens, an idea that starts out to be fair and uncover wrongs sometimes turns into something that does not resemble the original. Rather than teaching students an understanding of our history, some teachers have turned it into a criticism of America and its "racist beginnings". When you hear that bills have been signed to prevent the teaching of CRT, it means that legislation is being enacted to determine how current events and the American history of racism can be taught.

As a parent, how can you find out what is being taught in your

child's school? Number one: GET INVOLVED. Some ideas for how to do that might be:

- Attend back-to-school night and ask specific questions.
- Question specifically how this teacher teaches the history of racism in America.
- Apply for a position on your local school board.
- Don't confuse efforts of inclusion with CRT.
- Teach what your beliefs are at home.

- Don't be afraid of looking at and addressing different viewpoints – this creates healthy critical thinking.
- Question your children about what they are learning in this area at school.
- If something sounds divisive, question it without confrontation, but with the motive of seeking truth.
- Let your children know that if a teacher ever cautions them not to tell their parents, that's when they really need to tell you.

We live in a blessed nation. Can we look at our history, learn from it, and move forward in a way that honors sacrifices that have been made and march toward a more perfect union? We want to be aware of our biases.....without changing history.

(I'd love to hear of your experiences with this topic. Please write to me at [carolbwertz@gmail.com](mailto:carolbwertz@gmail.com)) JL



BY DR. CAROL WERTZ

Associate Professor at Simpson University with over 35 years in education and experience in teaching pre-K through adult, Carol has developed a wealth of experience and is ready for a new challenge in answering your educational questions. Please contact her at [carolbwertz@gmail.com](mailto:carolbwertz@gmail.com)







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# How to Host a *PROGRESSIVE* Party



BY SARAH WIND

**H**ave you been craving more social interaction? A fun idea to liven up your life and your friends' and neighbors' lives is to host a progressive party!

You may be wondering what a progressive party is. Years ago these types of parties were popular, so you may or may not have had the pleasure of experiencing one. A progressive party is one where a number of people essentially host mini-parties

in their homes and the group moves from house to house. These parties can be neighborhood or apartment complex specific, or planned with friends spread throughout the city.

They can be big or small, but you probably don't want to invite 100 people unless the hosts have enough space for that many guests. Big parties could look like entire families who both host and go from house to house, or friend groups where there are more people

than there are hosts. If you've got a handful of single neighbors, you can have a small party and all be hosts.

Typically, each host serves a different type of food and beverage than the others. The party could be a progressive meal where the salad, soup, and appetizers are served in the beginning, and the main dish and desserts are served later. Or every host could serve food and beverages in keeping with a theme. Hosts could also be given the freedom to serve whatever they want.

This type of event needs an organizer to send out invitations and communicate with the hosts beforehand. If you're not the best at planning parties, perhaps you can persuade a friend or neighbor to help so it won't be all on your shoulders.

The first step is to pick a date, time, and theme for the party. Then find out who'd like to host.

After you have folks that have agreed to host, send out invitations (printed or electronic) to the guests. Include your contact info and ask people to RSVP by a certain date. Also ask if they have food allergies or dietary restrictions so you can let the hosts know what not to serve.

Once you hear back from everyone

To keep the conversation flowing, have discussion questions ready.



you invited, let the hosts know how many guests they can expect. At that point you can also select the sequence of homes for the party and let everyone know where the starting point will be.

Depending on how many hosts will be participating and how long you want the party to last, decide how much time to spend at each home. Setting a timer will let everyone know that it is time to move on (and alleviate someone from needing to watch the clock).

To keep the conversation flowing, have discussion questions ready. Hosts can buy or make question cards, or buy cocktail napkins that have conversation starters printed on them. Guests can take turns asking questions and everyone can answer.

Don't forget to document the event by taking a few group photos! The progressive party organizer can either send them out to guests electronically or print photo collages of the evening along with a personal "thank you for participating" note.

I planned a progressive party once for my neighbors shortly after I moved into a new place, and it was a lot of fun. It actually helped mend some of the

relationships between my neighbors, which were strained for various reasons. It was wonderful to see love and understanding transpire in their hearts simply through spending time together in each other's homes and engaging in conversation. Reconciliation wasn't part of my grand scheme for the party, but it was a beautiful outcome.

No doubt everyone who joins your party will have a great time and be grateful for the effort you put into organizing it. There might even be a beautiful story that comes from it, or at the very least, meaningful connections made. **JL**



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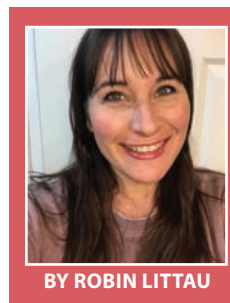
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A real estate advertisement for Sarah Wind. On the left, there is a circular portrait of Sarah Wind, a woman with dark hair, wearing a blue blazer over a black top. She is smiling. To the left of the portrait, the text 'DRE #02052816' is written vertically. Below the portrait is the 'venture PROPERTIES' logo, which consists of a blue stylized 'V' shape above the word 'venture' and 'PROPERTIES' below it. To the right of the portrait, the text 'Thinking about a new home?' is written in a large, white, serif font. Below this, the text 'Contact me today to start the search.' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom right, the text 'Sarah Wind REALTOR® 530.999.1592' is written in a white, sans-serif font. The background of the advertisement is a blurred image of a staircase with a wooden railing.



# Wardrobe of *Character*



**E**very morning, we wake up and choose what we'll wear from a selection of colorful, abundant options. I personally pair clothes together for a simple grab and go while my brain is still waking up. My closet is organized, and I purge it sporadically tossing anything I don't need, want, or use. We spend plenty of our life "time" assembling, purchasing, washing, folding, organizing, and replacing our wardrobes.

I cannot control the choices of others, but I can take full ownership of my responses in any circumstance.



When we naturally invest ample time into our external appearance, our internal character should be the focal point of our beauty. It often takes the back seat, but I'm calling it to the front and center of our day. Character growth opens the door to our best available options by propelling us into the next levels of greatness.

We are each influential individuals who can ignite a fire of inspiration through our life's example. In such a vital season of global change, we've become more aware of what we can control and what we cannot. I cannot control the choices of others, but I can take full ownership of my responses in any circumstance. I often tell my family "My response is my responsibility!" The hardest question I've ever chosen to ask them is: "What's it like to live with me?"

Who are we being in the eyes of those around us? What kind of character wardrobe are we choosing to wear? Are the colors of our facial expressions dark, neutral, light, or bright? Do we let others see the vulnerable beauty in us or do we keep ourselves unknown with isolated expressions? around us!

Step with me into an imaginary shopping trip! Let's find some beautiful replacement outfits to wear and purge traits that don't fit within our best choices. Here you are living in today! Happiness is an inside job! Be the most beautiful you! Tomorrow repeat:

1. The kindness Isle. In this Isle you'll find thousands of ideas toward brightening someone else's day. You could bring someone coffee, take them to lunch, write a note of appreciation for who they are to you. This would certainly start the day out right!
2. The listening Isle. In this isle you'll find two ears and one mouth. Two ears placed together make a heart! It's so simple (yet challenging) to just focus on listening agenda & device free. Connection is created with your attentive presence (which is a great gift to give!)
3. The helpful isle. This Isle has a powerful loving impact when another's burden is too heavy. We can come along side someone and meet legitimate needs. We can offer to help with yard work/cleaning, bring them a meal, purchase a gift card, or offer a family childcare.
4. The manners isle. This is the bedazzle Isle! Those most important to me should be receiving my best version. Speaking with respect, value and

honor make an ENORMOUS difference. It might be the main ingredient to a wonderful day!

5. The encouraging isle. This is the isle where you'll find more yes answers than no's and more I can's than I cants. It's the garment of hope and vision to see past potential setbacks. A simple hug on an exhausting day can lighten a heart. Encouragement is lending your courage to another, so if you've got it, share! **JL**

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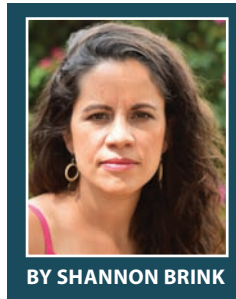
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BY SHANNON BRINK

A large, high-quality photograph of a woman's back and waist. She is wearing blue denim jeans that are slightly pulled down at the waist. Her right hand is resting on the waistband of the jeans. The background is plain white.

# Real CONVERSATIONS: Body Image Battles

## REAL CONVERSATIONS

Sometimes it feels like we are fighting our battles alone. It's easy to feel isolated, especially during this strange pandemic.

I know so many amazing women, who are in the middle of ongoing hardship, and they continue to show up and they are learning incredible lessons in the midst of their trials.

Throughout the next few weeks, I will be interviewing some of these women and sharing their stories in the hopes that it

can provide encouragement to those of you who are walking similar paths. You'll be able to listen in on these conversations and/or follow along with my blog posts after each interview to hear about their personal journeys and glean some of their wisdom.

### **I dare you to NOT be encouraged!**

In this first episode, I interview my friend Lael. Recently she has been on a journey to greater health and wellness which has meant not just weight loss, but addressing her underlying guilt and shame related to food.

## BODY IMAGE BATTLES

So often, as women, we desire to lose weight and make better food choices, but can get stuck. Maybe you've tried differ-



ent things and have not succeeded.

I am in a journey myself with this very issue and it can be hard to keep taking steps in the same direction and not give up when we don't see the results we want right away.

We want to avoid the struggle of an endurance game of dealing with the emotional and spiritual side of our habits and want the fast lane. We address our behaviors without addressing our thought life. But when we bypass the hard work, we find that we yo-yo back and forth between short-lived success and disappointment and failure. Relate?

But how do we make healthier choices without becoming obsessed, how do we have balance with wise decisions but allowances for life and bad days and failures? How do we deal with the mental battle underneath? How do we give ourselves grace for the journey?

### TIPS FOR WEIGHT LOSS AND FOOD HABITS

Some of the key points we talked about regarding weight loss and food habits:

1. Know what your why is. If the why behind your weight loss is fear and shame, it will only be motivating for so long.
2. It's not all or nothing. There can be balance. You can be gentle with yourself and gracious for where you are at, while still moving forward towards a healthier goal.
3. What you speak to yourself, matters. The thoughts you allow to rattle about in your head will affect how you behave without you even being aware.
4. Be intentional about finding people that can support you.

### GETTING 'UNSTUCK' ON YOUR BODY IMAGE JOURNEY

If you are on a weight loss journey and have found some of these truths to be helpful, or others along the way, let me know! What has helped you with the long-suffering journey of weight loss? Or transforming your mind with truths about who you are and what gives you value?

And for those of you who are stuck and trying to become unstuck with this issue (as I find myself right now), here are some questions to help you get unstuck:

- What are some of my wins lately? Am I celebrating the good choices I AM making instead of focusing on shaming myself for the bad ones?
- What IS my thought life like? Am I even aware? Should I seek counseling to become more aware?
- Where do I feel caught in guilt and shame? Is that cycle serving my goals?
- What thought patterns am I having that are not helpful?
- What does it mean to ME to be a good steward with my body? How can I focus on that instead of a number on a scale?
- What does it mean to be a good steward of my thoughts?

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

#### PODCASTS:

- Weight Loss For Nurse Practitioners with Lauren Shannon
- Weight Loss for Busy Physicians by Katrina Ubell

#### BOOKS:

- The Obesity Code by Jason Fung
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# It's a Matter of Trust



**DEBORAH KOEPPEN**

Deborah has a heart for bringing hope and encouragement to others through her own life experiences. Retired from Shasta County Social Services, she now enjoys writing, hiking and kayaking with her husband, and spending time with her family.



mind that she will land safely in her dad's arms. And the anticipation and delight on my son-in-law's face reflect that he would never disappoint her. And that is the kind of father he is.

Who in your life do you trust? That person, or select few, that you can truly be yourself with? The one with whom you can share your weaknesses, your frustrations and your struggles, as well as your victories and dreams, and know they love you unconditionally? We all need these kinds of relationships in our lives. Those that stand by us in the good times and bad.

One of the most beautiful illustrations of trust I've ever seen is exemplified in the picture on this page. My daughter captured this moment of my granddaughter leaping into the arms of her dad. She leapt off the ledge she was standing on without a care or thought. Her body language and the reckless abandon that's pictured on her face radiates absolute trust. There is clearly no doubt in her

In the book "Safe People" (How to Find Relationships That Are Good for You and Avoid Those That Aren't) by Drs. Cloud and Townsend, the authors describe the characteristics of trustworthy people, as well as those that are not. Trustworthy, or 'safe' people, as the authors refer to them, are able

Remember that trust is earned, and takes time to develop based on someone's actions and conduct over time. This is key.... give it time.

to connect with others. They tell the truth and welcome the truth told to them. They are open to feedback, invite us to be ourselves, and are accepting of us. Unsafe people, on the other hand, are often critical, irresponsible, and unable to keep relationships. They often are unwilling to admit their weak-



nesses, and become defensive to feedback. They lack humility, and may apologize but yet never change their behavior. It's important to know these characteristics and what to look for when developing relationships.

Years ago, after a painful and heartbreaking experience in my own life, I realized how important it was for me to learn to recognize the qualities of people I could trust. While learning the process of developing safe and healthy relationships again, I was reminded of how years before, my family had rented a U-Haul truck to move across the state. These trucks are equipped with a safety device called a governor, or regulator, that is designed to limit the speed of the vehicle. It's an important safety feature that prevents the engine from going too fast, keeping the vehicle at a safe speed. I saw this as a great illustration of how we should guard ourselves in developing new relationships, and extending trust to others. Move slowly and don't rush the process. Go at a safe speed and extend trust to another when it's warranted. Give it time. We're never required to trust a person because they say we should. Remember that trust is earned, and takes time to develop based on

someone's actions and conduct over time. This is key.... give it time. So many pitfalls could be avoided by not rushing this important process.

All good relationships are based on trust. As we learn to recognize the traits of safe people, and surround ourselves with these types of relationships, our lives will be greatly enriched.

And the more we learn to be a safe person ourselves, and grow and mature in these qualities, the more we will attract these kinds of emotionally healthy people in our lives. JL

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# Her Middle Name is *Joy!!!*

**L**aughter and joy followed Christina wherever she traveled. She had the ability to chase dark clouds of life away with a glancing smile or a thunderous chuckle. It was easy to distinguish Christina's laugh from those of others. Her laugh was both boisterous and contagious. Whenever Christina laughed you could not help but smile. My beloved wife and I met Christina while chaperoning a group of high school students touring France.

Throughout the trip Christina's laughter kept the group smiling and light hearted. I was waiting for the right opportunity to tell Christina how much her joy made the trip abroad so memorable. The chance occurred as the group was taking pictures of an amazing field of flowers. The flowers were blooming and bursting with vibrant color. We had finally had our fill of picture taking and were now walking back to the bus. Christina was nearby and the opportunity to chat with her unfolded. As we walked I shared with her freely how much my wife and I appreciated the joy she brought to the trip. Her face lit up and, of course, she smiled from ear to ear.

Her reply to my observation left me speechless. Christina shared that before she was born her mom had a miscarriage. The miscarriage left Christina's mom broken and depressed. This went on for some time before her mom was encour-



aged profoundly by women at the church where they attended. Our Lord God used their words to heal Christina's mom's grieving soul. After some time had passed, GREAT NEWS! Christina's mom was pregnant again. This time her mom was blessed with a healthy and happy baby girl. The family was so overjoyed by the birth of this very special baby girl that they had to include the word JOY in her name. As she ended the story we were now both smiling ear to ear. So where does the source of Christina's deep and plentiful joy come from? The answer does not take long for those that know Christina. The joy that manifests itself so vibrantly from Christina's life comes from God. The relationship that Christina has with our heavenly Father brings her such an abundance of joy that it overflows to those that come in contact with her. May this weary and discouraged world in which we live be encouraged and energized as we share the Joy of Our Lord. JL



ED TOOLEY

Edward Tooley has had numerous articles published about education, adolescence, parenting, creation, and Christian Living. His work has also been featured in the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series.

Edward's first book for children, *Rounding Third and Headed for Home*, is written in rhyme and is based on a true story of perseverance.

Edward's second book for children was just released and is a fictional account based on a true story of hope and a miracle. *The Lighthouse/El Faro* is a dual language book - both English and Spanish on the same page.



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