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Even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

PSALM 139:10



The Art & Science of Mothering

Raising children inspires and draws out the artist and scientist in moms

Moms are some of the world's most resourceful people. Consider Yamile Jackson. When her son, Zachary, was born 12 weeks prematurely, she invented "The Zaky," a pair of hand-shaped pillows that could cradle and comfort her fragile son when she was absent from the NICU. Yamile's creative idea was sparked by her son's need and perfected by her own persistent research and testing.

Yamile calls Zachary, now 8 years old, her Chief Inspirational Officer. Raising children inspires and draws out the artist and scientist in moms. As we shape our kids and the world around them, we are among the most creative, resourceful people on the planet. We have to be. Just as Yamile discovered in the NICU, our children look to us for love and comfort. They're also looking to us for breakfast, lunch and discipline. Well, maybe they're not looking for discipline, but moms know how important that is to throw into the daily mix.

Moms are artists, composing lullabies for colicky babies, making up word games on a long car trip and intuitively encouraging a preschooler to tell his imaginary friend about a sad experience. And with an old sheet, markers and masking tape, moms can turn a dishwasher box into a race car.

What happens when her kids fight over the race car? I remember testing an idea in which my kids switched off having "first turn" days. When my first test didn't work so well, I added writing names on the family calendar. That solution brought relative peace for several years. Moms are scientists, too. When faced with a mothering challenge, we ask questions, research possible solutions, create a hypothesis and test to see if it will work.

In one naptime, a mom can ask friends on Facebook about biting and research solutions on her favorite website, and then test a biting deterrent in the afternoon. Art and science. Although some moms may rely more on one than the other, mothering is most often a complex mix of both. It's an ongoing, hands-on, creative learning experience, best done in the company of others—family, peers and mentors. Michelangelo couldn't have painted the Sistine Chapel without assis-tants. Marie Curie worked alongside her husband and another scientist in her Nobel prize-winning study of spontaneous radiation. An authentic community provides space for experimentation, spurs creativity and encourages moms to persevere. When asked what advice she'd offer other moms try-ing to develop innovative ideas, Yamile Jackson said, "First, follow your heart and be passionate about what you're doing. Then, do your homework. Prepare, prepare, prepare and test before presenting a product to market. Learn about the process of developing a product, and don't cut corners."

As together we learn to be better moms, we need to be artists, passionately following our hearts. And scientists, researching and testing, doing our homework as we invest daily in our kids. Shaping great kids is too important for cutting corners.

Shelly Radic is the Interim CEO at MOPS International and lives in Colorado with her husband and their four children. She wrote the 2010-2011 MOPS theme book, "Momology: A Mom's Guide to Shaping Great Kids"

God's Cake

Sometimes we wonder, "What did I do to deserve this?" or "Why did God have to do this to me?" Here is a wonderful explanation! A daughter is telling her Mother how everything is going wrong, she's failing algebra, her boyfriend broke up with her and her best friend is moving away.

Meanwhile, her Mother is baking a cake and asks her daughter if she would like a snack, and the daughter says, "Absolutely Mom, I love your cake." "Here, have some cooking oil," her Mother offers. "Yuck" says her daughter. "How about a couple raw eggs?" "Gross, Mom!" "Would you like some flour then? Or maybe baking soda?" "Mom, those are all yucky!"

To which the mother replies: "Yes, all those things seem bad all by themselves. But when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake! "

God works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they always work for good! We just have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful!

God is crazy about you. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning.

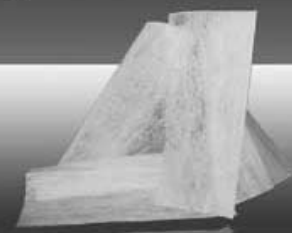
Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart.



A Moment of Science

Extraordinary Uses for Ordinary Household Items

Dryer Sheets



- 1. Deodorize shoes**
Tuck a dryer sheet into smelly sneakers or shoes (gym bags and suitcases, too!) overnight to eliminate odors.
- 2. Clean stuck-on gunk**
Put a fresh sheet in a pan with baked-on food and fill with water. Let sit for a few hours and the food will easily wipe away.
- 3. Freshen up the shower**
Rub shower doors and walls with a wet sheet to remove mineral deposits and soap scum.
- 4. Ease sewing**
Run a threaded needle through a sheet before sewing; it helps keep thread from tangling.
- 5. Tame hair**
Calm static electricity and Einstein-esque flyaways by quickly running a dryer sheet over unruly hair.

Hair Dryer



- 1. Remove crayon marks or wax spills**
Blow-dry the stain on high heat until the wax melts, then wipe it up with a sponge.
- 2. "Iron" out plastic tablecloth or shower curtain**
Hot air on plastic relaxes pesky wrinkles. Be sure to hold dryer 12" away.
- 3. Set frosting or icing**
Want your cake or cookies to look perfect? Cool air helps harden icing; hot air brightens a dull glaze.
- 4. Unstick a photo**
Blow warm air on the back of the photo album page while working the photo on the other side free.
- 5. Dust hard-to-reach places**
Point a dryer set on cool at those shelves and corners, and blow the dust right off.



5 Key Phrases to Keep Love Alive

by Laurie Puhn, J.D. of "Fight Less, Love More"

Today's busy multi-tasking couples have little time to invest in their relationship. You can keep the connection strong with 5-minute conversations and simple comments that show you care. You don't need lots of quality time together. In fact, you and your partner don't need to talk more, you simply need to learn to talk better. Below are 5 key phrases that will instantly ignite a loving bond.

1. Key phrase #1: "You are such a generous person"

Many people compliment the superficial things in others: "You look great in that dress" or "I love your new haircut." External compliments are nice, but research shows that people prefer compliments for internal character traits such: "You're such a kind, helpful or thoughtful person." In the on-line survey we did for my new book Fight Less, Love More, we found that 84% of people want their mate to compliment them for being kind rather than good-looking.

2. Key phrase #2: "I never thought of it that way"

Want to put a smile on your mate's face? That's simple: After your mate has explained his/her viewpoint on anything from a current event to your child's behavior, ponder the comment and say, "I never thought of it that way." It's the respectful way to say that their opinion matters to you (even if you don't agree with him or her). Once someone senses that you respect their ideas, they are more likely to listen to and respect yours.

3. Key phrase #3: "Good night"

In our on-line study we found that 25% of the couples surveyed don't bother to say "good night" to their partner. Fact: Of those who forget to say goodnight, 70% thought about ending the relationship in the last year. If you and your mate aren't going to sleep at the same time, make it a habit to find your partner before you retire and say two caring words: "good night". And why not add on "I love you"?

4. Key phrase #4: "Thank you for ____"

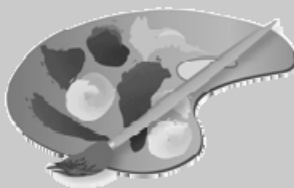
Each day find something to thank your mate for. If you have trouble finding something, ask yourself, "what did he/she do today that I didn't have to do?" Answers could be: take out the garbage, help your child with homework, pick up a pizza, etc. When your mate does something you expect him/her to do, it's still worthy of appreciation.

5. Key phrase #5: "How did it go?"

A little bit of remembering shows a lot of love. If you know your mate has an important meeting, doctor appointment, etc., be sure to follow up with your partner. Call, email or text, "how did it go?" This sends a clear message: I care about you.

The values we hold dear to us: respect, appreciation, compassion, loyalty and companionship are fostered or destroyed every day by our word choices and actions. If you use these 5 key phrases you'll see a quick improvement in your relationship.

Laurie Puhn, JD, author of *Fight Less, Love More: 5-Minute Conversations to Change Your Relationship without Blowing Up or Giving In* is a Harvard-educated family lawyer and couples mediator with a private practice in Manhattan.



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Kids in the Kitchen

Microwave snack Mix

Use a glass bowl when you zap this in the microwave. (Don't use a plastic bowl; we tried it, and the mixture got too hot and could possibly burn.)

Makes 13 cups

Ingredients

- 2 (1-oz.) envelopes Ranch dressing mix
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3 cups crisp oatmeal cereal squares
- 3 cups corn-and-rice cereal
- 3 cups crisp wheat cereal squares
- 2 cups pretzel sticks
- 1 cup dried cherries
- 1 cup candy-coated chocolate pieces

Preparation

1. Whisk together Ranch dressing mix and 1/2 cup vegetable oil in a large microwave-safe glass bowl. Stir in oatmeal cereal squares and next 3 ingredients.
2. Microwave mixture at HIGH 2 minutes, and stir well. Microwave at HIGH 2 more minutes, and stir well. Spread mixture in a single layer on wax paper, and let cool 30 minutes. Add cherries and candy pieces. Store in an airtight container up to 5 days.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Quaker Essentials Oatmeal Squares for crisp oatmeal cereal squares, Crispix for corn-and-rice cereal, and Wheat Chex for wheat cereal squares.

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Kid Craft Corner

Striped Bag Leaf Bouquet

This charming bag of leaves makes a wonderful centerpiece for any autumn get-together.

What you'll need:

- 1 brown paper lunch bag
- 1 cup rice
- Re-sealable zipper sandwich bag
- Fresh and silk leaves
- Twigs
- 3-4 green chenille stems, cut into fourths OR tape
- 2 feet twine
- Paint: yellow, brown, green
- Scissors

How to make it:

- Paint bag with wide green stripes. Let dry before painting other colors. When dry, add thin lines of yellow and brown. (See photo.)
- Place a leaf at the top of a twig and secure with a section of chenille stem. Repeat with several twigs and leaves, both fresh and silk. You can also use tape instead of chenille. (See photo.)
- Trim three inches off the top of the bag. Place rice inside sandwich bag, place bag of rice into the brown paper bag. (See photo.)
- Place twigs into the bag. If twigs are too tall (leaves should touch the top of the bag), snap bottoms of twigs to shorten. (See photo.)
- Wrap twine around the bag twice. Tighten the twine and adjust leaves and twigs as you tighten. Tie twine in a bow and trim the ends. (See photo.)

Tips:

- Using fresh leaves is a temporary thing. Try using dried fallen leaves for a more permanent arrangement.
- For an even simpler project, paint stripes with only one color.
- Instead of twine, use ribbon or yarn.



Get to Know Your MOPS Steering Team

In a Nutshell

1. Hello, my name is **Janell Kildow**.
2. My family consists of **my husband and I and two married children and 5 grandchildren**.
3. My hometown **Colorado Springs** and I really **like** it there because **it's close to the mountains**.
4. I always dreamed that someday I would **work in medical offices**, and that dream has **come** true.
5. Some things I like to do include **watching my grandchildren grow, traveling/vacations and gardening**.
6. There are many things I am good at and one of them is **listening**.
7. One thing I have accomplished is **to have faith in God and encourage others**.
8. If I could change one thing about myself it would be **my weight (or I would be taller)**.
9. I am really glad to be here right now because **I have so many interests**.
10. I would really like to get together with anyone who is interested in **walking and exercise and English Teas**.
11. The one thing I want to be remembered for is **being a Proverbs 31 Woman**.



1. Hello, my name is **Jennifer Arbuthnot**.
2. My family consists of **my husband Shawn, daughter Kayta, 9, and sons Landin, 5, and Carter, 2**.
3. My hometown is **Littleton**. and I really **love** it here because **it has always been home**.
4. I always dreamed that someday I would **own a nice home and be married with three kids**, and that dream has **partly come** true.
5. Some things I like to do include **flower gardening, working on cars and racing, camping, spending time with family and friends**.
6. There are many things I am good at and one of them is **cleaning house and being a mom**.
7. One thing I have accomplished is **running a business while being a stay at home mom**.
8. If I could change one thing about myself it would be **to be more organized**.
9. I am really glad to be here right now because **I love to relate to other moms and lend a helping hand when I can**.
10. I would really like to get together with anyone who is interested in **anything!**
11. The one thing I want to be remembered for is **being a loving and caring mom for my three kids**.

