

HAPPINESS HABITS FOR PARENTS

___ **SLEEP.** Really, really try to get enough. (Dim lights 30 min before bed. No devices in bed.)

___ **CONNECTION.** Before you jump out of bed, try **2 minutes** of connection...

- EYE CONTACT
- A TOUCH
- I LOVE YOU
- TODAY I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO...
- TODAY I COULD REALLY USE SUPPORT WITH...
- A GRATITUDE STATEMENT
- A HUG (and whatever else comes to mind...)

___ **A.M. WORKOUT.** If you “don’t have time,” do *something to get your heart rate up*: fast pushups, jumping jacks, crunches, a plank, etc. You can start with something small (<5 minutes) and work your way up to something that is reasonable for you.

___ **DANCE/SING** in the morning! It’s harder to be grumpy that way! (Usually)

___ **BE SILLY!** Make the kids (and/or each other) laugh hysterically!

___ **EAT BREAKFAST!** Duh. You already know why. So do it.

READ AND REMEMBER FOR THE DAY!!!

1. Find time for at least **1 MINDFUL MINUTE** of meditation. (Try working up to 20.)
2. Try **ONE RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS.**
3. Do something today that makes you feel a sense of accomplishment, high engagement, and/or **FLOW.**
4. Do something to build/maintain/repair those **POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS.** Call that friend. Send that email. Plan that lunch.
5. To yourself, each other *and* the kids, say “no” only when it really matters. Try asking yourself “why not?” **SAY “YES” AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE,** but it’s okay to qualify *sometimes.* “Yes! You can ___ when you...” “Yes, we can play a game together when we finish...” “Yes, and...”
6. **KEEP UP YOUR END OF THE BARGAIN** on chores and other obligations, but go easy on yourself and each other...and sometimes randomly do your partner’s/kids’ stuff. Why? *Because it feels good, makes everyone happy, and starts a giving cycle! As you’re doing it, try to allow gratitude to replace resentment. Yeah. I know. It’s hard, so do it when you can.*
7. Finally, **STOP YELLING!** (And yes, I see the irony here.) It’s not because you’re making your kids and/or your spouse unhappy, giving them PTSD, or even because those people will simply learn to ignore you and tune you out, putting them at greater risk if they’re ever really in mortal danger and need to pay attention. It’s because *you know you hate doing it,* and it makes you feel immature, out of control, and silly. So STOP. (Nobody’s perfect. **Just take a belly breath, check your automatic thoughts, and keep working on it.**)

This stuff comes from a number “happiness experts,” “relationship experts,” and from positive psychology research. There are too many here to credit, but I would check out Christine Carter, Martin Seligman, Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, John Gottman, and The Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley. Some of it is from my own brain. And that’s “good enough.”

- Jacqueline Hood, Ph.D.