

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2023



GGMG

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MOTHERS GROUP®

# HEALTHY MINDSET

magazine





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**Week 1**

Ooey Goey, Slimy and Sticky

Jun 5 - 9

**Week 2**

Transportation

Jun 12 - 16

**Week 3**

Edible Art

Jun 20 - 23

**Week 4**

Music & Dance Around the World

Jun 26 - 30

**Week 5**

Colorful Creations

Jul 3, 5 - 7

**Week 6**

Meaningful Community

Jul 10 - 14

**Week 7**

Animals, Animals

Jul 17 - 21

**Week 8**

Out of This World

Jul 24 - 28

**Week 9**

Let's Get Wet!

Jul 31 - Aug 4

**Week 10**

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Aug 7 - 11

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LETTER FROM  
THE EDITOR:

Step by Step

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is a Cole Valley resident and mom to three children, two cats, and one dog.

As a child, I loved lazily exploring the hills and streams of Vermont with my little brother and our dirt-caked friends. But I balked at my parents’ attempts to lead us on organized, more strenuous hikes, often on family vacations out West, in the heat, at altitude. “It’s healthy, you need the exercise!” they’d drill into me and my brother. I’d resist; they’d threaten punishments; I’d acquiesce. And the result was dozens of photos of a sullen child on Pikes Peak, or in Bryce Canyon, or at Zion National Park. It was another 20 years before I truly came to enjoy hiking on my own for its own benefits.

So far, my children have largely followed my own childhood path. My announcements of an imminent hike are met with Oscar-worthy death screams. I’ve tried to push less than my parents did, preferring to trick them into small hikes with some

“It’s slow going, and the summit isn’t guaranteed, but I’m loving every step of the path along the way.”

sort of payoff at the end, like a swing overlooking the ocean or a well-placed snack bar. I try to de-emphasize the fact that they’re exercising and instead use the walks as an opportunity to connect with them and get them to connect to the land around them. The complaints still outweigh these moments of connection, but I keep at it, one hike at a time, one foot in front of the other.

Our writers look at healthy habits from a variety of viewpoints in this issue. Tamara Sanderson examines our remote work hygiene, which grew quite sloppy for many of us during the pandemic, as work life began to seep into home life and threaten our well-being. She shares ideas on how to be your best worker self while maintaining healthy boundaries. H.B. Terrell questions our traditional markers of fitness, such as BMI, and posits that we exercise and move our bodies in a way that is joyful, meaningful, and ultimately sustainable. And we take another look at Catherine Symon’s discussion of sugar: the bad, the less bad, and the ways in which we can balance indulgence with healthy habits.

Recently, my third grader has started to ask to come hiking with me, without prompting, and without incentives. He tires easily and often makes me cut short my planned routes, often whining by the end, but I’m enjoying it, passing down the stories my friends have told me about the landscape in Marin, answering his questions about the trees, the plants, the animals scurrying across our paths. It’s slow going, and the summit isn’t guaranteed, but I’m loving every step of the path along the way.

Sonya Abrams

LETTER FROM  
THE BOARD:

Building Community Connections

By Connie Lin



Connie has now lived in San Francisco longer than anywhere else in the world. She’s relieved that her family’s home in Forest Hill Extension survived the atmospheric rains and hail storms this winter.

GGMG hosts ongoing get togethers for moms in communities across San Francisco, including Glen Park, the Sunset, Noe Valley, and more (check them out at [ggmg.org/calendar](https://ggmg.org/calendar)). You can meet other moms over dinner, happy hour, or a coffee and stroller walk. Take a break and let your kids play at our ongoing afternoon playdate at Little Oceanauts on the third Friday of each month or in the morning on the second Sunday of each month. And keep an eye out for future webinars on how to be the best YOU, like the one we hosted with Leslie Forde on February 2 about how to manage burnout and achieve the life you want to live.

When we think about health and wellness, it’s usually in the context of having a healthy diet, exercising, and getting enough sleep. Taking care of our own physical and mental health is critical to give us the energy and stamina to be able to take care of our families, build our careers, and more. But beyond looking internally and setting up good habits, meeting new people and fostering friendships can enable us to be better balanced by making us feel heard and seen. This is where GGMG loves to help.

Another key benefit of GGMG is our exclusive GGMG discounts. For example, take advantage of our partnership with the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco (JCCSF), which provides GGMG members a generous discount on enrollment fees and membership dues for fitness memberships, along with discounts on summer camp and swim classes. Stay on top of all our amazing member benefits by going to [ggmg.org/member-perks](https://ggmg.org/member-perks).

“Taking care of our own physical and mental health is critical to give us the energy and stamina to be able to take care of our families, build our careers, and more.”

As you start tackling your 2023 priorities and take the first steps on your new year’s resolutions, please consider signing up to be a volunteer with GGMG. Our amazing volunteers are the lifeblood of GGMG, and we’re looking for new board members, committee chairs, and help on our communications, marketing, and recruiting teams. Please email [recruiting@ggmg.org](mailto:recruiting@ggmg.org) to learn more.

Cheers to a happy and healthy 2023!

Connie Lin

HOUSEKEEPING

Opinions expressed in this issue are those of the contributors. Acceptance of advertising does not constitute endorsement by GGMG of any products or services. The editors reserve the right to accept, edit, or reject any content submitted to the magazine.

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**NEXT ISSUE:** Stand Up

Have an idea for an issue theme or article? Please email [editor@ggmg.org](mailto:editor@ggmg.org).

**This issue made possible by:** Weathering the storm; Weathering hand foot and mouth, RSV, COVID, flu, and a deluge of rain!; Navigating all the fun holiday events while only semi successfully avoiding flu-A and stomach flu; Water everywhere, just not where it’s wanted—and a broken water heater to boot; Just regular rain in London; The sheer joy of 11 Oscar nominations for *Everything Everywhere All at Once*; Waking up to water under my sink and all over the kitchen floor; Illness over here, luckily less water.

COVER OUTTAKES



Only one shot can make it to the cover. Here are some of our other favorites.

Cover photo by Mini Anna Photography  
Models: Maple and Kennedy (7)

# Places to See Blooms

By Christine Chen

The **Japanese Tea Garden**, now free for San Francisco residents, is not to be missed with its beautiful bridges and serene atmosphere. The Pagoda is finally renovated, and March and April are ideal times to see the cherry blossoms in bloom.

Under an authentic Dutch windmill (once used to pump water to plants in the park), the **Queen Wilhelmina Tulip Garden** in Golden Gate Park is a fabulous place to see tulips that bloom in red, pink, orange and yellow clusters in the spring.

The **San Francisco Botanical Garden** has more than 9,000 types of plants flourishing in Golden Gate Park and is free to San Francisco residents with ID. The large, sprawling space includes the Succulent Garden, the Moon Viewing Garden, the Ancient Plant Garden, and the Garden of Fragrance, which contains only heavily scented flowers.

The best time to visit the **Rose Garden** in Golden Gate Park is during the summer when everything is in bloom. I recall going once during the winter and we laughed that it literally was the Rose Garden because there was only one rose.

Always a delight, the front of the **Conservatory of Flowers** is full of annual flowers planted in geometric patterns and offers a colorful picturesque backdrop for photos. The best times to view are January to April, and then late June through September; it is most vibrant in August.

The **Dahlia Garden** near the Conservatory of Flowers celebrates San Francisco's official flower in a thick, fenced-in area that starts to bloom in June and peaks in late August and September.

The **Rhododendron Dell** in Golden Gate Park has a pathway for a leisurely walk through the collection of flowers and is best visited during the springtime, ideally in March and possibly April.

A hidden gem a block from the famously crooked part of Lombard Street, **Fay Park** on Leavenworth Street has two gazebos and three terraces connected by ramps and stairs. This oasis has spectacular views of the Bay among the blooming flowers and is a popular spot for weddings.

**Grace Marchant Garden** along the Filbert Steps is a cascading public garden full of pink roses, purple delphiniums, yellow banana plants, and red Japanese maples. To the delight of kids, the noisy parrot flocks that live on the slopes of Telegraph Hill often frequent this spot.

**Yerba Buena Gardens** is a collection of several gardens across various levels featuring seasonal flowers that offer an oasis in a bustling part of town. Kids will enjoy the Butterfly Garden, where plantings foster the population of butterflies who live there, including Monarchs.

Early February is the beginning of **mustard season in Napa Valley** and the vineyards become filled with bright yellow mustard blooms that glisten in the sun.

Take a drive down to **Half Moon Bay and Highway 1** to the south of town to see fields of wildflowers. There are numerous flower farms in this area and many are on private property but as you drive further south, there are fields open to the public.

# Sausalito and the Headlands

By Sonya Abrams

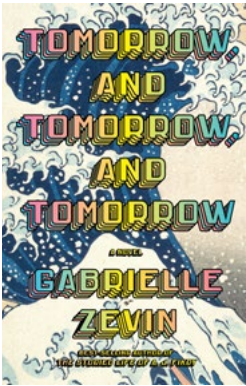
Winter's moisture brings out the beauty in Marin County, where the rolling hills become verdant and dotted with wildflowers and waterfalls. Explore the southernmost part of the county with a visit to **Rodeo Beach** in the Headlands. In addition to the beautiful beach, there's a lagoon teeming with wildlife and miles of trails, many paved. Children will love the **Tennessee Point Labyrinth**, an easy hike from the large parking lot dotted with old military bunkers and other fun pieces of history to explore. Just on the other side of Highway 101, the **Bay Area Discovery Museum** recently underwent a \$20 million renovation and is worth a visit. Children can make art, run amok in a massive outdoor play area dotted with interactive natural-material exhibits, and engage in sensory-stimulating play. Nearby, visit **The Marine Mammal Center**, the world's largest marine mammal hospital. Tickets are free but must be reserved. A quick and beautiful drive up the edge of the bay will land you in Sausalito proper, where kids and adults alike will be fascinated by the **Bay Model**, a several hundred-foot-long working hydraulic scale model of the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta System.

*Sonya is a writer and photographer who lives with her three children in San Francisco and spends an inordinate amount of time crossing the bridge to tramp through the beautiful wild spaces of Marin County with her new husky.*



# Book Review: Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow

Written by Gabrielle Zevin



Reviewed by Jessica Perry

Gabrielle Zevin's 2022 bestselling novel *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* follows the relationship, success, and failures of fictional gaming masterminds Sadie Green and Sam Maser. Beyond charting the course of their lifelong relationship, which starts when they meet in a hospital as children in the early '90s, the book also follows the lives of several vibrant secondary characters, with a particular focus on dealing with and overcoming emotional and physical health struggles.

Each section of the book juxtaposes Sadie and Sam's challenges playing or building video games with the struggles they need to overcome in their daily lives: disabilities, navigating relationships, the unexpected loss of loved ones, tragedy, prejudice, postpartum depression, and more.

The book reminds us that, time and time again, individuals often choose to suffer alone through their challenges rather than reach out to their support system when they're struggling. During their respective self-imposed periods of isolation, the video games serve Sadie and Sam with a means for connection, healing, and personal evolution. The virtual environment allows them to address their issues when the real world is too scary.

At many points throughout the novel, the lines between the gaming world and the real world blur. Zevin asks us to consider what are healthy ways to heal your body and mind. If you make and maintain real relationships in a virtual environment, can they also sustain you in your real life? Can intellectual and emotional growth in a video game help you to heal your physical ailments?

This book is a mesmerizing infusion of virtual reality and real-life struggles. You do not need to be a gamer to appreciate how enticing the idea of diving into an alternate life can be. Sadie and Sam use their multiple games not only to succeed in business, but also to heal themselves and each other.

*Jessica is not a gamer, but she is a voracious reader, mother, editor, and writer. She lives in Marin County with her family. Despite growing up in the '80s, she has never played Oregon Trail.*

Christine's favorite moments include the beaming smiles on her 9-year-old son and 7-year-old daughter's faces as they gift their proudly picked wildflowers from various parks to put in a vase.



CONTEST

Awwwwwww

GGMG Magazine invites you to submit a photo of your child’s most endearing expression. Is it the look on their face right after they break something? Is it that special kiss they give their baby sibling? Is it a blissful smile as they break into fresh mac and cheese?

The GGMG Magazine editorial board will select one photo for publication in next issue’s contest space. To enter the contest, please submit the following to [contest@ggmg.org](mailto:contest@ggmg.org) with the subject line “Awwwwwww”:

- 1. A high-resolution photo of your child in JPG or PDF form.
- 2. One to two sentences, for context of their expression in the photo.



Madelyn’s first trip to the snow included frosting some snow cakes. The look on her face after accomplishing the all important candle placement! Please stay!

NEW ARRIVALS



**Karen Hom**      **Baby Cassidy**  
**Rebecca Rudolph**      **Baby Walter Thomas**  
**Dennise Martinez**      **Baby Fiona**

Congratulations to **Karen Hom**! She will be getting joyful moments captured by Anna Munandar from Mini Anna Photography. Anna specializes in capturing joy and every milestone in your family, from birth to college. See her work at [minianna.com](http://minianna.com).

To announce your new arrival in the magazine and for a chance to win a \$150 gift card from **Mini Anna Photography**, fill out the form at [ggmg.org/about-us/ggmg-magazine](http://ggmg.org/about-us/ggmg-magazine).



She Just Scored a Goal. Is It Too Soon to Think Full Ride for College?

By Brian Feeley, MD and Nirav Pandya, MD

When Brian’s oldest was 9, she was approached at a softball all-star tournament by an opposing coach. He said private lessons and playing year-round were the only way to succeed in youth softball. What happened to the seasonal athlete that plays multiple sports growing up? Turns out the idea pushed by this coach, dubbed “early sports specialization” in the scientific literature, reflects a trend over the last 20 years—one driven by coaches, parents, and clubs, not by youth athletes themselves.

Over time, the goals and expectations of “sport” have changed. Fun, camaraderie, and development of communication and leadership skills are now seen as side benefits with achievement paramount and success measured less by trophies and ribbons and more by elite club invitations, showcase opportunities, and college scholarships. This has come with myriad social and health issues, some families more affected than others. Club sports are expensive and exclusive. A rise in childhood obesity is multifactorial but linked with fewer kids playing middle school and high school sports. Frequent practice and weekend travel decrease family time and down time.

In addition to these societal-level implications, there are documented downsides for the health and welfare of young athletes who specialize early. They are at higher risk for injury—aches and pains from overuse and more severe injuries such as ACL tears and ankle fractures. Says Kayla Gradillas, senior athletic trainer at St. Ignatius High School in San Francisco, “Freshman athletes come into high school with more of an injury history than five to ten years ago. It seems to correlate with younger kids (and their parents) deciding they will be Division I prospects at younger ages.” Kids who specialize early are also more at risk for burnout and dissatisfaction from sports.

As Gradillas implies, parents who know about these risks often assume there are commensurate benefits, but that doesn’t appear to be true. Only about 2 percent of high school athletes end up playing with full or partial financial aid in college, and even then, the dollar amount of the scholarship usually does not exceed the cumulative costs of club participation. In truth, benefits, on average, accrue more to kids who play multiple sports. They benefit from “skill transfer” where skills learned in one sport can be applied across multiple



settings, leading to faster skill accumulation. The *American Journal of Sports Medicine* found that NBA players who played multiple sports in high school were less likely to be injured during their career. Skill transfer and lower injury rates may explain why almost 90 percent of 2018 NFL Draft picks were multi-sport athletes in high school.

While some sports do benefit from buckling down early (gymnastics, dance, and diving), most sports don’t. Nicole

Bowler, girls’ soccer coach at Oakland’s Head-Royce School, states, “The passion to just have fun and explore sports throughout their elementary school years is going away and we need to get it back!” Bowler points to the displacement effect of club sports: when kids have less time, they engage in free play less. Gone are the sandlot pick-up games of baseball, spontaneous 3-on-3 basketball games. Our dismay doesn’t originate from nostalgia; there are well-documented benefits of unstructured play that cannot be replicated by drill-to-skill practices for kids as young as 4 years old.

Some people are working to change this paradigm. Lakshmi Jayanthi, founder and CEO of Pickup Sports, noticed that kids in her Atlanta suburb were not participating in free play, so she created an app to promote finding pick-up games. “As a mom, it’s so difficult to constantly shuttle kids around to organized activities. It gets particularly daunting when you have a kid who loves to play for fun, loves to explore a lot of different sports, but doesn’t have goals to try to make the top teams.”

What can parents do? Don’t buy the line that intense investment in youth sports produces fame and glory. It makes intuitive sense but isn’t backed by research. What is, according to Dr. Celina de Borja, a pediatric sports injury expert in Oakland, is limiting the number of hours per week spent in organized sport to your child’s age, max. She recommends only one team per season—dedicating any remaining desire to engage in sport to playgrounds, friends, and siblings—and not specializing until high school. It’s what we do for our own kids, and there’s no higher endorsement than that.

*Brian Feeley, MD is Chief of the Sports Medicine Service at UCSF and a father of five. Nirav Pandya, MD is Chief of the Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery Service at UCSF and a father of two. You can find them on Twitter or their podcast, “6-8 Weeks: Perspectives on Sports Medicine.”*



Orthodontics

With Bella Shen Garnett, DMD, MMSc and Kimberly Mahood, DMD, MSD



At Bella Smile, we offer a practice with a mission to straighten teeth, improve facial aesthetics, and promote long-term oral health. Learn more at [bellasmile.com](http://bellasmile.com).

At what age do kids usually get orthodontic work done?

The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that all children have their first visit to the orthodontist no later than age 7 or upon recognizing a noticeable malocclusion present. The orthodontist will be able to determine if treatment is necessary for your child or can be delayed until all permanent teeth have erupted.

There is a trend to have orthodontic work done earlier than when we were growing up, before all teeth are in. Why is that and what are the benefits?

Early orthodontic intervention for children may be recommended for several reasons. The biggest benefit to starting early treatment is to redirect skeletal growth as needed and to take advantage of the patient’s growth status to avoid more potentially invasive treatment, such as extraction of teeth or surgical procedures in the future. Several examples and benefits are included below:

- Orthodontic treatment can create a more favorable growth pattern for future growth, particularly for patients presenting with either an underbite (where the lower teeth protrude forward and in front of the upper teeth) or an overbite (where the upper teeth are far forward than the lower teeth). This similarly applies to asymmetries that can be detected in early examinations. Early treatment may help the patient avoid more invasive surgical interventions as an adult.
- Expansion of the maxilla while the sutures are not yet fused is beneficial for a wide variety of reasons. It can correct a crossbite to avoid asymmetrical jaw growth and also create more arch space to avoid extracting permanent teeth. Expansion can also create more space to prevent impaction of adult teeth.
- Expansion of the maxilla is also known to improve the airway and nasal breathing, since the base of the nasal cavity is connected to the roof of the mouth (palate). Another benefit of expansion is that it has been shown to significantly reduce adenoid and palatine tonsil volume which could have a significant impact for children presenting with sleep disorder/apnea symptoms. Research has shown that proper airway health is vital for your child’s future growth and development.

Does having orthodontic work done at a younger age usually mean the duration of treatment is shorter?

Having patients start orthodontic work at a younger age can simplify more complicated/complex cases and allow the overall treatment to be completed efficiently. For cases where teeth are impacted, or alternatively, for cases where teeth need to be extracted, early orthodontic intervention is strongly recommended. It is also important to note that overall treatment duration is largely dependent on patient cooperation and compliance.

Is pulling teeth to make space still popular if you have a small mouth?

Orthodontists have varying opinions and treatment philosophies when it comes to extraction of permanent teeth. At Bella Smile, our clinical preference is to not extract permanent teeth unless it is absolutely necessary in cases of severe crowding or when there is a need for a change in the profile.

“Having patients start orthodontic work at a younger age can simplify more complicated/complex cases and allow the overall treatment to be completed efficiently.”

What is the difference between Invisalign and traditional metal braces beyond aesthetics?

The decision to choose either orthodontic treatment is based on patient preference, lifestyle, aesthetic concerns, and oral hygiene while also taking into account the clinical needs necessary to achieve the healthiest smile for our patients.

While both options have their benefits, Invisalign does offer the following benefits over braces that many are unaware of:

- Customization of tooth movement and the patient’s smile
- Having more control over arch form shape
- Ability to utilize rubber bands early in treatment to correct the bite, without using headgear and improve the profile earlier in treatment (especially, when the upper teeth protrude far forward than the lower teeth)
- Fewer emergency appointments (no broken brackets)
- Overall greater patient comfort and improved oral hygiene with the removable aligners
- Less food restrictions

Health & Safety

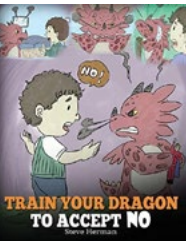
By Laure Latham

How do you develop healthy relationships with others and with yourself? How do you learn to deal with differences? These books on the general themes of mental health and safety will provide answers to lots of questions from young developing minds.

All Buckled Up

Written and illustrated by Andrea Zimmerman and David Clemesha

When it comes to the safety of little ones when on the move, it’s hard to beat a seat belt. This board book shows a variety of people, even astronauts, farmers or fire chiefs, buckling up to go about their activities. “One, two, three, click!” could become your safety refrain when getting in the car or in the stroller. **Ages: 0 to 2 years**



Train Your Dragon to Accept NO

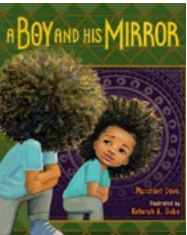
Written and illustrated by Steve Herman

Pet dragons are a lot of fun, but they are also notoriously unpredictable when they get upset. How do you train your dragon to control its emotions and not burn the house down? Using existing behaviors that aren’t so great and suggesting alternatives that make everybody much happier, this book will delight children while teaching them about anger management. Who doesn’t want to channel their inner dragon once in a while, right? **Ages: 3 to 6 years**

A Boy and His Mirror

Written by Marchánt Davis, illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo

A young Black boy struggles to feel accepted when kids at school tease him about his hair. Looking for answers in the mirror, the boy gets a surprise visit from a mysterious woman who tells him to find out who he really is. Learning to accept himself, the boy changes his behaviors at school and in the process, the others’ perception of him changes too. This journey of self-love and kindness will inspire kids to accept themselves as they are, but also to accept others regardless of their appearance. **Ages: 3 to 7 years**



Guts

Written and illustrated by Raina Telgemeier

This best-selling graphic novel conveys with empathy the many facets of childhood anxiety and how children relate to their peers at school. Taking us back to her 4th grade year at age 9, young Raina begins to be plagued by intense stomach aches she puts down to a stomach bug, except they don’t go away. Inevitably, her stomach aches get in the way of school attendance and Raina’s social life. While Raina in the story doesn’t immediately

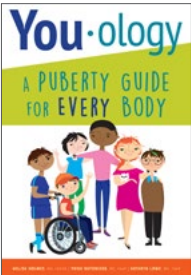
make the connection, readers will easily see trigger situations common with mild anxiety, such as Raina’s worrying thoughts over troubles at home, school, her life in general, shifts in diet, levels of hunger or interest in food. It’s worth noting that this is the third installment in Telgemeier’s graphic memoir series of her childhood years, so if your child enjoys this graphic novel, there are more to discover. **Ages: 9 to 12 years**

Laure blogs on healthy living and adventure travel at Frog Mom ([frogmom.com](http://frogmom.com)), and is the author of Best Hikes with Kids: San Francisco Bay Area. She works in legal marketing and lives in London, where she peppers adventures with her two teenage daughters with wild swims, foraging, and cream teas. You can find her on social media [@frogmomblog](https://twitter.com/frogmomblog).

Beneath

Written and illustrated by Cori Doerrfeld

When young Finn is grumpy and feels misunderstood in bed underneath a quilt, Grandpa suggests a walk in the woods. Still under the quilt, Finn reluctantly joins Grandpa. As they walk, Grandpa shares nuggets of wisdom, drawing parallels with the nature around them, pointing out instances where what’s on the surface conceals hidden complexities—trees with deep roots, for instance, and water teeming with fish. “Beneath appearances are experiences. Beneath actions are explanations. Beneath what’s different is what’s the same,” he says. Progressively, Finn emerges from the quilt and realizes that Grandpa understands more than he shows, and that there’s always more than meets the eye. **Ages: 3 to 7 years**



You-ology: A Puberty Guide for EVERY Body

Written by Melisa Holmes, Trish Hutchison, and Kathryn Lowe

“Awkward” used to describe how every child felt during puberty. Fortunately, this new inclusive approach will

normalize experiences that all children go through, without necessarily knowing where to turn. Using facts, age-appropriate and body-positive information, this book could make your child’s transition to adulthood smoother and kinder than they might anticipate. **Ages: 9 to 12 years**



# Unexpected Acts of Self-Care

By Gail Cornwall

Two books address women’s wellness from unexpected angles. In the first, extramarital affairs get recast as acts of empowerment, a bolstering of self. The second delves into issues of midlife, climate anxiety, and...sheep.



## A Passion for More: Affairs That Make or Break Us

More than 30 years ago, journalist Susan Shapiro Barash started talking to women, from 20-year-olds to 80-year-olds, about their affairs. She published the first edition of *A Passion for More* in 1993 and each year since has interviewed around 30 more heterosexual, cisgender sources. It’s not academic science, but it sure is something.

Some of the women’s stories fit societal narratives of who cheats and when: bored housewives, vengeful victims who’ve discovered their husbands’ infidelity and decided to strike back, and damaged children in grown-up bodies—those who were never loved well and don’t know how to love well. But *A Passion for More* largely tells a different composite story. Some women marry young. They are subsumed by motherhood. They’re ignored and undervalued. Their affairs aren’t initiated because they’re impulsive, reckless, or morally corrupt, and they don’t usually end in fiery balls of consequences and deep remorse. Rather, for the most part, taking a lover in these stories is a radical act of self-care by women who benefit and express no regret.

According to Shapiro Barash: “70 percent of women will engage in an affair of some kind at some point.” About half will leave the primary relationship and about half will stay. “For some, the lover is a bridge to another life, for others he is a method of renegotiating their commitment. For still others, both lover and husband/partner will co-exist.”

Quotes from the women reveal additional themes. Alice married a father-figure but then said, “Three years ago I no longer needed a father but a friend, partner, lover. Now I needed someone exciting and fun.” Lucy said, “From 35 to 45 I’ve changed so much as a woman.” What they needed had shifted over the years.

Others never got what they signed up for. Abbie said, “I did love my husband, I really did. Except he was too busy to spend time with me....He was married to his business....I needed something new to feel like my old self again, to save myself.” For Eva, “There I was, married with children, financially secure and dead inside” with a husband who “was absorbed with his work, even sports events on TV....He never listened to me; he never heard what I had to say,” she said. “Jeff, on the other hand, listened to every word....I was

trapped in a good life with something missing at the core.” Randy’s lover too “listens when I speak,” she said. Joanna’s husband traveled often. Susan’s “had little time for me.” Christine’s was a workaholic. So is Robin’s. And Sabrina’s. Priscilla said, “I became lonely....When he was there, physically and paying some attention to me, it was enough. I was fulfilled. But when he became immersed in business...I really felt rejected and unhappy.” Julie said, “I began to realize that I needed a lot from a man that I wasn’t getting from my husband. Intimacy, communication, sex—I got it all from my lover.” For these women, the affair was a symptom of marital dissatisfaction.

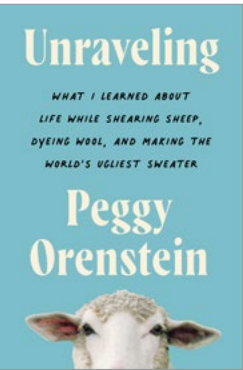
Some found the roles in which they’d been cast stifling. Violet wanted “to be desirable still after being married with little kids.” Stephanie said, “I was the devoted wife, mother, daughter. Except I wanted more out of my life.” Regina said, “I had an obligation to everyone: our child, my parents, his parents, work, running the house.” When Camille’s baby was born, she gave up a career and autonomy. Her lover “brought out the creative, fun side of me, the wacky aspect, a part of me that had been lost for so long, taken over by the role of a doctor’s wife, a mother...not creating a new me but reviving the lost me.” She said, “I deserve more than to feel half-dead. If I hadn’t experienced this love, I would believe most love affairs are really only about sex. But I know how much more it is than that.” Rita said, “I needed affirmation of my womanhood.” Hanna said, “I’ve regained my identity.”

“He really brought me back to life,” Julie said of her lover. Honey “felt sexier than ever.” Vivien “suddenly felt terrific and really alive.” Anna saw it as “a healthy ego boost.” For Tess, the affair was an exercise in mindfulness, “I am smack in the middle of it while it is going on.”

For some, the affair reinvigorated or prolonged the marriage: “Sex is better with my husband; the relationship with my husband is better, because of the affair.” For Melanie: “Without the escape of the affair and the pleasure it gave me, I could not have tolerated life with my husband.” Anamarie said, “My mothering skills are even better, because I’m happier.”

Of course, there’s anxiety and guilt too. Some of Shapiro Barash’s interviewees felt torn. And others admitted they wished they’d sought therapy or an open marriage. As she quotes Dr. Bertram Slaff saying, “If you speak with 100 women, there will be myriad conscious and unconscious reasons for them to take lovers....[T]he variations are enormous and one

cannot generalize.” And yet, the women in her book largely aren’t befuddled Eves succumbing to a seductive serpent and forbidden fruit; their stories are permeated by a sense of entitlement and exploration, of fearless resolve, and often, of confidence and self reclaimed.



## Unraveling: What I Learned About Life While Shearing Sheep, Dyeing Wool, and Making the World’s Ugliest Sweater

Faithful readers of this column know how I feel about Peggy Orenstein. If the author of *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*, *Girls & Sex*, and *Boys & Sex* writes a

book, I’m going to read it, even if I don’t give two figs about the topic. Though I guess I should say “fig leaves,” since that is one of Orenstein’s many fascinating digressions in this story about what comes after “eighteen years during which [a mother’s] first priority was someone else’s happiness.” In lockdown, Orenstein “had a lot of time to ruminate.” Before you get too jealous, understand how empty nesting made her feel: “Groggy and disoriented.” She writes, “Just when I’d gotten my life together, it seemed to be unraveling.” *Unraveling* is a memoir on aging, on “knitting...thoughts, feelings, and fears into multicolored blankets,” but it’s also a heavily researched and skilled recap of the rise and fall of several craft industries. Orenstein’s personal struggle with continued value and relevance are mirrored in her historical accounting of professions like sheep shearing, spinning, and procuring natural dyes. Thread, she concludes, can “weave us together across the warp of time, the weft of space...the disparate selves we inhabit.” And in the “pinching, pulling, smoothing back,” it can provide “well-being, a sense of peace” as well as “evoke the sacred, the familial, the traditional, and the new all at once.”

Gail works as a mom and writer in San Francisco. Read about parenting and education from the perspective of a former teacher and lawyer at [gailcornwall.com](http://gailcornwall.com) or by finding her on Facebook and Twitter.

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# The Joy of Ex(ercise)

## Move your body without obsessing about it.

By H.B. Terrell

By now, those who resolved to make health-related changes for 2023 may be settling into new habits; others are already falling short of the goals they set. If you're one of those who have successfully incorporated habits that make you feel great, huzzah! What can you do to ensure that your improved habits don't become obsessions? If you suffer from an eating or exercise disorder or body dysmorphia, advice from a licensed medical professional is the beginning of recovery. For others, a shift in perspective may help you to better understand your relationship with your body.

For me, health is about being able to do activities that make me feel joyful and confident, but it is also about understanding that "joyful" and "confident" are not the only things that a healthy person experiences. Examine your ideas of what constitutes health. Then consider what health is supposed to do—and why we pursue it in the first place.

### What health isn't

Let us lay to rest the fiction of body mass index (BMI) and by extension, weight as a measurement of health, before we begin any discussion of exercise.

The modern idea of BMI was introduced from 1830 to 1850 by a mathematician. The formula provided government agencies with a simplified statistical way to measure the degree of obesity of the general population for the purpose of efficient resource allocation. As Sylvia Gonsahn-Bollie, MD points out, "BMI was created as a population-based assessment, not an individual assessment...a BMI chart is a reflection of how much a group of people generally weigh, not what one person 'should' weigh."

Health is not something you can see when you meet someone—you'd need to get their blood test results and slap a pressure cuff on them to find out. For example, the 2021 census shows that the average American earns \$70,784 per year. Those

earnings may come from mansion-dwellers or someone's housemate, depending on several factors that have little or nothing to do with the factor measured (i.e., debt, local cost of living, social preferences). Similarly, some people with a BMI of 30 may be metabolically unhealthy, but some are elite athletes, while others would be considered fat by fashion standards but have no ill health effects. So, is metabolic health related to weight or to some other factor not considered in the BMI calculation?

### What health is

Health, then, is all about your HDL cholesterol, triglycerides, blood sugar, blood pressure, and waist circumference. Right? Where does mental health come into the picture? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says, "Mental and physical health are equally important components of overall health," pointing out that decreased well-being can increase the risk for physical health conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. When the demands placed on someone exceed

**“There’s joy in awareness, which we need to face the challenge of exercise. Rather than seeing these challenges as problems[...]frame them as opportunities for growth, stepping from the comfort of what we know we can do, to the delight of new experiences.”**

The term "body mass index" was coined in a 1972 synthesis published in the *Journal of Chronic Diseases*. Ancel Keys and the other authors of this paper cautioned that BMI was useful only for population studies, stating that it was inappropriate for individual evaluation. Despite this declaration in the very founding of the terminology, multiple studies by experienced medical researchers, science articles in *NPR* to *Prevention Magazine*, and a growing cadre of health activists denouncing the use of BMI in medical care, it remains the most common metric in medical and scientific studies related to health. "This oversimplified narrative," says Elizabeth Wassenaar, MD, MS, CEDS-S, "encourages health practitioners to consider 'excessive' body fat the direct cause of disease," rather than something that may be a result of another factor that is then overlooked.

Endocrinologist and Cambridge Professor Antonio Vidal-Puig studies and treats metabolic disease. He tells patients, "It's not about fat, it's about being fit." His research suggests that patients can work toward a metabolically healthy body through exercise, which can improve response to insulin and help clear fat from the liver even without weight loss.

their resources, mental health can be impacted.

As we are all in different places (who we're caring for, how intense that care is, what kinds of jobs we work, how long our hours are, what kinds of relationships we are experiencing, etc.), health-affirming practices will look different for each person. Some might go to the gym after a long day in the office for an hour-long sweat session. Others might spend their 15-minute work break sitting still and

breathing during an eight-hour shift on their feet. Still others might get off the bus a stop before their actual stop to get a bit of extra walking in on the way home—where the second shift (i.e., parenting) begins. Each of these examples balances physical and mental health.

My own definition of health changes as my circumstances evolve. As I write this, my personal measurements of health include:

- Giving myself the opportunity to revel in movement that feels good
- Eating food that satisfies body and soul, without counting calories, carbs, fats, or whichever measurement de rigueur is trending now
- Fostering mutually sustaining interactions, and declining invitations from those who make me feel as if I am either too much or too little
- Reserving time to be alone in whatever way feels nourishing that day
- Taking my medications
- Practicing mindfulness, with self-awareness at the root

It's well worth taking time to consider what you want to be able to do with the health you're cultivating, and what it looks like to get there in a way that uses your resources gently rather than demanding too much of your capacity to cope with stressors. This might mean that instead of berating yourself for eating the breakroom donut, you think about each bite as you take it, really enjoying it. It might mean that if you





wake up exhausted because you slept on the floor next to your toddler's bed because they were up late with nightmares, you pat yourself on the back for taking care of your child and give no mental energy to missing your morning walk.

**The skin (and fat, and muscle) you're in**

In *The Unapologetic Fat Girl's Guide to Exercise and Other Incendiary Acts*, author Hanne Blank writes, "...the whole 'exercise is good for your health' thing isn't what I find the most important about exercise. It's not even the most compelling. Exercise, after all, doesn't make you immortal or bulletproof. There are plenty of health conditions that exercise can't and won't change....And yet, it is my considered stance that exercise is crucially important.... Exercise makes it possible for you and your body to coexist in better and more integrated ways." Blank's book is both a technical guide to exercising while fat and an inspirational work meant to provide the confidence to take up space whether you're on a treadmill or at the barre, and whether you're wearing a size 12 or 32.

Kim Gould Fry is a therapist specializing in the treatment of eating disorders, body image issues, and compulsive exercise. She is also a certified barre instructor and certified personal trainer who runs a size-inclusive exercise studio in Austin, Texas. An expert in intuitive movement, she describes it as "the process of checking in with your body, assessing how much energy you have, how you're feeling, what your body might be craving movement-wise, and then using all of that to determine the type of movement that you do, and the duration of movement you're doing." She suggests a mindfulness practice of being attentive to the body's needs, comprising curiosity, intentionality, and compassion.

These self-awareness techniques can be revelatory for those engaging in intuitive movement. In *Running With the Mind of Meditation*, Sakyong Mipham describes this kind of mindfulness as paying attention to our breathing, the pounding of our feet, how it feels as our arms move. Mipham suggests that being either too rigid or too relaxed can take us out of the experience



of moving—we're on the right track when we appreciate what it means to be in our own body, in this particular moment, making this specific motion. There's joy in awareness, which we need to face the challenge of exercise. Rather than seeing these challenges as problems, Mipham suggests we frame them as opportunities for growth, stepping from the comfort of what we know we can do to the delight of new experiences. As Mipham puts it, "When we stay with what's happening, life becomes twice as interesting."

Moving can be difficult, and strenuous, and energizing, and delightful. When I was a runner, huffing and sweating and struggling, inevitably, a switch would flip and I'd get a hit of endorphins that made me feel like I could do anything, be anyone—change the world, even. The first 15 minutes of every run were a slog, and the last 30 felt like I was floating. When it was raining, I'd relish the cool drops on my face, dripping from my hair. When it was cold, I would start off shivering until I felt the chill as a relief. This is San Francisco, but on the rare occasions when it was hot, I'd taste every nourishing drop of water as I slugged it more than usual. These days I'm a walker, noticing the world at a more leisurely pace, but those moments of bliss are still something I remember fondly.

Whether it's yoga, dancing, or any activity that gets the heart pumping, moving the body regularly and with intention makes you feel stronger as exercise builds not only muscle and skills but also confidence. It makes you feel

secure, certain that your body is a good place to be.

**The next step, and the next...**

Having any body is a privilege—a one-in-a-million chance to exist. That this egg and that sperm cell meld, splitting and building until you are one specific person, unique in time and space, is a gift. If we made space for people to exist in a generous way, free of the external pressures to be what the culture is currently calling healthy (i.e., thin) how much more pleasurable it could be to relish the pleasures of the senses!

Health is more than the number you see between your feet on a bathroom scale. A revolutionary idea: what if every body was considered just a body, with no value measurements attached? What if health was a measure of how effectively we function within the parameters of our specific body? Health-improving activities might involve pleasurable movement, mental health care, interacting with others, mindfulness, avoiding food allergens, and taking medication that helps us to function well in both body and mind. To wit, health as a subjective term.

What might we do differently when we reserve the mental energy currently spent conforming to look just one way out of the multitudes of possible variations, instead occupying the mind with a healthy mixture of big questions and small delights?

I'd love to find out. Shall we?

*H.B. Terrell enjoys taking long solo walks, dancing with her husband, and trying yoga poses with her toddler. She lives in the Excelsior neighborhood.*



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# Stop Letting Remote Work Manage You

Manage your energy, take strategic breaks, and build rituals and boundaries to make remote work *actually* work for you.

By Tamara Sanderson



Let's start with some *real* talk...How did you imagine your best "remote working" life?

Maybe it included visions of your cat cuddled up on your desk or easily being able to pick up your child from school (without all the rescheduling). Perhaps you imagined finally fitting in a mid-day yoga session or a quick errand run now that you'd ditched the commute. Or, for those with remote working partners, maybe you envisioned a better work-life balance for your family.

But unfortunately, the thing that enables us to work remotely, namely technology,

can come with its own drawbacks—specifically, the ability to turn off and unplug.

According to Asana's 2022 Anatomy of Work report, hybrid work needs clear boundaries. Key complaints from their survey of 10,000+ global knowledge workers include no clear start/finish to each day (37 percent), more time spent checking emails outside of working hours (38 percent), and more time spent thinking about work outside of work hours (35 percent).

Likewise, Asana found that 42 percent of people are spending more time on email than one year ago, 40 percent are spending more time on video calls than one year ago, 52 percent are multitasking more during virtual meetings than one year ago, and 56 percent feel they need to respond immediately to notifications.

All of this is to say, if this sounds familiar, you are not alone!

There's a better way. None of us were born with remote working skills (although I must admit, my niece had a knack for the iPhone at age 3). As with other skills, it requires time, patience, and grit. You're building a new muscle, which can be uncomfortable as an adult. Here's some guidance that could help you take more control of your work life in 2023.

## Know thyself (and thy energy)

As they say, put your oxygen mask on before helping others. You can learn all the best practices and read all the listicles, but fundamentally, remote work is about behavior change—which starts with your behavior.

A McKinsey study found that "top executives report being five times more productive during their peak performance hours in the day—yet only 5 percent of them report being in a state of deep engagement during this time." The takeaway? First, you need to know when you're most productive. Second, you need to use that time wisely.

Several factors influence your energy levels, from your biologically determined circadian rhythm to who you're working

Rather than fight against our biology, it helps to work with it.

Sahar Yousef, Ph.D., a cognitive neuroscientist and lecturer at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business, suggests psychologically detaching from both personal and professional responsibilities regularly (checking social media doesn't count!).

Sahar's lab recommends using a 3M framework to avoid burnout:

- Macro breaks (half- to full-day offline per month). Examples: Hike in nature, day trip, visit friends or family.
- Meso breaks (2 to 4 hours offline every week). Examples: Art lesson, practice a hobby or sport, cook a special meal.
- Micro breaks (a few minutes, multiple times a day). Examples: Close your eyes

**"[T]he thing that enables us to work remotely, namely technology, can come with its own drawbacks—specifically, the ability to turn off and unplug."**

with and your physical environment. While you may have a hunch about your energy peaks and dips, take it further and track your energy to identify your biggest energy boosters and drainers and then optimize your schedule accordingly (remember, according to McKinsey, that could be the difference between spending one hour or five hours on the same task).

## Gimme a break

Yes, Kit Kat's jingle was catchy, and while I can't remember my childhood phone number, I can easily remember the call to action: "Gimme a break / Gimme a break / Break me off a piece of that Kit Kat bar!"

What if there's some truth behind the candy advertisement?

Humans are not robots. Susan Weinschenk, Ph.D., an applied psychologist and author of *100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People*, states that humans can only focus for 7 to 10 minutes, at most, and then need a short break before being able to start over again with another 7- to 10-minute focus session. Likewise, the mind naturally wanders 30 percent of the time, and sometimes up to 70 percent when doing a routine task, like driving on an uncrowded highway.

in between meetings, shower, short walk, stretch, meditate.

Ali Greene, co-author of *Remote Works*, incorporates micro breaks into her productivity hack she's coined, "One Spot, One Goal," where she uses her physical environment as a cue to focus on one thing and then takes a break while changing locations. Fresh air and a bike ride act as a natural energy boost to help her reset.

## Develop rituals and create boundaries

As someone with a proclivity for car sickness and who once suffered a 3-hour round trip commute from San Francisco to Silicon Valley, I was thrilled to discover that Americans now spend 60 million fewer hours traveling to work each day due to remote work, according to the American Time Use Survey.

However, we now realize that the commute served more than the purpose of getting from Point A to Point B. It also created a boundary between work and home. That podcast session or Spotify sing-along helped pass the time and enabled you to transition from "work mode" to "leisure mode."



## Working with your biological rhythm

While you may have a clear post-lunch slump, some aspects of your energy levels are less obvious, especially if you have trained your whole adult life to work in a nine-to-five office environment. By tracking your energy for a week, you can identify and understand your biggest energy boosters and drainers, then make changes to optimize your workflow. Any time you complete a task for work or in your personal life (e.g., cleaning out your inbox), or an event happens (e.g., going to boxing class or leading a project-kickoff meeting), take a minute to jot down the before-and-after impact. You can do this in a journal or use a custom-made energy tracker (like the RW Energy Tracker at [remoteworksbook.com](https://remoteworksbook.com)). Ideally, you'll want to track at least two to three events per day—a mix of work and personal.

At the end of the seven days, review your responses and see what trends you're noticing. Take a moment to reflect on the following questions:

- What boosts my energy?
- What drains my energy?
- What types of tasks could be eliminated without consequence?

Once you have a better sense of your energy, it is time to make some decisions and take action! How can you prototype some changes based on what you learned? Not an early bird? Save your heads-down tasks for later in the afternoon. Have an energy boost after boxing class? Perhaps you can use that energy to knock out focused work afterward.



Siobhan McKeown, COO of Human Made and a mother of young children, recommends a candid way to create boundaries: care about something outside of work. She forms a boundary between work and her personal life through a simple ritual: she puts her children to bed and then practices the piano for an hour. “It’s a transition where I move from thinking about work to not thinking about anything.”

As we know, though, boundaries do not work in a silo. You should spend time upfront with your team clarifying boundaries, discussing working hours, and documenting them. An AFK (“away from keyboard”) message on Slack or a hold in your calendar that says you’re offline can go a long way. By setting expectations upfront, especially around response time and working hours, you can reduce anxiety and the pull to be responsive 24/7.

As a former executive coach and the CEO of employee development platform PILOT, Ben Brooks believes that if you’re expecting certain norms and behaviors from your team, you must also model them as a manager. For example, Ben encourages his team to establish work-life boundaries but also has a personal preference as a business owner to answer emails after hours when it’s quieter. To balance the needs of his team (work-life boundaries) and his needs (to answer emails after hours), he compromises by scheduling the emails to go out the following day at 8 a.m. It’s a small gesture that goes a long way.



**Circling back**

For all those mothers out there with children who love Marvel movies (or are fans themselves), remember the words popularized by Spider-Man: “With great power comes great responsibility.”

We’re in the midst of huge cultural shifts impacting every aspect of our lives—from how we work to where we live and what captures our attention. Feeling anxious, overwhelmed, or burnt out is normal, especially if you’re never “off” work due to constant pings and notifications.

Those feelings should not be discarded or improved upon; rather, they are warning signals that the ways you work today are not sustainable. In 2023, take more agency when it comes to how you work by truly understanding your energy peaks and

troughs and working around them (not through them), incorporating regular micro, meso, and macro breaks into your schedule, and by creating rituals and boundaries that help you be fully present while working, and truly offline when not.

For decades, we’ve planned our lives around our work. Now, it’s time to intentionally design work to fit our lives.

*Tamara (Tam) Sanderson is the cofounder of Remote Works, an organizational design and consulting firm with a mission to liberate teams from the nine-to-five and teach them how to do their best work anytime, anywhere. Her book, Remote Works: Managing for Freedom, Flexibility, and Focus, is available on Amazon and is distributed internationally through Penguin Randomhouse. She can be found at remoteworksbook.com.*

**Tools to Help Managers Set Boundaries with Remote Work**

**Collaboration kick-off guide:** You’ve likely heard of a project kick-off. Those rigorous plans and meetings with key stakeholders ensure that everyone is on the same page. They’re important. They’re necessary. But, why shouldn’t they also exist for the working relationship? Have a collaboration kick-off at the beginning of a new project in order to: make introductions, set role expectations, and understand motivations.

**User guide:** Imagine the last time you bought a kitchen gadget or some newfangled electronic device. It likely came with an instruction manual (with varying readability levels) to help you use the device and troubleshoot common problems. The same principles apply with remote work. Under what conditions do your employees work best? What makes them tick? What are their pet peeves? How can you manage them according to their needs? Documenting these and making them widely available can prevent friction down the road.

**Team charter:** Once your team is working well together, it’s time to codify the operating behaviors across your team. Think of the team charter as your team’s North Star—it defines your team’s direction while also explicitly stating boundaries. Be sure to document team goals, learning opportunities, meetings, collaboration, documentation, expectations, and team culture.



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# Sugar, Sugar, Everywhere

## Sugar is the latest culprit in the changing science on harmful dietary habits, but why? And how can we mitigate the risks?

By Catherine Symon      Photographs by Mini Anna Photography

*Originally published in the June/July 2018 Health & Wellness issue.*

If you remember the 1980s, you probably remember the low-fat/low-cholesterol trend that transformed American supermarket shelves. Red meat and eggs were out, pasta and fat-free cookies were in. The prevailing dogma was that eating fat made you fat and increased your risk for diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses. But years into the low-fat movement, the rates of obesity and diabetes continued to climb unabated. Why? What was contributing to the growing “diabesity” epidemic?

A handful of researchers and clinicians started to rethink the eat-fat-get-fat dogma and turned their attention to another ingredient: sugar. Cutting fat reduces flavor, so packaged food companies were compensating by adding sugar and high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), a cheap and convenient alternative to sugar, to low- and non-fat products. As taste buds adapted to the increased sweetness, sugar and HFCS began to appear in decidedly un-sweet foods like plain mustard, peanut butter, chicken stock, tomato sauce, and pretzels. Today, three-quarters of all packaged foods contain sugar and the average consumption is close to 70 pounds per person per year. Is sugar the driving force behind our burgeoning waistlines and health problems? A growing body of evidence says yes.

### What is sugar?

Sugar is a blanket term for a diverse group of carbohydrates (molecules made of carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen) that have many roles in the human body. Sugars on the surface of your red blood cells determine your blood type, while others inside your cells serve as quality-control agents for the intricate process of folding chains of amino acids into proteins. The backbone of the DNA double helix is a sugar. But perhaps the most important role for sugar is to provide energy to the human body.

Sugars are found in whole foods (fruit, vegetables, grains) or they may be refined from natural sources (cane, beets, honeycomb, corn) before being added to food. Regardless of whether the sugar is natural or refined, the molecules are the same; glucose from a pear is the same as glucose from a sugar cube. But the three sugars that are absorbed by the body (glucose, galactose, fructose) have very different metabolic effects in the body.

### What do dietary sugars do in the body?

The ill effects of chronic sugar consumption start in the liver. The liver is the processing center of the body and has many important functions, including producing bile to break down fat, filtering drugs and toxins from the blood, regulating blood clotting, storing energy and iron, and helping to keep blood glucose levels steady. Damage to the liver therefore has a widespread impact in the body. How do glucose and fructose impact the liver differently?

Glucose is the primary supplier of energy to your body cells. Glucose is so critical that your liver will manufacture it when needed. This is particularly important for the cells in your brain, which cannot store energy. When you eat glucose-containing foods, your blood glucose rises (the term “blood sugar” refers to the amount of glucose in your blood). In response to the rise, your pancreas releases insulin to return blood glucose back to its normal level by stimulating cells to take up glucose from the blood. About 80 percent of the glucose is delivered directly to muscle and brain/nerve cells to be used for energy. The remaining 20 percent travels to the liver, where the glucose molecules are

### Common sources of dietary sugars

Sugar	Sources	Converted in the gut to:
Lactose	Milk, yogurt	1 glucose + 1 galactose
Maltose	Bread, sweet potato, cereals	1 glucose + 1 glucose
Sucrose (aka “table sugar”)	Sweetened beverages, cookies, cakes, sweets	1 glucose + 1 fructose
Fructose	Fruit, HFCS	n/a
Glucose	Carbohydrates, HFCS	n/a
Galactose	Dairy	n/a

*Source: US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Composition Database*

either used as an immediate energy source or converted to a starch called glycogen and stored for later use. Not only is the conversion from glucose to glycogen simple, the liver only has to metabolize 20 percent of all the glucose you consume. It’s easy work. Importantly, glucose also helps to stimulate hormones that turn off hunger signals and encourage body cells to burn energy.

Galactose is quickly converted to glucose in the liver and metabolized in the same way.

Fructose is different. Being almost twice as sweet as glucose, fructose stimulates the brain’s reward center and makes us want to eat more. Unlike glucose, fructose has no ability to stimulate the “I’m full” hormone cascade and instead tricks the brain into thinking the body is starving. This, in turn, triggers hunger and coaxes cells into an



energy-conserving (as opposed to energy-burning) state. Fructose serves no purpose in the human body, so 100 percent of whatever is consumed travels to the liver to be broken down and cleared from the blood. In very small amounts, the liver can manage this without ill effects. But in larger amounts, the liver is overwhelmed by the influx and the metabolic process gets backed up. In this case, fructose is converted to fat and deposited in the liver. The gradual accumulation of visceral fat over time can lead to non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). While we often associate diabetes and other metabolic disorders with obesity, NAFLD can develop in people of all weights. It causes a multitude of problems that can result in (additional) weight gain, high triglyceride levels (a risk factor for heart disease), inflammation, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), diabetes, and possibly dementia. New research indicates that NAFLD is also the primary driver of insulin resistance, the precursor to diabetes and cardiovascular disease, which is still the number one cause of death in the US. One in three Americans has NAFLD, making it the most common disease in the US.

### Where is all this fructose coming from?

You may already know that fructose is the sugar in fruit. But fructose also comprises one-half of the sucrose molecule, best known as table sugar. Whenever you consume sucrose, half the amount of sucrose is glucose and the other half is fructose. Some of the most common sources of sucrose (and therefore fructose) are: foods and beverages that contain white or cane sugar, brown sugar, turbinado sugar, coconut sugar, honey, or HFCS. Incidentally, HFCS has been in consumers’ crosshairs for being the ugly stepsister of sweeteners. But HFCS and sucrose are virtually indistinguishable to the human body.

### Wait, can I still eat fruit?

Yes! Fructose may be the primary sugar in fruit, but the fiber in whole fruit neutralizes the impact of sugar in two ways: by decreasing the total amount of sugar absorbed into the blood from the intestine and by slowing the rate at which it is absorbed. This means the liver receives fructose and glucose at a manageable pace.

### Is there sugar in alcoholic drinks?

The alcohol in beer, wine, and spirits is made from fermenting carbohydrates from fruits and starchy vegetables: wine from grapes, vodka from grains, beer from barley, etc. For beer and spirits, all of the sugar from the original plant is typically converted to alcohol (ethanol) during fermentation. The real sugar kick comes from mixers like fruit juices, sodas, bitter lemon, tonic water, and syrups. Wine, on the other hand, often has some sugar left over from the fermentation process. Sweet dessert wines have the most (roughly 3 grams or three-quarters of a teaspoon per ounce) while dry wines have the least (trace amounts). Be aware that some wine producers add sugar after fermentation to smooth out the flavor of their wines (even dry wines); winemakers are not required to disclose this on their labels, but the practice is not allowed in California. Of course, alcohol contains almost twice as many calories as sugar (7 per gram versus 4 per gram, respectively).

Alcohol is also metabolized by the liver in a very similar way to fructose, and chronic consumption leads to fatty deposits in the liver. (NAFLD was so named to differentiate it from the fatty liver disease caused by excessive drinking, but many of the effects on health are the same.)

### How much sugar is safe?

There is no current consensus on how much sugar should be in our diets. Some experts are calling for sugar to be regulated like alcohol. The guidelines that do exist are for added sugar and exclude the sugars that occur naturally in foods. The USDA’s Dietary Guidelines suggest that added sugars should represent a maximum of 10 percent of your daily caloric intake (50 grams or 12.5 teaspoons per day for a 2,000-calorie diet). The World Health Organization also recommends 10 percent as the maximum caloric intake but suggests that a 5 percent limit is preferable. The American Heart Association recommends 5 to 7 percent as the daily maximum intake.

According to the USDA, the largest sources of added sugar intake are sweetened drinks: sodas, fruit juices/drinks, and sports drinks. The second largest category



includes snacks and sweets. Together, these two groups represent almost 80 percent of the added sugar consumption in the US. Adolescents consume the most added sugar with an average of 17 percent of their daily calories (equivalent to 21.5 teaspoons per day for a 2,000-calorie diet). Children aged 4 to 8 years aren't far behind with an average 15 percent of calories from sugar. Toddlers aged 1 to 3 years average 11 percent.

“If you’re concerned about sugar intake, the most effective change you can make is to avoid sugar-sweetened drinks and fruit juices.”

## Hiding in plain sight

Added sugar can be found in unexpected places: infant formula, puree pouches, crackers, salad dressing, bread, potato salad, sauces, nut milks, and more. The Food and Drug Administration updated food labels to include a line item for “Added Sugars.” Check the label to see where sugar appears in the ingredient list; the closer to the beginning of the list, the more sugar there is. Some foods contain multiple sweeteners. Here are just a few synonyms for added sugar:

- Ingredients containing the word “sugar”
- Ingredients that end in “-ose”
- Barley malt
- Cane juice crystals
- Corn syrup solids
- Dextran
- Dextrose
- Diastatic malt
- Fruit juice
- Golden syrup
- Maltodextrin
- Malt syrup
- Molasses
- Rice syrup
- Sorghum syrup

### Glycemic Index: Use with caution

The Glycemic Index (GI) has become a popular tool for making “healthier” food choices. But it is widely misinterpreted and can lead to unintentional food choices. The GI was developed to help people with diabetes calculate their glucose intake. It ranks carbohydrate-containing foods from 1 to 100 based on how much the food raises blood glucose compared to either pure glucose or white bread (which are assigned the maximum score of 100). The GI ranking is based on 50 grams of carbohydrate from a given food, which tells you nothing about the glucose impact of a single serving. For example, watermelon’s GI is ~80, which is high. But with only 6 grams of carbohydrate per serving, you would need to eat 8.5 servings of watermelon to approach the blood glucose level predicted by the GI. More useful is the Glycemic Load (GL), a measure of how a single serving of a given food raises blood glucose. The GL of watermelon is only 4.

Note that GI and GL only measure the increase of blood glucose, not other sugars. For example, agave nectar is often touted as a “healthier” sweetener, but the main reason it has a low GI is agave nectar can contain between 70 to 90 percent fructose (which is converted to fat in the liver) and contains relatively little glucose.

	Glycemic Index	Glycemic Load
High	70-100	>20
Medium	56-69	10-20
Low	<55	<10



## So...what should I eat?

If you're concerned about sugar intake, the most effective change you can make is to avoid sugar-sweetened drinks and fruit juices. While there are some nutrients in pure fruit juice, 8-ounce servings of orange juice and apple juice have 21 and 24 grams of sugar, respectively, which is almost as much as the 26 grams in the same volume of regular Coke. Flavored yogurt, while not a drink, often contains even more sugar than soda. This is most often true with products marketed to children. So familiarize yourself with the synonyms for added sugar, keep an eye on food labels, and switch to brands that omit unnecessary sugar.

The second most important thing is to incorporate lots of fiber in your diet. Fiber not only decreases and slows the absorption of sugar to a rate where your liver can easily handle it, fiber moves food faster through the intestine so a portion of the calories in your food are actually consumed by the bacteria in your intestine and not you. Faster transit also stimulates quicker release of the “I’m full” message to your brain because the cells that release the satiety hormone (known as peptide YY) are located in your small and large intestine and they only send that signal in the presence of food. You’ll need both soluble and insoluble fiber to see the full benefit of this nutrient. Pureeing insoluble fiber decreases its effectiveness, so don’t expect to fill the bill with smoothies; eat whole foods to get both kinds of fiber. Eat celery with the strings in and apples and pears with the skin on.

The bottom line is: know where to find sugar (and all its aliases) so you can avoid it when you don't want it and enjoy it (in moderation) when you do.

*Catherine is a medical writer. This article was inspired by the purchase of a large bag of Cadbury Mini-Eggs. A Really. Large. Bag.*



# Do you know?

**SCHOOLS** - There are fifteen school districts in Marin County.

**LOTTERY** - One Marin school district enrolls via a lottery system.

**FOG - Where the temperature and fog line change in Marin?**

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NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS

Monthly Queer Family Hike

Join queer families for a COVID-safe walk/hike, which includes casual mingling/chatting, discussions on agreed-upon topics, and just sharing unique experiences and issues we have encountered as queer families. All queer families are welcome!

The safety requirements are:

- Socially distanced families
- Adults and kids (age 2+) can wear masks the whole time

**Date:** TBD  
**Time:** TBD  
**Place:** TBD  
**Cost:** FREE for members

**Registration:** Email Dy Nguyen for details ([dy.nguyen@gmail.com](mailto:dy.nguyen@gmail.com))

GGMG New Mommies + Babies Meetup

Are you looking for your own mom village? Sign up to meet other moms!

If you have children under 12 months old or are expecting, we would like to invite you to a small, casual gathering where you will meet GGMG moms similar to you.

Snacks and drinks will be provided while you and other new moms meet, connect, and take the first steps to plan a stroller walk, find a workout buddy, or plan a playdate for your little ones.

**Date:** TBD  
**Time:** 5:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.  
**Place:** TBD, five locations in different parts of the city, will be emailed to participants close to the event date  
**Cost:** \$5

Sunset Supper Club for Moms

Join us every fourth Thursday for drinks and appetizers at a neighborhood restaurant and meet some new moms in your community!

**Date:** The fourth Thursday of every month: February 23 and March 23  
**Time:** 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. (drop in anytime)  
**Place:** Fiorella Sunset (Rooftop), 1240 9th Ave.  
**Cost:** FREE for members

Glen Park Coffee + Stroller Walk for Mommies (& Babies!)

Would you like to meet neighborhood moms, grab a coffee and enjoy a stroller walk together? We're organizing this Coffee + Stroller walk for you! You'll meet at a coffee shop before you go for an hour of fresh air, light exercise, and great conversation!

**Date:** The first Wednesday of every month: March 1 and April 5  
**Time:** 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
**Place:** Bosworth and Diamond Side Lot by Pono Skincare in Glen Park and we can figure out which coffee shop to stroll to.  
**Cost:** FREE for members

South of Glen Park and Bernal Monthly Moms Night Out

The South of Glen Park/Bernal Neighborhood Meetups Committee would like to invite you to our Monthly Moms Night Out every second Thursday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Moms only! Each month we will visit a different venue in our neighborhood. After kiddo bedtime, come enjoy a drink and some appetizers with other moms. Details for each month's venue will be posted on our website.

**Date:** The second Thursday of every month: March 9 and April 13  
**Time:** 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.  
**Place:** TBD (different place each month)  
**Cost:** FREE for members

Little Oceanauts \$7 Playdate

Looking for an afternoon playdate for your kiddos? Little Oceanauts in Ingleside is open and is the perfect place for children to run off their energy before dinner time! Meet fellow GGMG moms and enjoy a fun afternoon together. GGMG members enjoy the special price of \$7 per kid. Sign up now!

**Date:** The third Friday of every month: February 17 and March 17  
**Time:** 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
**Place:** 1917 Ocean Ave.  
**Cost:** GGMG members pay a special rate of \$7 per child. Infants 6 months and under are free. Parents/caretakers are free. Must RSVP and PREPAY. Limited spots available.

Moms' Happy Hour (Noe Valley, Mission Bay, SOMA, Dogpatch, Potrero Hill, Mission neighborhoods)

Our monthly Moms' Happy Hour would like to invite you to come out with yourself or with your babies/kids every third Thursday between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. We will visit a different venue in a different neighborhood. Details for each month's venue will be posted on our website.

**Date:** The third Thursday of every month: February 16, March 16, and April 20  
**Time:** 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
**Place:** TBD (will be announced two weeks before the event)  
**Cost:** \$5  
**Contact:** Text or email Jessie Lee for details ([Leejessiesf@gmail.com](mailto:Leejessiesf@gmail.com)) or 415.518.6402

Kids Playdate Second Sunday, Monthly

Do you want your kids to run off their energy on the second Sunday of every month? Meet fellow GGMG moms and kids. Location is TBD and will visit a different location in a different neighborhood. Details for each month's location will be posted on our website.

**Date:** The second Sunday of every month: March 12, April 9  
**Time:** 10 a.m. to noon  
**Place:** TBD (will be announced two weeks before the event)  
**Cost:** \$5  
**Contact:** Text or email Jessie Lee for details ([Leejessiesf@gmail.com](mailto:Leejessiesf@gmail.com)) or 415.518.6402

Register for events at [gmg.org/calendar](https://gmg.org/calendar) unless otherwise noted.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

The Golden Gate Mothers Group is committed to building and fostering values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Among the challenges of parenting, a mom’s own needs often take a backseat to those of the family. The DE&I Committee hopes to shed light on this inequity by sharing Bridget Garsh’s interview with Leslie Forde, CEO of Mom’s Hierarchy of Needs, an online community that provides resources and support for mothers.

Leslie Forde: Mom’s Hierarchy of Needs

By Bridget Garsh

Originally published in NeighborSchools, July 27, 2021.  
neighborschools.com/blog/leslie-forde-moms-hierarchy-of-needs

A male colleague once asked Leslie—Why are moms always so stressed? Leslie grabbed a sheet of paper and scribbled down her first draft of her Mom’s Hierarchy of Needs. Leslie responded—moms are stressed because they prioritize everyone else’s needs before themselves. Self-care happens only once everyone else’s needs are met. Leslie is now focused full-time on helping moms prioritize their own self-care. Leslie has talked to countless moms through her research and has transformed Mom’s Hierarchy of Needs into a new business helping employers retain working parents and create inclusive workplaces where caregivers can thrive.

How did you start the Mom’s Hierarchy of Needs?

I completely crashed after my second child, my daughter, was born. I burned out in a really big way at work. So that was the impetus. I always had an incredible amount of energy. And somehow I had this fictitious image in my head about taking maternity leave and then everything returning right back to the way everything was previously. I just didn’t anticipate how different everything in my life would be.

I was approached by a founder of a startup for mental health. In a conversation about mental health, he asked me—Why are moms so stressed? I responded—You know, there’s Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and then there’s Mom’s Hierarchy of Needs. And as soon as I said it, I felt like something just clicked. So I just drew the Mom’s Hierarchy of Needs on a little sheet of paper that evening. And that’s how it all began.

Can you explain to us the levels on Mom’s Hierarchy of Needs?

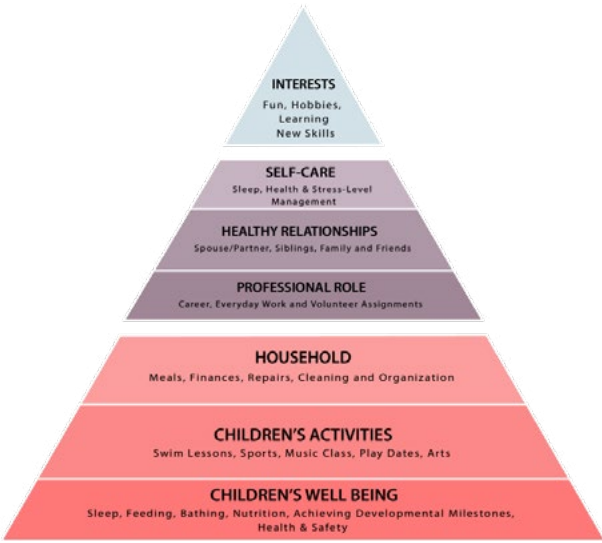
All the things at the bottom are our priorities, our children’s health, their well-being, their milestones and their education. And then you look at the next layer, our household role and everything that we have going on there. And then comes our professional role. All of these roles make up two-thirds of the Mom’s Hierarchy of Needs framework. And then at the very tippy top we have healthy adult relationships, and self-care which include sleep, interests, fun, learning, and of all the things that we would do for our mental, physical and emotional health. They’re way up at the top. And the reason that we never prioritize them is because everything on the bottom is never done.

What do you think is one of the biggest challenges of parenting?

Everyone wants to be excellent at everything. I want to be an excellent mom. I want to be an excellent partner. I want to be an excellent daughter to my aging parents. I want to be an excellent friend and sister. And I want to be an excellent worker. But you can’t do it all. There are real-time trade offs that you have to make. Sometimes you have to say no to something that you would love to say yes to. Or maybe you have to put in 50 percent that you would have put 100 percent before.

What are some strategies that we can use to let go of the mom guilt?

I think there are two big drivers of the guilt. One is the expectations we have for ourselves. But then there are other things that are external, that society has decided for us like who’s at the pediatrician, who’s doing pickup and drop off? And it’s those external requirements that get pushed onto us, either subtly or not subtly, where people start to feel a lot of guilt. So I think understanding your personal triggers is the best advice I could give around managing guilt. Because if you know what your hot zones are, you can create some rules, so that you’re not wrestling with guilt every time you have to make that decision. Then you’re not revisiting your personal boundaries every time you have to make a decision.



MEMBER SUPPORT

Getting to a Clutter-Free Mind

Originally published in the February/March 2022 Occupation issue.

The new year is often a time for purging and reorganizing. Finding new homes for once-loved toys and cleaning up after the last guest leaves are just a few of the chores that rise to the surface with the onset of springtime. However, it’s important to keep your mind on the list of spaces to clear as well. Clearing the clutter from your brain can lead to a reduction in stress, increased productivity, and overall well-being. Here are a few ways to start:

- Get on a social media diet: Install a time-limit app, unfollow or unsubscribe from “friends” or brands that clog up your feeds with negative, false, or unnecessary information.
- Set your priorities: What matters most to you? Be strict about your time and the demands that fall outside of these priorities.
- Write it down: Keep a journal. Keep a notepad next to your bed or even your shower—seriously! Get it out of your mind. Act on it, defer it, or forget it!
- Practice mindfulness: We know—meditation isn’t for everyone. But even taking the minutes you use to brush your teeth or wash your dishes to pause and reflect can help you slow your pace in a positive way.
- Let it go: Elsa was on to something. Recognizing the negative feelings that crop up is the first step toward freedom. Deciding to let them fly away takes practice.

If you’re feeling extra-stressed this new year, please don’t hesitate to reach out to [member.support@ggmg.org](mailto:member.support@ggmg.org).

PARTNERSHIPS

The Friends branch of the Partnerships Committee collaborates with local organizations and businesses to provide substantial discounts and resources for our members. We aim to develop mutually beneficial relationships with businesses in the Bay Area that provide useful services to mothers. Our goal is to work preferentially with small local businesses run by women and/or people of color in an effort to promote their professional advancements in our society.

The Partners branch of the Partnerships Committee manages our relationships with our large Partners including the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco (JCCSF), Luke’s Local grocery, and UrbanSitter.

Committee duties in Friends:

- Input new offers by local businesses (Friends) looking to provide substantial (20 percent or more) discounts to GGMG members
- Maintain our relationships with our current Friends



Seeking Volunteers to Join the Golden Gate Mothers Group Magazine Staff

Openings:

- Writers
- Copy Editors
- Designers
- Photographers

Email [editor@ggmg.org](mailto:editor@ggmg.org) for additional details.

Formal experience not required. Moms from all backgrounds encouraged to apply!

- Seek out potential new Friends who provide services useful to our members
- Negotiate new business discounts
- Update members on new discounts

Committee duties in Partners:

- Maintain relationships with current Partners and seek out new Partners
- Negotiate new business discounts to expand the discount offerings for GGMG members
- Outreach for new Partners of interest with preference to small local businesses run by women and/or people of color

Open Roles:

- Committee Co-chair in Friends (one hour per week)
- Committee Co-chair in Partnerships (one to two hours per week)

To volunteer, email [partnerships@ggmg.org](mailto:partnerships@ggmg.org).



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\*Grades offered vary by location. Preschool State License Numbers: 384001837, 414004014, 384004006, 384004165. Copyright © 2023 Stratford Schools, Inc.



## Teaching What I Never Learned

By Anna Gracia

I was 6 years old when I got my first diary. I was still 6 the first time my older sisters read it. "I like Grant! Shhh, it's a secret!" they'd tease, repeating it again and again—still to this day, in fact. Our mom, the primary caretaker and dispenser of punishments, had two ways of coping with fights in our five-child household: ignore it, or yell at everyone while coming after us with a hairbrush. The diary situation got the silent treatment.

At that early age, I'd already gotten the message that would be repeated back to me in a hundred different tiny ways as I grew up.

*Never trust your family.*

*Never trust your family* with your depression because those people are just looking for attention and suicide will make you



move out of the bedroom she still shares with her younger brothers so they won't be separated.

But is it enough?

I tell myself that if forced to take sides, I would want my kids to stick together at all costs—even if it's to align against their parents. Us. The people I swore would never subject my kids to the kind of mental health neglect I'd suffered. I tell myself that it could be enough. All that matters is that they have a support system—people they can go to and trust. But it turns out, I'm lying to myself.

I want it to be *me*.

I want to rewrite my life. Find a better

road map for my kids. Save them from the isolation of being surrounded by people you can't talk to. But in the process, I've had to reckon with my own violations of the safe relationships I'm trying so hard to cultivate.

After all, who hasn't been guilty of shouting at your kids while you're just trying to cook them a healthy dinner, damn it? And who hasn't shuffled a kid back into bed for the tenth time, frustrated they won't just leave you the hell alone for a night? Or unthinkingly quipped a sarcastic remark while joking around, only to watch, horrified, as their siblings repeat it back?

In a world with limited time and limited energy, parenting seems to be an endless series of "damned if you do, damned if you don't" decisions.

My kids continue to grow and I spend every day choosing between my own exhaustion and their need for connection. Some days I choose them. Most days I can't. And every year, they share a little less with me. I don't know if it's because they're reaching a certain age, or if it's because they truly don't have anything worrying, or if it's because I'm so obsessed with checking in that I've become actively un-cool to confide in. And my choices are to either lean into it or back off, each with its own set of consequences.

I am not responsible for my kids' mental health. I know this. But I am responsible for giving them the tools they need to tend to it—tools I'm still learning myself. I'd like to think I'm doing better than my parents did for me. But like them, I don't know what I don't know. I just hope I never find out after it's too late.

*Anna is the author of Boys I Know and other contemporary books for teens. Find more of her writing at [anna-gracia.com](https://anna-gracia.com).*

**"In a world with limited time and limited energy, parenting seems to be an endless series of 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' decisions."**

burn in hell for eternity. *Never trust your family* with your eating disorders because there are starving kids in Somalia and besides, shouldn't you worry more about shaving or getting a tan? But most importantly, *never, ever, ever trust your family* with your life because none of them ever even noticed that you obsessively made plans to kill yourself. Meticulous, thought-out plans.

I live in constant fear of history repeating itself with my kids.

"Share time!" I announce cheerfully over the dinner table, trying desperately to be one of those families who confide in one other. I memorize the names of their friends. Find activities that match their current interests. Take them out for one-on-one time, just in case there's something they might want to share with me but not everyone else. I'm a hamster in a wheel of my own creation, spinning in place as I frantically work to be available. Trusted. Just in case.

In some ways, I see it paying off. My kids are best friends with each other, swapping crush confessions and deepest secrets out of my earshot, despite a handful of slip-ups on either side. Even now, in middle school, my daughter won't





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