

NOVEMBER 2021



**GGMG**

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# INDULGENCE

magazine







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**Writers** Emily Beaven, Christine Chen, Gail Cornwall, Clare Deignan, Julie Houghton, Laure Latham, Veronica Reilly-Granich

**Copy Editors** Sarah Brandstetter, Sasha Fahimi, Anna Gracia, Ali Hughes, Neha Masson

**Designers** Alissa Harrison, Jessica Franklin, Yvonne Tsang

**Photographers** Anna Munandar, Bhavya Thyagarajan, Katya Mizrahi

**Contest Editor** Gabriella Judd Cirelli

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# Letter from the Editor: Because We're Worth It

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is an editor and photographer living in Cole Valley with her three children.

“Oh, I know I don’t need it; it’s an indulgence,” we usually say with a bashful smile and a wave of the hand, as we explain away our latest purchase/trip/act of self-care. As parents, and particularly as mothers, we’re often taught that self-denial is a virtue, that she who suffers most wins, and that any indulgences we do partake in must come with an apology. I don’t like this game, and I don’t want to play it anymore. One thing the pandemic taught us is that we could let the little things go. Makeup? Heels? Showers? All these fell by the wayside as we sought out what little comforts and reprieves we could find in our shrinking worlds. From baking jaunts to sweatpants purchases, we self-soothed in ways that didn’t jibe with our culture, which values self-denial and industriousness. Though the tendency is to label these lifestyle additions and subtractions as either frivolous or lazy and therefore indulgences, they weren’t. They were powerfully necessary to maintaining our sense of well-being during desperately hard times. I didn’t apologize then for these little extras, and I’m not going to feel guilty now.

In this issue our authors explore various facets of indulgence. Emily Beaven loosens her belt and shares holiday recipes, including some that use clever tricks to lighten the caloric load at a time when we often consume more than we want to. Christine Chen probes the GGMG forums to discover what mood-elevating purchases our members made during the dark days of the pandemic. And Sasha Fahimi reviews different parenting styles identified by experts and shares why the permissive style in particular might reap the greatest rewards for parents and children alike at least in the short term. As long as they’re not harmfully excessive, we should be proud of fulfilling our desires and treating ourselves with

“Life is short, parenthood is hard, and if I want to buy that weird-looking half-dress/half-blanket I saw on TV, it’s not because I’m feeling indulgent, it’s because I absolutely need it.”

thoughtfulness. Life is short, parenthood is hard, and if I want to buy that weird-looking half-dress/half-blanket I saw on TV, it’s not because I’m feeling indulgent, it’s because I absolutely need it.

*Sonya Abrams*

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**NEXT ISSUE:** Roots

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

**THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY:** Settling into our new, suburban life and soaking up the sun; happily going to IRL school events and living in our water damaged house while waiting for a contractor; Dream come true: Galapagos. Swimming with penguin, sea turtles and sharks; Sexy knee high cam boot (hairline foot fracture); Started running, weight lifting, journaling, meditating, Blogilates 30 Day Calendar, and water sports.

# Letter from the Board: Leaning In To Small Indulgences

By Erin Cahill



Erin is both a mom—to Alyx, Jack, and two orange tabbies—and a partner in a large accounting firm. Her husband and co-parent, Niall, helps to make this all possible. When she has free time, of which lately there is not a lot, she enjoys hiking, running, and wine.

To say the last 18 months have been one big blur that has increased burnout is putting it lightly. It has been a hard year—professionally, the busiest year of my life (which is remarkable, given how long I have been doing this), while personally struggling to find balance with my family and friends. And I know each of us has experienced our pandemic burnout and difficulties in different ways—financially, personally, and professionally. This month’s theme made me reflect on the things that

have helped get me through this difficult time. Perhaps these indulgences didn’t seem like a luxury at the time. I love wine and drinking it and have much more often picked out the “good” wine during the pandemic than I might have in the past. Another indulgence is a bath—we have a large soaking tub, and I often take a bath at least once a week. Sometimes I may sneak one in during the week if I am really run down and tired. It energizes me and helps me reset. My other

indulgence has been at-home masks and peels. I try all kinds, searching for the one that will make my lines and dark circles go away! Unfortunately, I have not found the miracle maker, but the facials combined with the bath and wine are indulgences that provide that much needed “me” time. I suspect that all these indulgences will remain in a post pandemic world—although they may be less frequent. I hope as you read this month’s edition you will find indulgences that you can relate to—either those during the pandemic or after, as we all hopefully go back to a more normal way of life soon. As we start to return to normalcy, if you haven’t had time for yourself, I hope you allow that to happen and you too start to (re)connect with others. One of the things I miss about pre-pandemic GGMG is the in-person meet ups, events, and meetings. We are starting to return to some of the in-person events, and we would love to see you at these when you feel comfortable. We miss our family of mamas. And of course, if you are interested in greater involvement in GGMG, there are a number of volunteering opportunities available—from committees to Board positions. You can reach out directly to

“As we start to return to normalcy, if you haven’t had time for yourself, I hope you allow that to happen and you too start to (re)connect with others.”

me at [board@ggmog.org](mailto:board@ggmog.org) for more information or check out the forums and monthly bulletin for open positions!

*Erin Cahill*

## Cover Outtakes



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

Cover photo by Katya Mizrahi Photography



# Family-friendly Bay Area Brunch Spots

By Jessica Perry

Looking to indulge in a nice weekend brunch that pleases the whole family? Check out these favorites of many GGMG members.



**Zazie** is located in the heart of San Francisco’s Cole Valley and has a lovely backyard patio. French-inspired brunch food is complemented by a large selection of coffee, tea, and delicious beverages. [www.zaziesf.com](http://www.zaziesf.com)

**Park Chalet** sits right next to Ocean Beach and has a wonderful back patio that opens up into Golden Gate Park. Eat here, listen to some live music, and then head over to Ocean Beach or the San Francisco Zoo. [www.parkchalet.com](http://www.parkchalet.com)

**Cassava** is located right in the midst of the Richmond corridor and features delicious Asian-fusion dishes. Outdoor seating is comfortable and well-heated. Be sure to check out the Japanese breakfast bowl. [www.cassavasf.com](http://www.cassavasf.com)

**Sam’s Anchor Cafe** in Tiburon is a great jumping off point to have an early lunch with a beautiful view of Angel Island and access to the ferry. [www.samscafe.com](http://www.samscafe.com)

**Mission Rock Resort Oyster Bar & Grill** is located in the Mission Bay neighborhood of San Francisco and has a stunning outdoor patio with views of the bay. Brunch fare includes a wide variety of eggs in addition to many seafood-oriented dishes. [www.missionrockresort.com](http://www.missionrockresort.com)

*Jessica is a writer, editor, mom and hardcore brunch enthusiast. She is doing her best to find the best eggs benedict in the Bay Area.*

**Presidio Social Club Exchange** recently reopened with an expanded patio that is great for the kids to run around in. Brunch selection features mostly California cuisine. Live music also frequently plays. Reservations are recommended. [www.presidiosocialclub.com](http://www.presidiosocialclub.com)

**Chloe’s Cafe** on Church Street in San Francisco has an extensive brunch menu and outdoor dining area that’s suitable for the whole family. Take your pick from a multitude of egg dishes, sandwiches, sweet treats, and more! [www.chloessf.com](http://www.chloessf.com)

**Farm Shop** in Larkspur at the Marin Country Mart has a wide selection of pizzas and main dishes with an extensive outdoor dining area. Let your kids run around the fountain and play area afterwards. [www.farmshopmarin.market](http://www.farmshopmarin.market)

**Brenda’s Oakland** has an extensive breakfast menu made up entirely of New Orleans food. Choose from six different types of beignets or other Southern breakfast specialties. [www.brendasoakland.com](http://www.brendasoakland.com)

**Grand Lake Kitchen** in Oakland has a variety of brunch foods. Notable options include the chilaquiles verdes and the pastrami benedict. [www.grandlakekitchen.com](http://www.grandlakekitchen.com)

**Milagros** in Redwood City has delicious Latin brunch food and a beautiful outdoor patio. Look for unique items such as the el mariachi breakfast burrito and loaded huevos rancheros. [www.milagrosrc.com](http://www.milagrosrc.com)



# Li’l Kid, Big City: Steps in San Francisco

By Christine Chen

The **Lyon Street Steps**, which span over two blocks on the side of a steep hill with amazing views of the Palace of Fine Arts and the SF Bay, is a popular location for a workout. The **Hidden Garden Steps** in the Inner Sunset are a public art space, featuring a beautiful 148-step mosaic tile staircase on 16th Avenue between Kirkham and Lawton Streets. Artists Aileen Barr and Colette Crutcher created the first ceramic-tiled stairway, the **Moraga Steps**, also in the Inner Sunset. The **Filbert Street Steps** are a series of wooden stairs connecting Coit Tower to a steep slope at Kearny, across the Montgomery median, and down to Sansome Street. The highlight of these steps is **Napier Lane**, a wooden plank sidewalk lined with pre-1900 cottage-like homes, as well as the public **Grace Marchant Garden**. The steps also offer unobstructed views of the Bay Bridge and Treasure Island, as well as the local feral parrots who visit regularly. My kids’ favorite is the **Embarcadero Center spiral staircases** (and ramps), in the still pretty empty office space. The stunning bright green, yellow, and orange colored **Lincoln Park Steps** off California Street dead-ends into the Lincoln Park Golf Course. The **Athens Avalon Greenspace Tiled Steps** in the Excelsior offer pedestrians a new rainbow-hued mosaic staircase surrounded by a lush garden. The **Arelious Walker Stairway**, located in the Bayview, connects an isolated part of the neighborhood to the India Basin Shoreline and Bay Trail. The stairs use textiles and ceramics from Africa, Central America, and the Middle East.

*Christine hopes you’ll enjoy her article on Pandemic Indulgent Purchases, where her bio can be found.*

# Indulge in Movement

By Alissa Harrison



The pandemic inspired a resurging commitment to finding the balance within the trifecta of life: work, family, and health. Movement is essential to helping us stay positive in our daily lives, particularly since many of us have slowed down, whether it’s due to working from home, feeling sad from missing friends and family, or limitations of traveling for business or pleasure.

Movement and creative problem solving through technology has provided abundant access, empowering us to live or find joy in how we live. With limitations of physical connectivity, old and new friends connect through the use of technology and social media.

Some useful apps allow people passionate about fitness to come together, checking in daily, often harmonizing through a fitness challenge, leader boards, and daily efforts with comments enabled to keep everyone engaged and the sharing of resources fluid.

- Strava: GPS tracking, challenges, and allows photo sharing from your activities.
- Nike Run Club: GPS run tracking; audio guided runs; weekly, monthly, and custom distance challenges; customized coaching goal plans.
- All Trails: 200,000+ hand-curated trail maps for hiking, running, and biking trails around the world. Share photos and reviews of trails, creating spaces of possibilities.

The icing on the cake is that we can indulge in movement with our littles. There are so many possibilities in and outside our home (family Zumba sessions to get the morning going and outdoor trails alongside the beautiful coastal scenery). When we indulge in our health, we can find the awareness to reframe our perspectives, to make sound decisions and expand the possibilities in what we can do.

*Alissa enjoys exploring the wild open space with her rambunctious boys, ages 2 and 4. They frequent scenic trails, pirate ship playgrounds, zip lining parks, and beautiful beaches along the coast. She meditates, journals, walks, hikes, strength trains, and deadlifts. Alissa is ecstatically taking steps to overcome her fear to finally enjoy the wild waters of the ocean.*



# Help Your Child Build Eating and Body Confidence

By Casey Crosbie, RD, CEDRD-S



Casey Crosbie, RD, CEDRD-S owns Crosbie Nutrition, a private practice in Berkeley, and is co-author of *How to Nourish Your Child Through an Eating Disorder: A Simple, Plate-by-Plate Approach to Rebuilding a Healthy Relationship with Food*. She previously served as Director of Nutrition for The Healthy Teen Project in Los Altos, CA as well as Lead Dietitian for the Comprehensive Eating Disorders Program at Stanford. She's also a loving mom of two kids. Find her online at [www.crosbienutrition.com](http://www.crosbienutrition.com).

**My child is a picky eater; how can I help them eat a wider variety of foods?**

First, it's important to recognize that kids (especially young kids) are largely intuitive eaters. It's only after we adults impose our own eating agenda that kids lose sight of that intuition. As parents, it's our job to offer a variety of food at consistent times of day in a relaxed eating environment. Beyond that, it's up to our kids to determine how much to eat. When given the space to explore different tastes and textures without pressure to eat more or less of something, kids make up for the gaps throughout the day (or week!) on their own. This is known as the "Division of Responsibility," a term coined by Ellyn Satter. Finding fun ways to incorporate new foods can help too. Try a "family food experiment"—pick a food that is familiar to your child, e.g., apples, and go to the grocery store with your child to pick out a few different varieties. Then, at home, slice them all up, and get the family involved in an "apple tasting." You can even make a little tasting sheet with attributes like taste, smell, color, feel, texture, etc. and have each family member write down or talk about each of the apple varieties. Even very young children can participate—they might like to use a crayon to "write" down their thoughts about the food. This can be done with any type of food!

**I struggle with my own body image issues; how can I prevent my child from experiencing the same?**

We live in a society that praises thinness and shames fatness. This is a global issue that must change, and it starts with body diversity acceptance at home. As humans, we come in many different shapes and sizes—it's part of what makes us beautiful and unique! As parents, it's one of our most important jobs to role model acceptance of body diversity "whether

that's race, ethnicity, gender, dis/ability, sexual orientation, religion, class, or other human attributes," according to Health at Every Size. Teaching your child to nourish their body, to move it in different and fun ways, and to celebrate all that it does for them sets the stage for a life of body acceptance. Try eliminating negative self-talk at home and replacing it with positive body talk. If you need more support with this, check out [thebodypositive.org](http://thebodypositive.org).

**My kid is sugar obsessed! Going into the holiday season, how can I help my family eat less sugar?**

Sugar is everywhere, both in natural forms (like fruit) and processed forms (like candy). As humans, we are born with a preference for sweet because the lactose in breast milk is sweet. Offering three meals and two to three snacks at consistent times of day, including a variety of food groups (grains/starches, proteins, fruits/veggies, dairy or dairy alternatives, and fat) will help everyone in your family remain well-fed. That way, if sugary foods are available, they will be consumed in moderate quantities. It's helpful to include these foods as part of meals or snacks so that other nutrient-dense foods are consumed alongside them. For example, if your child is asking for cookies, add them to a meal that includes the five food groups listed above. If your child arrives to the meal properly hungry (meaning the last time they ate was snack a couple of hours ago) and eats the cookies first, don't worry! They will likely still eat the other foods on the plate because they are eating intuitively. In this way, you are showing them that it's okay to eat sugar, as part of a balanced meal. This gives them the opportunity to practice intuitive eating and paves the way to building a healthy relationship with food. For more information about balanced meals and snacks, check out [www.platebyplateapproach.com](http://www.platebyplateapproach.com).

## NEW ARRIVALS



Congratulations to Ali! 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 [www.minianna.com](http://www.minianna.com)

Ali Hughes    **Baby Madeline Therese**



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 [tinyurl.com/ggmgnNewArrivals](http://tinyurl.com/ggmgnNewArrivals).

## CONTEST

### Meet Santa at Filoli

Built in 1917, Filoli is a historic Woodside estate famous not only for the beautiful home, but also for its incredible gardens. If you were a fan of the TV show "Dynasty," you've seen glimpses of this beautiful property as it was filmed at Filoli. The home and gardens form 16 acres of the 654 property acres.

During the holidays, Filoli amazes visitors with its wonderfully festive decorations. On "Santa Weekends" you and your children can meet Santa outdoors in the beautiful garden court to take a selfie. This favorite annual event is sold out, but thanks to tickets offered by a GGMG member, our lucky prize winner's family of four will attend on Sunday, December 19. The event is open from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The value of this prize is \$86.

**Please enter the contest by emailing [contest@ggmg.org](mailto:contest@ggmg.org) with the subject line "Santa."** One winner will be selected at random.

The winner of our last contest is Adrienne Ford, who has won a partial highlight service with gloss or toner, together with a consultation, trim, and blow dry from hair guru Cerissa Sanchez. The value of this prize is \$185.

Thanks to our generous prize donors. Please patronize their services!

Note: All visitors to Filoli are required to wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status



Photo by Sharon Mollerus via Flickr

## PARTNERSHIPS

GGMG Members, don't forget to use your exclusive discount at Luke's Local Grocery! Get 15 percent off of all purchases in-store and in the app.

- To redeem in the Luke's Local app, use code GGMG2021.
- To redeem in-store, simply show a screenshot of your GGMG membership card (log in to GGMG and click on "My Membership Card").

**Luke's Local locations:**

Cole Valley Market: 960 Cole St. San Francisco, CA

Cow Hollow Market: 2190 Union St. San Francisco, CA



## A Necessary Getaway

By Bolívar Puyol

Growing up in a blue-collar Latino family in Los Angeles, we never felt deprived although money was always tight. We rarely ate out, clothes lived multiple lives as patched-up hand-me-downs, and we were lucky if we got an annual trip to the movies or a Dodgers game. My parents had no date nights, no anniversary weekends away, and my Ecuadorian dad would give my mom a hard time if she ever made a call to her mother in México outside of Christmas.

My mother afforded herself and my siblings one periodic indulgence that my father somehow allowed. Every couple of years she'd pack up my younger brother and sister and I to board a plane, leaving my dad behind to hold down the fort. She would take us to visit my grandmother and other extended family in Guadalajara, the beautiful, flower-filled city of her birthplace. We spent the entire summer with family and friends, immersing ourselves in speaking Spanish with cousins, learning about Mexican history and culture, and touring the country. They were among the fondest memories of my youth, and I wanted my 14-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter (my eldest is away at college) to have similar experiences, but COVID interrupted our travel plans.

This summer my mother hit a milestone—turning 75 years old. Since it appeared the public health situation might be turning a corner and with our family vaccinated, I suggested to my mother and siblings that we reunite on my mother's home turf to celebrate. It was an indulgence that I felt we deserved after all the sacrifices my children and I made through the pandemic and beyond.

Ultimately, we were able to mitigate the risks, and have the kinds of experiences together that I had hoped for. We sat out on the patio of my mother's home in Guadalajara and shared stories with visiting family like I remembered doing when my grandmother was alive. My kids and I walked the historic old town, sat out for tacos along the tree-lined streets, and learned about the history and politics recounted in the dramatic murals of José Clemente Orozco inside the statehouse.

In Puerto Vallarta, my son and I scuba dived while my daughter snorkeled with my brother among schools of colorful



fish. We surfed in the charming Pueblo Mágico of Sayulita. We strolled along the Malecón, laughed with the street entertainers, admired the public art, and watched resplendent sunsets. We also explored the beautiful colonial city of Guanajuato, birthplace of Mexican independence, land of history and legend that fascinated my children as much as it had thrilled me as a child.

I had debated the safety of taking my children to México City, a vast metropolis that I had not visited in 20 years, and found myself impressed with how disciplined and responsible its citizens were in handling the pandemic, and how progressive and tolerant the community

was (we were there over Pride Week)—not to mention how clean, safe, organized, and beautiful everything was. My kids and I visited the impressive Museo Nacional de Antropología, where my son could see with his own eyes relics of the Aztec, Maya, and Olmec past that he had learned about in school. I took my daughter on a pilgrimage to the home of Frida Kahlo, her hero and artistic inspiration. We attended a ballet folklórico performance at the spectacular Palacio de Bellas Artes, my daughter dancing away with my sister outside after the show.

We stood in awe amidst the pyramids of Teotihuacan, transporting ourselves back to a time that even the Aztecs considered ancient history.

Ultimately, however, it

was the time spent connecting with family and friends that was *the* highlight for all of us. My kids reveled in getting to know and engage with cousins they had barely known before. On our flight home, when asked what her favorite part of the trip was, my daughter's eyes lit up, answering without hesitation: hanging out with her cousins, and she asked when we could see them again. I came away thinking that in fact, this trip had not been so much an indulgence as a necessity, an essential element of living a healthy and meaningful life. Like my mother before me, I felt compelled to do it as part of my responsibility to myself and my children and was fortunate to have made it happen.

*Bolívar Puyol is a single dad, the son of hard-working immigrants, and an architect, backpacker, and lousy pigtail stylist. He lives in San Francisco with his 8-year-old daughter, his 14-year-old son, and, occasionally during pandemics, his college-age son.*

**“We strolled the Malecón, laughed with the street entertainers, admired the public art, and watched resplendent sunsets.”**

## Autumn & Halloween

By Laure Latham

Pumpkins, bats, and witches may be a sacred Halloween trilogy, but there's so much more to fall. Whether your young ones enjoy spooky tales, not-so-scary nursery rhymes, or heart-warming Thanksgiving wisdom, they will love each of these books celebrating the season.



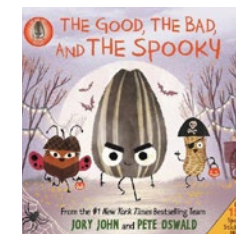
### Five Little Pumpkins

Written by Tiger Tales, illustrated by Lucy Barnard

“Five little pumpkins sitting on a gate, The first one says ‘Oh my it’s getting late!’” The classic nursery rhyme gets a makeover with slightly different text and beautiful illustrations full of fall

colors such as purple, orange, and deep red. Sturdy enough so a toddler can turn the pages, this book will invite countless rhyming bedtimes at home—before the big night out!

**Ages: 0 to 2 years**



### The Bad Seed Presents: The Good, the Bad, and the Spooky

Written by Jory John, illustrated by Pete Oswald

Do you remember when you were a child and agonized over what to wear for Halloween? Bad Seed is

exactly like that. His favorite holiday is Halloween, but costume-anxiety hits him hard. What if his costume isn't good enough? Bad Seed gets so grumpy that he finds a way to postpone trick-or-treating for everyone. It seems like a good idea at the time, but is it really? Kids will relate to how stressful Halloween can be when you don't know what to wear and they will particularly enjoy the message at the end of the story.

**Ages: 3 to 5 years**



### Mary Engelbreit's Little Book of Thanks

Written and illustrated by Mary Engelbreit

Mary Engelbreit's signature folksy artwork makes this little book of thanks a real treasure. Each image illustrates inspirational quotes on the meaning of gratitude from people

such as Oscar Wilde, Maya Angelou, and John F. Kennedy.

As an introduction to the true spirit of Thanksgiving, this book is easy to understand while inviting deeper conversations.

**Ages: 3 to 7 years**



### Camp Time in California (Magic Tree House)

Written by Mary Pope Osborne, illustrated by AG Ford

When the famous Magic Tree House takes Jack and Annie back in time to 1903 in Yosemite National Park, the children get to meet John Muir and

President Theodore Roosevelt. Engaging and full of information, this book will make you fall in love (again) with the national park and will help young readers understand the need for conservation. Filled with amazing fall colors, readers will learn about the fun of camping (or staying) in Yosemite Valley.

**Ages: 6 to 9 years**



### The Wish Giver: Three Tales of Coven Tree

Written by Bill Brittain, illustrated by Andrew Glass

In the small town of Coven Tree in New England, a strange man appears at the annual fair. Claiming to be able to grant wishes for 50 cents apiece, he sells four wishes, one each to four townspeople, then promptly disappears. The story of

each person and their wish is told separately, with each wish leading to horrible side effects. However, by the end, they're all nicely entwined. This Newbery Honor Book will send shivers down the spine of older readers looking for a highly original tale of dark magic.

**Ages: 8 to 12 years**

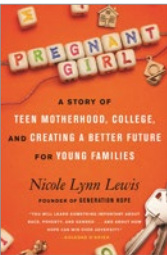
*Laure blogs on healthy living and adventure travel at Frog Mom (frogmom.com), and is the author of Best Hikes with Kids: San Francisco Bay Area. She works in legal marketing and lives in London, where she peppers adventures with her two teenage daughters with wild swims, foraging, and cream teas. You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



# New Perspectives on Old Parenting Problems

By Gail Cornwall

With these four recently released books, you can indulge in turning compassion into action, owning your introversion (or understanding someone else’s) with giggles, making your kids more sufferable, and scaffolding a high-peforming kid when they start to melt down.



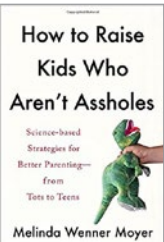
**Pregnant Girl: A Story of Teen Motherhood, College, and Creating a Better Future for Young Families**

In relatable and often gripping detail, Nicole Lynn Lewis shows readers how a college-bound, middle-class kid can become pregnant and homeless, surrounded by addiction, abuse, and poverty. Now the CEO of a nonprofit that helps teen parents become college graduates, Lewis speaks not just to her own experience but also the stories she’s been entrusted with over the years. “Despite what people assume, our pregnancies were not the first thing to ever happen to us,” she writes. In the wake of trauma, such as growing up in Lewis’s high-conflict home, “a young person can be so desperate for someone to latch onto in the storm that everything is secondary to just needing to be anchored in something—in anyone.” Like a boyfriend or an unborn baby. Wrapping political history and statistics in her own narrative of living on stale Pop-Tarts and walking high school halls like a ghost, Lewis makes a persuasive case that policymakers “begin with the pregnancy ... ignoring all that came before because it allows us to overlook all the ways we have failed them. But... the pregnancy [is] just a symptom of larger, often systemic, issues. Larger issues in a family. Larger issues in a country.” Instead, we lead with shame and demand impossible feats of bootstrapping. “How many women were in the same situation I was, but for them, the stars didn’t align?” Lewis asks. “The housing didn’t come through... They didn’t have transportation to get to the WIC office to buy formula. No one in their family had ever gone to college—or ever planted the seed that they could earn a degree. What happened to them? What happened to their children? What happened to their promise and their potential?” In *Pregnant Girl*, she presents a seemingly insurmountable confluence of societal ills, but a dent can be made by standing witness to these mothers’ stories and contributing to Generation Hope.



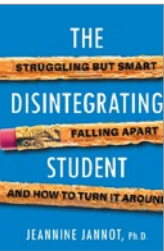
**Babies Don’t Make Small Talk (So Why Should I?): The Introvert’s Guide to Surviving Parenthood**

“If you are the type of person who draws energy from getting alone time, parenting will tap into the well of your energy and pump it dry,” writes Julie Vick in this curious little book. The quick read belongs firmly in the humor genre, funny for the sake of funny, and yet, Vick includes serious through lines for introverted parents: It’s okay to say no to what’s expected (e.g., baby shower), and it’s okay to ask for protection from the social assaults of the world from a partner or friend who isn’t depleted by interfacing with people. Vick also includes quite a few tips and tricks, ranging from the more serious (“Go back to work: As long as you don’t work as a Walmart greeter or door-to-door salesperson, your job is likely to provide you a few moments of reprieve from people at least some of the time”) to the seemingly inane (“I find that pumping gas is an effective way to gain a few minutes of time to recharge. I can see my kid in their car seat the whole time, but I can’t hear them yelling when a cracker just broke in half.”). When it comes to pregnancy announcements, “The beauty of a printed card is that it’s hard for people to hit reply and start asking you whether you are planning to get an epidural.” If you decide to go through with that shower after all, Vick recommends you flip the gift unveiling, asking each guest to open the present they brought so the attention isn’t on you. When you have to attend a school event, volunteer for a job like taking tickets: “This will give you something to do other than standing awkwardly in the corner staring at the clock.” As an extrovert, I didn’t need these specific tips, but I still found Vick’s perspective as illuminating as it was amusing.



**How to Raise Kids Who Aren’t Assholes: Science-based Strategies for Better Parenting—from Tots to Teens**

Don’t be fooled by the profanity: *How to Raise Kids Who Aren’t Assholes* is a serious parenting book meticulously researched by a top-notch science writer. In it, Melinda Wenner Moyer tackles complex concepts and data in straightforward prose that’s all the more readable for its lack of forced folksiness and pep. Part one parses studies that get at answers to the questions, “How do you foster generosity, honesty, kindness, ambition, and resilience? How do you stamp out rudeness, entitlement, arrogance, sexism, and racism?” Then she moves on, providing “science-backed strategies to help you deal with particularly gnarly situations and issues: What should you do when your kids fight? How should you manage technology and social media? What’s the best way to talk to your kids about sex and pornography?” Wenner Moyer describes grappling with whether we really need another parenting book, given “that today’s parents endure far too much criticism as it is” but deciding to move forward driven by the belief “that we can become better parents by educating ourselves.” Her choice finds vindication in the dozens of passages I highlighted, like this one—“Parents of bullies... are among the least likely to think that their kids are being mean”—and this one—“kids who attended academic, achievement-oriented preschools rated their own abilities as lower, had stunted expectations of their own success, and were less motivated than kids who went to more relaxed preschools in which they chose their own activities in a play-based atmosphere.”



**The Disintegrating Student: Struggling But Smart and Falling Apart, and How to Turn Around**

Jeannine Jannot, Ph.D. has worked as a school psychologist, a psychology professor, and an academic coach. In *The Disintegrating Student*, she holds the hands of parents with formerly stellar students who’ve started to fall apart. Rather than immediately dispensing her “77 Tips to Be Productive and Well,” Jannot takes a back-to-basics approach, walking through common parenting missteps and the science of how each good intention backfires: being permissive, controlling, overprotective, enabling, and more. Cultural forces—including kidnapping fears, the movement to boost self-esteem, an emphasis on testing, and hyperconnectivity—also contribute to students melting down when they hit a “rigor tipping point.” In other words, kids can swing academic success despite skill deficits and counterproductive habits, but only temporarily. At some point, middle school for some, college, or even graduate school for others, students hit a wall, and “will often reject well-intentioned offers of assistance,” even going so far as to create a “decoy explanation for their declining performance.” At this point, the ask of parents is both complicated—with loads of best practices to consider—and simple: “[M]aintain a positive attitude and be more tolerant of normal adolescent behaviors.” Oh yeah, and direct them to Jannot’s “77 tips” for rethinking how they approach organization, time management, studying, mindset, stress, sleep, and screens.

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.

# Finding Career Fulfillment Is Not Indulgent

By Julie Houghton

I vividly remember the moments right after my older daughter was born almost 10 years ago—how the doula put her on my belly and told me to let her make her own way to my breast, which by some miracle she did. I was truly awestruck to meet her, and I felt a sense of otherworldly wonder at the things we already knew about each other. I knew her hiccups and her stretches. She knew my voice.

Right alongside those images of seeing and holding my daughter for the first time is another strong memory—an immediate and incredible sense of dread at the idea of leaving her after maternity leave to return to a job I hated and the deep clarity that I had to make a change.

The desire to quit my job was not a new feeling. I had struggled to find happiness in my work for as long as I could remember. Even as a young child I would cringe when adults asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I already sensed that there was a right and a wrong answer.

For most of my adult life, I continued to struggle with figuring out what I wanted to do versus what I told myself I should do. Even though it didn't feel like "me" at all, after college, I took a job consulting for Fortune 500 companies, because that seemed like a responsible thing to do. And, since everyone there went to business school, I figured I might as well, too. After getting my MBA from UC Berkeley, I worked in a string of what some might call dream jobs.

On paper things looked great. And it wasn't all bad. I made some good friends. I got promoted. I had some bad managers, but I had a lot of really great ones too. But deep down, I was miserable. I hated the corporate world, and I was living someone else's version of my life. I relied on sugar, coffee, and wine to make it through the days. I fantasized for years about quitting my job, but had huge fears of running out of money, no matter how much we had saved. But it wasn't just that I was scared to follow my passion. I was scared that I didn't have any passions. And if by chance I found one, I was pretty sure it would be something that I



wouldn't make any money doing. I only knew one thing for sure—the idea of quitting my job when I didn't know what else I wanted to do seemed ludicrous, especially in a bad economy, when I told myself I should be thankful to have a job at all. Pursuing happiness in my career eventually came to seem like a lost cause and a reckless indulgence. And then everything changed. Giving birth to my daughter gave me the courage to do for her what I had so far been unable to do for myself. The idea of leaving her to go back to an uninspiring, stressful job with 50-hour weeks was unbearable. I wanted

balance—work that allowed me to live my purpose (whatever that was!) and make a difference in the world while still having the flexibility to spend time with my family. Even more importantly, I wanted to be my daughter's inspiration. I didn't want her to grow up seeing me work in "safe" jobs that left me burnt out and unfulfilled. I wanted her to learn to trust herself, not follow someone else's definition of who she should be.

I got a coach. I learned how to stop worrying about who I was supposed to be and pay attention to who I was. I learned how to move forward even when I was scared or the path seemed uncertain. And got unstuck from my

black and white thinking. I couldn't afford to just quit my job and start a new career, but I could ease into it by working in a transition job while building my own business. I have two daughters now, who will soon be 9 and 10. As they are on the brink of increasingly making decisions about their own lives and eventually their careers, my deep intention is for them to know that their mental health, happiness, and sense of fulfillment are never an indulgence. I hope I have shown them that living a life and having a career that's in alignment with who they are is, in fact, essential.

*Julie Houghton is a career and business coach with almost 10 years of experience helping people find careers and launch businesses they love. She's a mom to two amazing kids and one very cute dachshund poodle mix. You can connect with her at [juliehoughton.com](mailto:juliehoughton.com) or [julie@juliehoughton.com](mailto:julie@juliehoughton.com).*

**"...my deep intention is for [my daughters] to know that their mental health, happiness, and sense of fulfillment are never an indulgence."**



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# Rolling Through a Global Pandemic With Our Evolving Parenting Styles

Learning to identify your parenting style can save your relationship and get you through tough times.

By Sasha Fahimi

As a family law attorney for roughly 12 years, I have represented many couples in difficult custody battles, going back long before I myself had children. A client whose grace and patience with her children and through the divorce process as a whole once said something that really stuck with me, even though it didn't truly make sense until after my daughter was born.

The case was a relatively mellow divorce (as divorces go), with a fairly amicable couple. I usually have a good sense of the driving force behind a marriage's demise, but this one really just didn't seem to have

a cause. So, I finally asked her what had made them decide to end things. She listed a few reasons: they had grown apart, she felt like things had just been off for the past few years—things like that. But ultimately, she said that the single biggest issue for both of them was their parenting styles. They were just far too different. He was authoritarian, very rigid and controlling with the children and his expectations of them, whereas she leaned somewhere between authoritative and permissive. At that time, I had no concept of parenting styles or the bottomless pit of books and other resources that comprise the

parenting industry. But as I got to know this couple and their relationship with their children, what she said made perfect sense, and I was struck by her insight.

## The four “main” parenting styles

In the 1960s, clinical and development psychologist Diana Baumrind identified three main categories of parenting styles, with a fourth added by researchers roughly 20 years later. These styles were determined based on the study of preschool-age children and their behaviors, and have been subjected both to academic acclaim,

as well as criticism, as all parenting studies are wont to be. There are of course other subtypes (i.e., helicopter, tiger, free range) but these four styles constitute something of an umbrella.

The first category is *authoritative parenting*, which offers structure and rules with a loving and nurturing approach. Parents who adopt this style work to understand how their children are feeling and teach them how to regulate their feelings. Parents take an approach that expects maturity, while forgiving shortcomings. Problem solving and independence are encouraged.

The second category is *authoritarian parenting*, which involves very strict rules. It is very restrictive and punishment-heavy. Parents with this style implement rules without explanation; the rules must be followed “because I said so.” A common critique of this category is that it is associated with negative outcomes, yet it is used in many other cultures without negative consequences.

The third category is *permissive parenting*, which gives children a lot of freedom. This category is also called *indulgent parenting*.

The fourth category is *neglectful parenting*, where a parent is more detached and uninvolved.

I now have a first-grader and another baby due in December. My former client's words have popped into my head multiple times over the years, as my husband and I have navigated the tricky waters of determining what sort of style we each have, what sort of style we want to have, and how to get—and stay—on the same page. I've read countless books and articles, consulted with child development specialists, and watched TED talks and listened to parenting podcasts. I've thought about my own authoritarian upbringing by Persian immigrants (which was most certainly NOT the style I would choose for my own children), and most importantly, discussed these important topics with my husband.

Of the four “main” styles, the authoritative style, sometimes referred to as

“democratic,” is one that many parents strive for, because it is a child-centric approach. In pre-pandemic days, it was certainly my gold standard, although it is hard to stick with when your child is bargaining with you 20 minutes past bedtime for just one more chapter, or suddenly realized they didn't eat enough dinner and must eat again NOW. But my

“We’ve also learned that a bit more flexibility and a bit less rigidity is not a bad thing—it has allowed us all to really see our children in a different way.”

husband and I were resolved to do our best with this style that we agree with most strongly. And when the world was moving along as it always has, with predictability in our days and weeks, we were very good about it. Consistent, when consistency was key. And then, everything changed.

## Parenting style? What parenting style?

In March 2020 we found ourselves in unprecedented times as parents—and frankly, as humans. A lot of things had to change, fast. I clearly remember laughing in my emergency physician husband's face as he told me that *everything* was about to close; not just restaurants, gyms,

businesses and schools, but courthouses were going to go remote. I could not imagine such a thing. And yet here we are.

One of the most important things we had to do as parents, on top of everything else, was to navigate this total upheaval calmly and effectively for and with our children. I know this looked different for all of us based on many factors: whether we were working, whether we had the luxury of working remotely, whether our kids were school-aged, and whether we had help. There was so much we didn't know, and so

much it seemed like we could not do to help ourselves get through it, like leaning on family or childcare providers.

In my family, we tried to set a schedule with our daughter and trade off based on our calendars each day. I think we even laminated the schedule. I also think it lasted about two weeks before it ended up in the trash. And oh, how we tried to keep screen time down. How we stretched ourselves to make sure there was art, reading, nature walks, and exercise each day! But little by little screen time increased and I began to impulse-buy everything that I could possibly find from every corner of the Internet to keep my daughter





entertained. She expressed an interest in puzzles, so I bought her five of them. Suddenly found a passion for Legos? Let's buy all the sets.

Then, finally, when I was out of all other ideas, we purchased her an iPad of her very own. Time limits, you ask? Why yes, she had daily time limits, and we tried to guide her towards reading and enrichment apps, but there were many days when I popped that little code in to give her an extra hour so I could finish my late afternoon Zoom meetings.

And let me be clear: I believe a personal iPad at the age of 5 is a major indulgence, not to mention the rest of the aforementioned purchases. But so goes our parenting goals and ideals during the bizarre world we now live in.

**Loosening, and altogether losing, screen time limits**

Per a study commissioned by Gerber and conducted by OnePoll in November 2020, more than half of 2,000 parents with children over the age of 3 have said the pandemic has permanently changed the way they parent, with a marked shift towards loosening, well, everything.

In response to this study, Cleveland Clinic Psychologist Dr. Susan Albers noted that the pandemic has allowed parents to spend more time with children and better understand what type of parenting may work for them. Further, “one of the biggest lessons for parents during the pandemic is that they realized they didn’t have to identify or strictly adhere to one type of parenting style. Before the pandemic, they may have been more authoritarian and during the pandemic moved into a more permissive style. They let go of bedtimes or gave their child more access to screen time than they would have in the past,” Albers said. “Really successful parenting has been shown in research to be a combination of both a nurturing environment and providing structured boundaries and consequences.”

Scarymommy.com also reports that many



parents threw their preconceived notions about parenting styles out the window, and were simply more mindful and in tune with their children, and with themselves. If that meant loosening screen time restrictions for the sake of everyone’s mental health, then so be it. USA Today reports that TV and gaming restrictions, among other house rules, overwhelmingly fell by the wayside during the thick of the lockdowns.

In fact, the very nature of our lives during the pandemic, whether it was Zoom meetings or remote schooling, necessitated an increase in our baseline levels of screen time every day. Add to that the increased screen time we allowed our children so that we as parents could get through our days, and that equaled... a lot more than most of us thought we’d be comfortable with. But in an effort to find a silver lining here, we can also consider this ability to switch to remote schooling as, dare I say it, “lucky.”

The Internet allowed us to remain connected during a pandemic that now has the unfortunate distinction of having surpassed the 1918 flu pandemic as the deadliest pandemic in U.S. history.

In fact, the Internet has proven indispensable, allowing work, school, and socialization to take place virtually during ever-extending lockdowns.

This is not to say that studies or experts are promoting a total lack of rules, however. Surviving the worst of the

pandemic was about balancing, and for a time, rules and restrictions fell by the wayside. However, as licensed clinical psychologist Kirsten Bradbury, Ph.D., notes, while we’ve all made some extreme “COVID compromises” to our usual standards, including allowing trash TV, video games, and relaxing rules around hair washing, cutting, and vegetable eating, reverting back to some structure as we are coming out of this will be very important. We may not know what that structure will look like, and it may look very different than it would at this point in our children’s lives

had we not just lived through a pandemic. But returning to a more balanced, authoritative parenting style will likely smooth this transition for our children as we re-emerge into the world.

I look back on the past 18 months and am stunned by the things we let go, but I know deep down that these things were essential for our survival. We’ve also learned that a bit more flexibility and a bit less rigidity is not a bad thing—it has allowed us all to really see our children in a different way. I, for one, was floored to learn that my child seems to have an insatiable hunger that lasts all day long. (I mean honestly, who knew they eat this much?)

When we were really in the thick of it and people suggested looking at the bright side and focusing on how much quality time we were getting to spend with our kids, I was not having it. But now that we are ever so slowly shifting towards something resembling normalcy, I can see and appreciate that. I am also comfortable with the things I did and the parenting shifts I made to survive this. Hopefully, we can all find the space to be kind to ourselves about decisions like these that, while they may be labeled as indulgent, or even lazy, were necessary to our very survival.

*Sasha is a partner at Sucherman Insalaco LLP, a family law firm located in San Francisco, and mom to one first-grader, one grumpy rescue pup, with another (human baby) on the way.*

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# Mixing up Your Thanksgiving Meal

**As Thanksgiving gatherings return, changing up the meal may be in order.**

By Emily Beaven

**T**hanks to the COVID vaccine, many people will be able to enjoy Thanksgiving 2021 with family and friends. However, many of us, especially those with young children, may opt for a smaller affair that does not include extensive travel. Growing up in the Midwest, Thanksgiving and Christmas were always the same in our house: Turkey, two types of cranberries (traditional and a raw cranberry relish my mother grinded by hand), green bean casserole, mashed potatoes, Pepperidge Farm stuffing, Parker

House rolls, sweet potato casserole with pecans, brown sugar, and coconut, a relish tray, and homemade pumpkin pie. So many memories were made around the Thanksgiving table and I will always remember this special set menu.

Since leaving home, I've had many different Thanksgiving experiences, ranging from a homemade Thanksgiving in Florence, Italy with four girlfriends huddled around the tiniest stove I've ever seen, to dinners in our small apartment in San Francisco, and cooking Thanksgiving

dinner for hundreds of fellow students while studying at the Culinary Institute of America in New York.

I've also experimented with a variety of twists on the classics—cranberries with Gran Marnier, oyster and sausage cornbread stuffing, deep fried and spatch-cooked turkey, and green beans with shallot bacon vinaigrette. For years spent with my husband's family, we've created epic cheese trays and always have carrot cake for dessert.

Over the years, we have settled on our

family's version of Thanksgiving. This year, we won't be traveling and anticipate a smaller gathering. I also want to make things as easy as possible while providing a good amount of variety. If you're planning a Thanksgiving that will be a bit different than "normal," consider this an opportunity to branch out and try some new things. For some, perhaps that's supporting a local restaurant and ordering the whole dinner. For others, maybe it's a potluck with close friends and family where you just have to bring one dish. If you are planning to cook, consider these ideas for something that may be just a bit different, and of course delicious.

Wherever you're enjoying Thanksgiving this year remember to keep it simple and involve your kids as much as possible.

## BACK TO ROOTS

The key to almost all of my vegetables is quite simple: extra virgin olive oil, kosher salt, and fresh ground black pepper. Oh, and an oven. Roasting vegetables—pretty much any kind—is one of the best ways to bring out the natural sugars in veggies and adds an amazing depth of flavor. I usually spend time peeling and chopping various squashes and root veggies, however, you can easily find these pre-peeled and chopped at a variety of grocery stores.

## The Method

However you get your veggies peeled and chopped, add them to a sheet tray, but make sure not to overcrowd them—use two trays if needed. Liberally drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast for about 25 to 30 minutes at 400 degrees. Make sure to check them frequently and turn them throughout. These can be made ahead of time and reheated right before the meal.

## MODERN RELISH TRAY

Search online for “relish tray” and you’ll find lots of retro versions of this mid-century staple. As an 80’s child, this was something my grandparents always had and I love keeping the tradition alive. We had a pretty simple one growing up—celery sticks, olives, and sweet pickles. The celery was always a nice way to refresh your palette in between all of the heavy Midwestern fare. As an adult, I’ve developed a new appreciation for the relish tray, and find it’s a fantastic way to keep kids engaged while dinner is being prepared. It’s also a great way to experiment with new flavors. Think pickled veggies, long sliced carrots, crunchy jicama, celery, cucumbers, and pickles. For grown-ups, Cheese Plus on Polk Street in Russian Hill makes the most delicious herb- and goat cheese-stuffed peppadew peppers, along with an assortment of specialty olives.



## CREAMED SPINACH

As I was preparing this article, I asked my husband, “What’s your favorite thing I make for Thanksgiving?” He instantly replied, “Creamed spinach.” I don’t know when or how this beloved steakhouse side dish made its way onto our Thanksgiving menu, but it’s a crowd-pleaser. It’s super easy to make and you can prepare it a day or two prior and reheat in the oven.

**Ingredients:**

- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 1 lb. spinach – ideally baby spinach, or stems trimmed
- 1 pint heavy cream
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
- Fresh nutmeg, grated, to taste
- Your favorite grated cheese (optional)

**Directions:**

Sauté shallots and garlic in butter in a pan until soft, and reserve. Meanwhile, boil a pot of water and add in spinach until just wilted. Drain spinach in a colander. Press spinach until the majority of the water has been removed. This is the most tedious step, but can be fun to engage children to help squeeze and push out the water.

Chop spinach very finely, and reserve.

In a small pan, add the heavy cream and boil until reduced by half. Season with salt and pepper to taste and add in as much nutmeg as you like (we like a lot). Stir in spinach, shallots and garlic and bake in a shallow oven-safe dish for about 25 minutes at 350 degrees. We don't add cheese, but you certainly can top it with your favorite grated hard cheese.



“If you’re planning a Thanksgiving that will be a bit different than “normal,” consider this an opportunity to branch out and try some new things.”

CELERIC PUREE

If you’ve never tried celeriac, also known as celery root, now could be a great time to try something new. As an alternative to mashed potatoes, celery root has a wonderfully delicious, slightly sweet, celery-like, nutty flavor. I once made these for my Midwestern father, who said they were the best “mashed potatoes” he ever had.

The Method

The peeling is the most difficult part in this dish as celery root is very knobby, but once you get over that, they are very straight forward. Sizes can range greatly, so for six people, plan on getting two celery roots or about 2 ½ pounds. Peel and chop into large pieces, cover with water and boil until tender. Drain and add into a stand mixer with your favorite liquid (milk, milk-alternatives like coconut milk would be quite nice, or stock). Season with salt and pepper to taste.



APPLE GOODIE WITH DULCE DE LECHE

Creating your own special names and variations make the best food memories for your family. My mom would often throw this together after dinner during the weekdays especially in the fall. She called it Apple Goodie because it’s so good, but it’s basically a crumble. After cooling, she served it with cold milk poured right on top. For something a little extra special, try topping it with dulce de leche.

Ingredients

- 1 cup flour
- 1 stick of cold butter, cubed
- ½ cup of brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 4 to 5 apples, peeled and sliced
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk

Directions

With a pastry cutter or fork, cut the butter, flour, sugar and cinnamon together. It’s okay for it to look clumpy. Pour over sliced apples in a dish and bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes. You can purchase a beautiful jar of premade dulce de leche for \$8 to 10, or you can buy a can of sweetened condensed milk, boil the entire unopened can for about 3 hours, and have the exact same product. Make sure to add water to the pot throughout the process, as it will evaporate. Allow the can to cool before opening it. Pour over the crumble after it’s cooled, and refrigerate to save for later.

Emily is a former cook, graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, mother of two, and realtor at Compass in San Francisco.

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# Pandemic Indulgent Purchases

## Trying to find joy amidst the chaos and unknowns of the global pandemic

Curated By Christine Chen



Thank you everyone who participated in this fun GGMG Forum conversation about what indulgent purchases you made during the pandemic. As someone who didn't splurge on anything, this has definitely given me some inspiration. It is heartwarming to hear how the GGMG community was able to find some joy as everyone adapted to the pandemic. Congrats to all who made real estate purchases. Home purchases and Peloton bikes were some of the most popular splurges—clearly a result of all the time that was spent at home! Hopefully things will gradually get better, and these indulgent purchases will continue to have a positive impact on your lives. Here are some of your responses...

"A 10 ft. x 10 ft. sprung wooden dance floor, so ballet could continue throughout lockdown on Zoom. I'm still amazed that Zoom ballet class is even possible! Of course, it's in front of the TV, so now the couch is waaaaaaay far from the screen, and I routinely stub my toe on the edge. But it enabled the show to go on, so to speak."

"My e-bike which carries up to 440 lbs because I didn't feel comfortable riding public transportation anymore during COVID to pick up our toddler from daycare. This 'second car' has been amazingly useful, and I wish I got it sooner!"

"Our pandemic puppy, of course. Adopted, but not free. Plus [a ton] of puppy paraphernalia, and about \$600 to replace two pairs of prescription glasses she has chewed up, among other household

items. It's a good thing she's so darn cute."

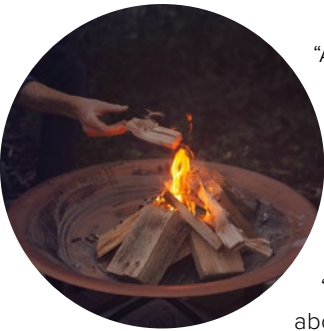
"A firepit for our backyard! We were home all the time, and our limited social interactions were spent outdoors, so we splurged to make our outdoor space feel special. Also strung up outdoor lights and now it feels super cozy."

“Hopefully things will gradually get better, and these indulgent purchases will continue to have a positive impact on your lives.”

"New blinds. I rent and there was no way my landlord would've spent money on replacing the ones I had (those awful, cheap plastic blinds that would fall apart if I even touched them). They really transformed the way my apartment looks and they have been so much nicer to look at and deal with, that it's made the past 1 ½ years of working from home much more pleasant."

"A subscription to Rent the Runway for some more fun "Zoom tops". The folks at my work aren't playing around, they are seriously decked out and fully accessorized from the waist up for our meetings."

"Daycare/preschool that was open when my daughter's private school went remote last fall/winter. My husband and I were both working full time at home (me teaching on Zoom for about 7 hours a day) and just couldn't give her the attention she needed. We'd already paid school tuition, but sprung for [the extra cost] per month for a few months, and it was SO worth it."



"An organizer team that took everything out, categorized it, and put it back beautifully. Another bathroom and a back deck. Oh, and a treehouse."

"A Mirror! I'd been thinking about it since COVID, and finally bit the bullet during a pre-Thanks-giving sale last year, thanks in part to some positive feedback I saw on GGMG. I haven't used it as much as I should have, but it's been great for our very small space, and for the odd times I find to do yoga (late late at night). Plus, I didn't have a full length mirror to begin with!"

"An electric scooter—bye-bye, Muni! We had an e-bike already prior to COVID (that my husband commutes in), so we are now a fully micro-mobile family."

"A new TV with surround sound (my hubby), a new sofa (after 10 years) soon to be ordered."

"I've spent about [a lot] on high-end skincare and bath products in the past 18 months, and while that sounds INSANE, I have no regrets

because I spent zero dollars on makeup, massages, or haircuts."

"A vitamix... because of all the cooking I was (am) doing!"



"A new laptop! Might not sound super exciting, but I debated forever and it has been life changing! I have a desktop, but it has gotten painfully slow, and I'm starting a new baby clothing business so it was time!"

*Though a shopaholic, Christine made no indulgent purchases during the pandemic but did make quite a dent in her wine collection and is now yearning for banana pants.*

"Braces and Intense Pulse Light (IPL) Photofacial treatment for me. The braces are not enjoyable in the least, but have the added nice side effect of helping me easily get rid of the extra 10 pounds I've been holding on to. And the IPL was a spur of the moment, something I thought I would never do, but it worked like a miracle. It's like someone put an eraser to my freckles and sun spots. I have never indulged in any beauty treatments or aesthetic things for myself. More of a Patagonia and Birkenstock kind of person. Ironical that being isolated and indoors has brought out the 'time to take care of myself' in me."

"We upgraded to a 77-inch 4K OLED TV."

"All nice wine, all the time. No more bottles under \$20. Also, a Peloton and treadmill, but that's been done!"

"A hammock. And multiple pairs of the same Lululemon pants in different colors, since that is all I wear now that I work from home."

"Way, way too much fabric and sewing accessories, as I started sewing during the pandemic."



"No major purchases of stuff, although my husband is disturbingly excited about his new matching Tupperware collection. We did treat ourselves to a 10-day trip to Hawaii that was indulgent, and we ate at the outdoor restaurant by the pool almost every night."

"Very non-spendy, compared to a house, but I bought my son banana pants from a British clothing company. I love them. I hate shopping. *indikidual.bigcartel.com/product/fruity*"







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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Native American History Month



Ohlone Woman. Almaden Community Center and Library, San Jose

November is Native American History Month. While one month is not nearly enough time to acknowledge the colonization, atrocities, and deliberate attempts to erase Indigenous cultures and people, Native American History Month offers an opportunity each year to continue educating our communities and ourselves and to honor the experiences of the original inhabitants and stewards of the land of the San Francisco Peninsula.

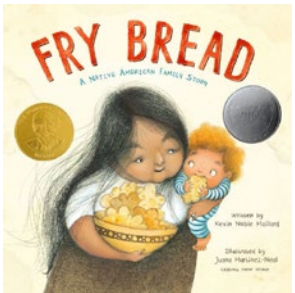
Help to dispel the myth that Christopher Columbus “discovered” the Americas by learning more about the history of the land. Native Land Digital ([Native-Land.ca](http://Native-Land.ca)) offers a simple starting point in the form of an interactive map to identify which Native nations originate from the land on which you live, work, and visit.

We recommend learning more about the experiences of the Ohlone People by listening to local Ohlone leaders. Recently, the de Young Museum hosted an Ohlone Land Acknowledgement Series. The first event in this series is “We are OF the Land,” with Dr. Jonathan Cordero, Chair of the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone, and Gregg Castro, Principal Cultural Consultant, in which they “discuss the cultural and spiritual significance of Land to the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples.” The second event, “Rematriation: Going Beyond Land Acknowledgement,” features Corrina Gould, the tribal spokesperson for the Confederated Villages of Lisjan.

Read and share these books recommended by the *American Indians in Children’s Literature* blog with your family:

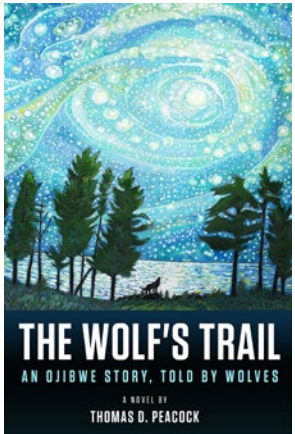
Picture Books:

- *Fry Bread: A Native American Story* by Kevin Noble Maillard
- *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom



Chapter Books:

- *Peggy Flanagan: Ogimaa Kwe, Lieutenant Governor* by Jessica Engelking
- *The Wolf’s Trail: An Ojibwe Story, Told by Wolves* by Thomas D. Peacock



- High School, Young Adult, and Adult:**
- *Apple: (Skin to the Core)* by Eric Gansworth
  - “What’s an Indian Woman to Do?” in *When the Light of the World was Subdued, Our Songs Came Through: A Norton Anthology of Native Nations Poetry* edited by Joy Harjo

Lean in, listen, and support Indigenous voices that protest symbols of oppression and cultural appropriation. To begin, please check out:

- **The Association of the Ramaytush Ohlone (ARO)**  
[ramaytush.org](http://ramaytush.org)  
ARO represents the interests of the original peoples of the San Francisco Peninsula with the purposes of ancestral responsibilities to care for Mother Earth and to care for the people who reside in Ramaytush Ohlone’s ancestral homeland.
- **Coastside Families Taking Action (CTFA)**  
[coastsidefamielstekingaction.org](http://coastsidefamielstekingaction.org)  
This organization is a group of families devoted to making the San Mateo Coast a welcoming, supportive, active, and empowering place for children and families. They are working for a diverse, progressive, sustainable, and equitable Coastside.
- **American Indians in Children’s Literature (AICL)**  
[americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com](http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com)  
Established in 2006 by Dr. Debbie Reese of Nambé Pueblo, American Indians in Children’s Literature provides critical analysis of Indigenous peoples in children’s and young adult books. Dr. Jean Mendoza joined AICL as a co-editor in 2016.

Have any questions, comments, or want to volunteer? Email us at [diversity@ggmg.org](mailto:diversity@ggmg.org).

CAREERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Monthly Lunchtime Networking Party

During this virtual event led by mom and career coach Nic Frick, we will use breakout rooms and guided whole-group conversation starters to create real connections. If time allows, you will have time to ask the group for further networking opportunities and connections.

- This is for you if you:
- Are trying to find a new job
  - Want to expand and strengthen your network and connect with other moms
  - Want to break into a new industry
  - Took a break and want to return to the workforce

Your only “job” is to show up with curiosity, trust, and generosity with the other moms in the Zoom room. The rest is taken care of and guided so you can just go with the flow.

This event from the Careers & Entrepreneurs Committee will help you meet new moms with ease in a delightful, unique way. Say bye-bye to awkwardness and hello to deeper professional and personal relationships. Everyone is welcome regardless of current or past employment status!

*If there is interest, we will make this a monthly recurring event in 2022.*

**DATE:** Wednesday, November 10 and Wednesday, December 8  
**TIME:** Noon to 1 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Zoom  
**COST:** FREE for members  
**REGISTRATION:** [www.ggmg.org/calendar/event/500309/2021/11/10](http://www.ggmg.org/calendar/event/500309/2021/11/10)

VOLUNTEERS WANTED



to join the GGMG Social Media Committee! Come flex your thumbs and help us get out the word about GGMG events, parenting info, and more—all from the comfort of your couch. Email [socialmedia@ggmg.org](mailto:socialmedia@ggmg.org) for more information.

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[familygetaway.org/2QjJAUn](http://familygetaway.org/2QjJAUn)

**VRBO:**  
<https://www.vrbo.com/1835391>

**Neighborhood Meetups Committee**  
Openings: Multiple volunteers needed

The Neighborhood Meetups Committee hosts in-person neighborhood-based social events. We are the on-site hosts of Quarterly Playgroup Formation as well as other neighborhood-based social events, such as the Mom’s Night Out wine nights, book clubs, movie nights, family brunch date, family weekend hike, and afternoon tea social. As a volunteer, you will be expected to plan and host two events per year, each lasting two to three hours. Please email [me@ggmg.org](mailto:me@ggmg.org) for more information.

**GGMG Mommies and Babies Meetups**  
Openings: One Co-chair, one volunteer

Newborn Playgroup Formation is one of the most important GGMG resources for new moms, who are usually new members of the GGMG community looking to connect with other moms. Our Committee strategizes and creates the Quarterly Moms to Newborns Playgroup Formation program. We create, organize, generate and distribute the event plans for the on-site hosts to execute. The event is held in October, January, April, and July, respectively. Please email [me@ggmg.org](mailto:me@ggmg.org) for more information.



EVENTS

Monthly Queer Family Hike

Join queer families for a COVID-safe walk/hike which includes casually 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+) able to wear masks the whole time.

**DATE:** First Saturday of the month  
**TIME:** 1 p.m.  
**PLACE:** TBD  
**COST:** FREE for members

Virtual Moms Night In: Every Last Wednesday of the Month

Looking to keep social connections alive as we continue to face a public-health crisis? Come hang every month at our Virtual Moms Night In via Zoom!

Wine, pajamas, messy bun—all are accepted.

There is no agenda, just hanging out and connecting with each other. This event will take place the last Wednesday of every month.

**DATE:** Every Last Wednesday of the month  
**TIME:** 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Zoom  
**COST:** FREE for members

New Mommies and Babies In-person Meetup

Are you ready to meet and connect with other mommies and babies in person? GGMG is bringing back in-person events this fall!

Pre-COVID, we hosted the Playgroup Formation Mixer in one centralized location at Sports Basement Presidio. Knowing that we will be living with COVID for the foreseeable future, we are moving the event outdoors, and setting up smaller groups to meet in the north, east, south, west and central parts of San Francisco. This will help us mitigate risk by reducing the size of the crowd, while reducing your travel time.

At this new event (rebranded Mommies and Babies Meetup), snacks and drinks will be provided while new moms meet, connect, and plan for future stroller walks and playdates together. If you have a baby who is newborn to 12 months old, please join us! To help us plan, identify venues, and reserve tables, please complete this form. Your answers will be shared with moms in your particular meetup so that you're acquainted with everyone beforehand.

To join the in-person events, you will need to provide proof of full vaccination. For those who are not comfortable to meet in person yet, please still fill out the form. Our volunteer will connect you with a playgroup near you.

This event will be taking place in October, January, April, and July.

**DATE:** Every Last Wednesday of the month  
**TIME:** 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Zoom  
**COST:** FREE for members

GO TO [GGMG.ORG/CALENDAR](https://www.ggmag.org/calendar) FOR MORE EVENTS AND TO REGISTER

I Have an Appetite for Destruction

By Colleen Morgan

My children are very young and their needs are endless. I am the CEO of all tasks big and small—food, clothes, home, love, entertainment, exercise, waste management, hygiene, and sleep—and everything in between. For the last 18 months, in the midst of a pandemic, I've also taken on the role of primary educator, and despite my gentle explanations to the contrary, my 4-year-old son's "best friend."

All of this has left me, in a word, exhausted. To decompress, I prefer solitary walks and yoga, but these activities require time and silence—both of which are in very short supply.

In an interesting turn of events, I've discovered some temporary relief in small acts of destruction. Crushing an empty toilet paper roll in my hand before throwing it in the recycle bin? *Sure*. Slowly crumbling a completed puzzle into its box? *Nice*. Piercing a potato with a fork one too many times before baking? *Yes, please!*

Throwing out my kids' uninspiring artwork while they sleep? *Oh God, yes!* But nothing gets me going like weeding in the backyard. What starts as a quick removal of an obvious intruder, snowballs into an hour-long hunt, contorting my body in strange positions while cursing under my breath. *I am so tired of caring for things—I just want to DESTROY!* When I finally give up, I am covered in sweat, leaves, mulch, and triumph. My knees are scraped and my hands are sore, but I emerge the victor, despite knowing there are still weeds lurking out of sight and reach. In a few weeks or months, their reappearance will lure me back into a destructive trance.

This new way of releasing tension helped me better understand my children when they struggle to express their own frustration. Kids exist in a world full of adult-created boundaries, that rarely values their opinions or accommodates their perspective. These boundaries should create predictability and reduce anxiety, but they have crumbled during the pandemic, forcing us all to live in a state of limbo. It is no surprise children reflexively unleash their anger at their parents or other trusted authority figures in the most dramatic and creative ways.



I began to wonder: *Would my kids benefit from my unconventional coping strategy?* So after careful consideration, I've encouraged my children to dabble in destruction. The rules are clear: *We do not destroy other people's things. We do not destroy to hurt others. We clean up after our destruction.* They silently concentrate as they tear or cut up their uninspiring artwork. They take turns stomping on an empty tissue

box before tossing it in the recycle bin. They shriek with delight as Nutters, a well-loved plush squirrel, demolishes the village they built. Occasionally, my son meticulously dissects multiple pens—caps, springs, barrels, and ink chambers strewn on a table. In the past I would have freaked out, but now I slowly back away into another room, thankful he's found a quiet activity that doesn't involve my attention.

On reflection, this isn't such a drastic change. Life with kids is rarely neat and tidy—physically or emotionally. I often experience fear and joy simultaneously—from watching my children crash their bikes over rocks and roots to laughing as my son shouts for his 2-year-old sister to "Shred it, Miss!!" My children seem to enjoy their new liberties as a way to explore,

relax, and exert their autonomy. They are (sometimes) more mellow and loving to each other. But I suspect this change has little to do with destruction and everything to do with my ability to let things go. While parenting is accepting a life of controlled chaos, parenting during a pandemic is losing most, if not all, control. In a way, I've given myself a gift that I've already given my children—the ability to express my feelings in a tangible way. I indulge in a healthy behavior that may raise some eyebrows. But I encourage all parents to think about the arbitrary limits we hold ourselves to and the freedom to challenge what is expected.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have some weeds to attack.  
*Colleen lives with her family in San Francisco. Her regular indulgence is shoveling an extra scoop of rice directly out of the rice cooker into her mouth (with the serving paddle).*

“While parenting is accepting a life of controlled chaos, parenting during a pandemic is losing most, if not all, control.”







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