

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2020



GGMG

GOLDEN GATE
MOTHERS GROUP®

magazine

Love & Passion



OUTGOING REALTOR ISO FUN FAMILIES to hang out with on Saturdays & Sundays from 2:00-4:00pm

ABOUT ME: I'm a self-professed data geek and just a wee bit OCD. As a straight shooter who protects her clients' money like a pit bull, I'm not afraid to advise you to walk away from a house, or point out its flaws. I take my job very seriously, but I love to have fun while I'm doing it. I love breaking down the often complicated process of home buying and selling into clear steps, and calculating risk for each decision. I've been told that I'm "the best explainer". 10 of my 12 years as a Realtor in San Francisco have been conducted with my "mom goggles" on. I'm looking for long term relationships, not one night stands. I'm open to polyamory if you have friends who want to buy a multi-unit with you.

ABOUT YOU: You're an awesome mom who needs a new home for your growing family. You are careful and make solid investment decisions. You love Excel spreadsheets, bulleted lists and online project management systems. You enjoy asking stupid questions (that aren't actually stupid) and receiving clear, thoughtful answers. You like it when people tell you what you need to know, because you might not even know what to ask. You dream of someone who will show you the math behind their price suggestions; someone who enjoys ripping through a disclosure package just daring it to have an inconsistency or unclear answer so they can clarify it; someone to delegate all of your worrying to, because you know that they are capable, competent, and they have your back without a shred of doubt.

LIKES:

- Measuring things
- Climbing on the roof
- Furry animals

DISLIKES:

- Monday offer dates
- Crooked wall art
- Crawl spaces

NICKNAMES:

- Queen of Comps
- Disclosure Decimator
- Mom

FAVORITE SAYINGS:

- You only get what you inspect, not what you expect.
- There are no stupid questions.
- Trust but verify.
- Make it happen!



SHERRI'S 2019 SALES STATISTICS:

- 81% of clients had young children
- 15% of sales were off-market transactions
- 48% of buyers and 84% of sellers were first-timers
- 57% of buyers had their 1st offer accepted
- 63% of buyers were in contract within 3 months
- Prices ranged from \$955,000 - \$4,125,000

AGENT RANKINGS:

- Top 1% of all Realtors in San Francisco
- Top 10 Zephyr Agent from 2013-2019
- Top Producer since 2009
- Ranked as one of America's Best Realtors in 2019 by RealTrends
- Over 80 past & present GGMG families served!



Whether you are venturing into the market for the first time, or you are a real estate veteran, Sherri has the proven expertise and enthusiasm to guide you to a solid investment decision. Not sure where to get started? No worries—contact Sherri today!

Sherri Howe

REALTOR® & GGMG Mom

a.k.a askhowe — look for me on the message boards!

415.640.4664 Lic#01816621

Sherri@AskSherriHowe.com



www.ggmg.org

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Letter from the Editor: The Hazards of Love

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is a Cole Valley-based mom of three and a work in progress.

On November 14, the day before my husband died, in an attempt to head off a brewing argument, he sent me a text: “Let’s live today like it’s our last.” Neither of us knew that he’d be dead in 24 hours. But we both knew that we needed to hit the reset button on our relationship. The past few years had been increasingly hard, with the stress of bearing three children in three years, imbalanced parenting and household responsibilities, health challenges, and job dissatisfaction sometimes choking our marriage like an invasive vine strangling a tree trunk. We spent a lot of time in triage mode, attending to everyday battles while not beating back our problems enough to keep the core of our relationship in sight. This was not a unique experience; many of my parent friends complain that the love and passion at the heart of their partnerships can be obscured by the whack-a-mole nature of child-rearing. But unlike many other couples, we didn’t have the time we needed to weather the storm and right the ship. One cruel gift of a sudden death is that it can strip away resentments and struggles in an instant, leaving the heart of a relationship exposed. Since my husband died, I have been overwhelmed by a clear understanding of all I loved about him, now that my love has no physical recipient (there’s some truth to the idea that “grief is just love with no place to go.”).

“We can’t fully love without an awareness of what we have to lose.”

His searing wit and dark humor; his gentle kindness as a friend and mentor; his non-judgmental love of my body in all its stages; our mutual passion for food and the pleasure we found in cooking for each other; the agility with which he wielded a guitar, which was echoed in gentle rhythms with which he bounced our infants to comfort them; and his openness, his intelligence, and eagerness to plumb our emotional depths. These irreplaceable qualities that were present throughout our relationship, but which I often lost sight of. Our writers this month explore love and passion from less painful but equally valuable perspectives. On page 20, Emily Beaven explores how our love for motherhood doesn’t need to rely on alcohol as a crutch. Veronica Reilly-Granich on page 24 talks with families to discover what habits keep their family bonds strong. And on page 16, Jennifer Butterfoss offers tips to harness your passion and find fulfillment even against the competing pull of parenting responsibilities. None of us will escape heartbreak. But why do I insist on ruining your Valentine’s Day by discussing loss? Though I don’t like the sense of urgency in living each day like it’s our last, I do believe in stepping back from the fray to think about all that you someday will lose. It’s not easy, it’s deeply uncomfortable. But as Jeff Foster writes, it’s necessary. “Impermanence has already rendered everything and everyone around you so deeply holy and significant and worthy of your heartbreaking gratitude.” We can’t fully love without an awareness of what we have to lose.

Sonya Abrams

Letter from the Board: Mom Love

By Virginia Green

I have a friend who makes a habit of walking up to other moms and enthusiastically telling them how amazing they look. Maybe it’s their lipstick or their necklace, their sunglasses or their shoes, but her compliments instantly bring a genuine smile to their faces. When I asked her why she does this all the time, she replied that women need to show each other more love, to boost each other up; even a small compliment can make someone feel like a million bucks. That feeling of being seen by another person is incredible—

“Becoming a mom is like joining a secret club.”

especially a fellow mom, who you know is right beside you in the parental trenches. Becoming a mom is like joining a secret club. It’s a club where we all intuitively understand just how fiercely one can love her child and how vulnerable it can feel to have a piece of your heart walking around outside of your body. It’s a club where we all know just how hard and exhausting and thankless motherhood can be. We can start to lose ourselves in it, and so it feels great to see another mom out there absolutely crushing it. I wish we all could show our love and celebrate other moms more often, whether it’s for their killer lipstick, the way they handle a tough parenting situation, or the precious spare time they dedicate to their passion projects. For the past 24 years, GGMG has helped moms find other moms to walk beside. I want to take a moment to recognize one of our stellar GGMG moms, Karen Brein, who retired as

chair of the Board of Directors last month. Karen has been a volunteer for years and there simply isn’t enough space here for the huge and heartfelt thank you she deserves for all she’s done for our organization. We will miss her leadership greatly! With Karen stepping down, I have started my tenure as your new chair, and our current director of partnerships, Erin Cahill, has become the new vice chair. I look forward to working with Erin and the rest of the board, a group of truly incredible moms who are passionate about GGMG and will help steer our beloved organization into the future and do great things. Let’s make 2020 a year of celebrating, loving, and lifting each other. Being a mom is one of the hardest jobs in the world. We could all use a little reminder that we’re in this together and doing a great job.



Virginia and her husband Alex are parents to Eloise (age 6) and Margaret (age 3). They live north of the Panhandle. She has been a member of GGMG for seven years and a volunteer for six, and she can’t imagine how she would have survived motherhood without this amazing community of rockstar mamas.

Virginia Green

Housekeeping

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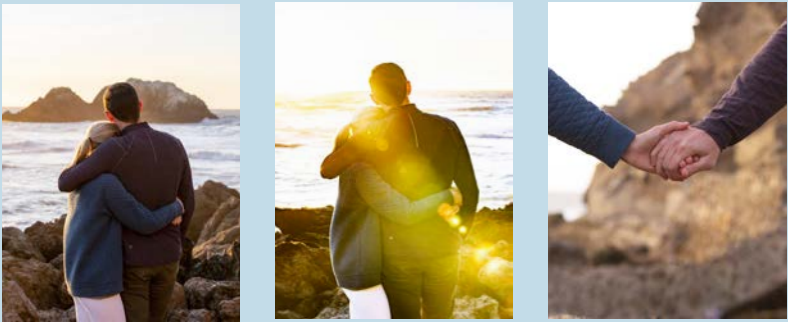
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COMING NEXT: April/May: Change

Have an idea for an issue theme or article? Please email editor@ggm.org.

THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: Holidays hosting a house full of women and a head full of interminable congestion; IEP evaluation; Stomach virus, trip to Pacific Grove, trip to Atlanta, roseola, and a lot of tea; A successful peanut challenge; Persistent jetlag, food poisoning; Whole 30, leaning back into work, spousal snoring; much-needed family time.

Cover Outtakes



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

Cover photo by Katya Mizrahi Photography
Cover models: Katie and Steve



Unique Date Night Ideas for San Francisco

By Jessica Perry

Want to shake up your usual “Night-on-the-Town” with your partner? Look no further! San Francisco has many corners to explore and lots of unique venues where you can reconnect with your loved one.

The Crosstown Trail

Take in the beautiful views of the city by foot while discovering neighborhood gems along the way. The recently unveiled Crosstown Trail circumnavigates the city and is 17 miles long.

www.crosstowntrail.org

Pacific Café

This 40-year-old institution in the Outer Richmond draws seafood lovers from near and far for its delicious food and cozy, retro atmosphere. Bonus: complimentary wine while you wait!

www.pacificcafesf.com

Exploratorium After Dark and Cal Academy NightLife

Take in music, cocktails, and varying activities at your favorite museums without having to chase your kids.

www.calacademy.org/nightlife

www.exploratorium.edu/visit/calendar/after-dark

Cobb's Comedy Club

Enjoy some laughs at one of San Francisco's most popular comedy clubs.

www.cobbscomedy.com

Full Moon Walk at the SF Botanical Gardens

Join a docent-led tour of the San Francisco Botanical Gardens under the light of the full moon.

www.sfbg.org

San Francisco Ghost Hunt Walking Tour

For a spine-tingling date, take a walking tour of the haunted locations of Pacific Heights.

www.sfgghosthunt.com

Urban Putt

Embrace your inner kid and try your hand at mini golf at the first indoor 14-hole golf course in San Francisco.

www.urbanputt.com

Sunset Chinatown & Little Italy Segway Tour

Take a quick Segway lesson and then zip through historic neighborhoods to check out the views of the Bay Lights, Ferry Building, and iconic Transamerica Pyramid.

www.electrictourcompany.com/tour/san-francisco-chinatown-tour



Li'l Kid, Big City: The Southern Coastline

By Christine Chen

In Pescadero, kids can pet goats in the pastures at **Harley Farms** then sample savory and sweet goodies in the barn's cheese shop. Kids 7 and older can enjoy a gentle horse ride at **Sea Horse Ranch** along the coastal bluffs and sandy shores. At **Lemos Farm** in Half Moon Bay, enjoy ticketed activities from pony rides to a train ride through a mini-ghost town. **Odyssey** in Half Moon Bay is a cute sea-themed crafts center and retail store full of trinkets and adventures for kids. A nautical-themed outdoor garden has 12 activities at a time, including leather working, terrarium building, and a scavenger hunt in the garden. There is also a Geode-Breaking Station and a Treasure Flume, a mining apparatus where you can unearth minerals, shells, and fossils. **Francis Beach** in Half Moon Bay is a great option for families. It has a parking lot with immediate access to the beach and oceanfront tables that are great for picnics. Train-obsessed kids will love dining in a 100-year-old train caboos at **Dad's Luncheonette** in Half Moon Bay. While it has a kid's menu, parents will appreciate the talents of the owner, a former chef de cuisine at Saison.

Christine is the mother of a 6-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl who are city kids and could use more time outside to burn off excess energy.



Let's Get Our Sexy On

By Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss

San Francisco has plenty of opportunities for mamas of all shapes and sizes to get some self-love and body positivity going. Let's use 2020 to bump, grind, and purr a bit more, shall we?

Pop Star Booty Camp

Learn a complete routine to the most booty-shaking, pop-loving, danceable tunes ever. Build up your sisterhood to Beyoncé's "Single Ladies" or Britney Spears' "Stronger." Classes meet once a week for eight weeks and culminate in a nightclub performance.

Days: Tuesday nights, eight-week sessions

Location: 19 Heron St.

www.popstarbootycamp.com

SF Pole and Dance

Channel your sexy inner showgirl and get the best workout of your life several feet off the floor. SF Pole and Dance offers classes starting with beginner foundations and progressing through professional levels and complete choreography.

Days: Most evenings starting 5 p.m. or later

Location: 301 8th St. #225

sfpoleanddance.com

Sexitude Dance

For 90 minutes of super-sexy stretches, shimmies, and leg lifts, drop into Sexitude Dance. Leg warmers, neon colors, and belly shirts are encouraged. Each month, the instructor choreographs a routine in small sections, reviewing prior weeks' moves so everyone can follow, even drop-ins.

Days: Tuesday nights and Sunday afternoons

Location: 351 Shotwell St. and 3316 24th St.

www.sexitude.com

Good Vibrations

With a hot, sexy lineup of feel-good, body-loving workshops like "Bangin' Boudoir Looks for Every Body" and "Unleash Your Inner Bombshell Burlesque Workshop," there is something for everyone at these SF locations of the classiest sex shop ever.

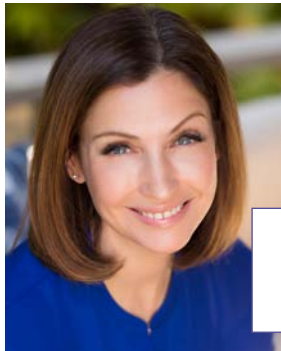
Days: Friday nights and weekend afternoons

Location: Valencia, Polk, Mission, and Kearny locations

www.goodvibes.com

Jennifer has always fantasized about completing an 8-week pop star booty course with a girlfriend or two. Want to join her? Contact her via her website at jenniferkuhrbutterfoss.com.

Jessica is mother to 4- and 6-year-old daughters and has been living in San Francisco for the last 17 years. She loves nothing more than exploring this vibrant city and all of its eccentricities with her husband.



Sex Therapy

with Sara Okman, MFT

Sara Okman, MFT, is a licensed marriage and family therapist, specializing in helping grownups resolve their intimacy impasses. She has been a couples counselor and sex therapist since 2011 and is currently in private practice in both San Francisco and Mill Valley. Contact her at www.relationship-reboot.com.

What is sex therapy?

Sex therapy is simply a subset of psychotherapy that addresses concerns related to sexual or physical intimacy. Talking with a trained sex therapist can facilitate a better understanding of ourselves and our partner(s) as sexual beings. Common goals include increasing the sense of trust and safety with intimate partners, improving sexual functioning, exploring sexual or gender identity, and better understanding of relational dynamics. As in any form of talk therapy, there is absolutely no sexual touch involved, nor any physical contact between therapist and client.

Who would benefit from sex therapy?

Most people seek out sex therapy for help with one of the following three areas: relational distress, sexual functioning that is impeding pleasure, or exploring sexual expression. A good therapist works with their clients to dismantle any negative messages or ideation about eroticism, intimacy, and/or body image, and can help them identify and communicate their intimate thoughts, feelings, needs, and desires in a healthier, more productive way.

Sex therapy can also help to rebuild trust after an affair, heal a non-sexual marriage, navigate desire discrepancy, and address the inherent limitations and benefits to a monogamous or a consensually non-monogamous (CNM) relationship.

When sexual functioning is impaired it often causes deep pain, both physically and/or psychologically. Sex therapists help clients who struggle with pelvic pain disorders, anorgasmia, erectile dysfunction (not medically induced), or early ejaculation, and actively support those who have experienced sexual and/or reproductive trauma.

Those in the LGBTQ and kink communities can find excellent support talking with a trained professional who is both well-informed and radically non-judgmental. A sex therapist helps people understand and accept their sexual or gender identities, navigates difficult conversations with polyamorous configurations, and assists when sexual expression takes on a compulsive or addictive quality.

What are common issues you see in sex therapy?

The most common themes that I see are desire discrepancy

(one partner has a higher sex drive than the other, or one identifies as kinky and their partner does not) and the non-sexual marriage. It has been estimated that approximately 15 to 20 percent of American marriages are non-sexual in nature, which means physical intimacy 10 times a year or less. Usually at least one partner is very unhappy with these impasses, but oftentimes the pattern has gotten so stuck—exacerbated by pressure, guilt, or shame—that it is challenging to shift the dynamic without professional intervention.

I further specialize in working with third-party reproduction, perinatal loss, and the infertility experience. This not only can be a blow to self-esteem but can negatively impact a couple's erotic expression. The sense of freedom and levity previously found in sexual play is often diminished through fertility treatment and scheduled, "on demand" sex. The playful contact that a couple once started with may feel out of reach, especially after the birth of a child and parents' expanding responsibilities.

How do you get "back into it" after having a baby?

Let's expand the notion of what getting "back into it" means. It often takes women at least 4 to 6 weeks—and sometimes up to a year—after giving birth to regain interest in penetrative

sex. This can be due to a number of factors, not the least of which is sleeplessness and exhaustion. A new mom might have concerns about body image,

vaginal pain, getting pregnant again, or have a lowered libido due to the release of prolactin during breastfeeding. She also might be getting all of her physical touch needs met by the new baby. This particular impasse often resolves by having the other parent take over (i.e., after work) so the primary caregiver has time to decompress and be more open to additional touch. This might include holding hands, hugging, spooning, or cuddling. If penetrative sex is temporarily off the table, try to remember to put your hand on your partner's back, run your fingers through his/her hair, or offer a full-body hug. "Outercourse" is a term used to describe any kind of non-penetrative sexual play and can be an important piece to include as part of erotically reconnecting to your partner.

"Talking with a trained sex therapist can facilitate a better understanding of ourselves and our partner(s) as sexual beings."

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Together, we mothers can do anything!



Thank you to all who participated in our drives and volunteering activities in 2019! GGMG members collected 7,000 diapers in May and June 2019, shattering our goal of 5,000. The diapers were donated to Help a Mother Out® (HAMO), which distributes diapers to families in need through a network of social service partners including voluntary home visit programs, facilitated parent support groups, family resource centers, and public health departments.

In November and December 2019 we filled 30 Project Night canvas bags, each containing a new security blanket, an age-appropriate book, and a stuffed animal, and donated over \$1,700 in cash. The bags were distributed to the Safe & Sound and Homeless Prenatal Program. We were also able to donate \$450 in Usborne books and stuffies to the drive thanks to Neighborhood Meetups' book fair party in November.

Throughout the year we organized 6 opportunities for families to volunteer at the SF-Marin Food Bank. Children as young as 4 help sort fruits or vegetables to ensure good quality food is sent to those in the community who need it.

Please keep your eyes on this space and in bulletins for future opportunities to support local organizations helping families in need throughout the coming year.

CONTEST

Zzzzzzzzzzz

Enjoy a complimentary sleep consultation for your hard-to-sleep baby, valued at \$499, with Dr. Sarah Mitchell. The consultation can be done virtually or in-person, details to be determined between the contest winner and donor.

Sarah is a chiropractor by training but found her true passion for empowering parents to teach their little ones to sleep after the birth of her son, who just would not sleep.

Sarah has 2 DIY online classes: "How to Gift Your Newborn the Love of Sleep" and "A to Zzzzs: For Babies 4 to 24 months." Her private, high touch consultations and coaching are done virtually or via home visits.

Enter the contest by emailing contest@gmg.org with "Zzzzzzzz" in the subject line. Winners are picked at random. Thank you to our prize donor, Dr. Sarah Mitchell. Check out her website at www.helpingbabiesleep.com, for sleep information for babies 0 to 3 years of age.

Congratulations to **Stephanie Quan**, winner of the December contest prize, the movie night package at Alamo Drafthouse.



Helping Your Family Love Mother Earth

By Julia Rockwell

Mother Earth has been good to us, but are we treating her with the same care? From plastic-filled oceans to climate breakdown, our mother is in need of some extra TLC. Let's let the love we give this Valentine's Day extend beyond those around us and expand to include our beautiful planet.

Here are 10 simple ways you and your family can spread the love this February and beyond:

1. DO AN AUDIT

Before hauling your bins to the curb, do a trash and recycling audit with your kids to discover your family's main source of waste. Food packaging? Online shopping? Takeout containers? That's a great place to start reducing waste.



2. PACK A ZERO WASTE LUNCH

When it comes to kid's snacks and lunches, there is a lot of packaging waste. Start with a reusable lunchbox and containers, a cloth napkin, washable cutlery, and a refillable water bottle. (Look to a thrift store if you need to add to your child's lunchware collection—especially for cutlery, which can easily go missing.) Processed foods tend to be the most packaged, so aim to fill lunches

with more fruits and vegetables. If your child likes squeezable pouches, consider refillable ones instead.

3. MEATLESS MONDAYS

Eating less meat, beef in particular, can have a far-reaching impact on the climate crisis. According to a study at the University of Oxford, "business-as-usual emissions could be reduced by as much as 70 percent through adopting a vegan diet and 63 percent for a vegetarian diet." Not ready to cut out meat entirely? Start with Meatless Mondays or aim to have beef only on special occasions.

4. GIVE SECOND CHANCES

According to *The New York Times*, nearly three-fifths of all clothing ends up in incinerators or landfills within one year of being manufactured. If that's not enough to make your jaw drop, more than 8 percent of global greenhouse-gas emissions are produced by the apparel and footwear industries alone. Mending the clothes you have, buying quality pieces made from organic, natural fibers, passing kids clothes on to another family, and shopping secondhand are all important factors in fighting climate change.



5. BREAKUP WITH SINGLE-USE

There are many ways to start transitioning away from single-use items. Start by bringing a shopping tote and reusable produce bags to the grocery store. Opt to carry a utensil kit in your diaper bag or purse to avoid using disposable cutlery. Swap tissues for a handkerchief.

6. DITCH THE CUP

Next time your family heads out for ice cream, skip the disposable cup and spoon. Treat your kids to an ice cream cone instead. People often think that leading a sustainable lifestyle means depriving yourself of the things you love. More often than not, it's about shifting the way you approach something rather than giving it up.



7. DOUBLE THE RECIPE

When cooking at home, double recipes and freeze the second portion so you have an easy meal on-hand. This way you can avoid having to get takeout that comes in disposable containers or wasteful frozen packaging. You also save time—which everyone loves.

“If you mess up, it's ok. Don't not do it because you can't do everything”

8. DON'T DUMP PLASTIC TOO SOON

People often assume that to be sustainable, they need to get rid of all of the plastic in their lives. If you own plastic things, like a laundry basket, it's best to treat it well. If it cracks or a handle breaks, repair it. Only when it no longer functions should you go out and purchase a new one made from a sustainable material. Throwing out or donating perfectly good items only to replace them with a new "sustainable" option isn't actually sustainable at all.

9. KEEP THE SPARK ALIVE

It's time to fall back in love...with Mother Earth, that is. Go on a hike with your family in the Presidio. Join a community garden. Plant herbs with your child and grow them on your windowsill. Do a beach clean-up. Get outside and breathe in the ocean air. It is good for the human spirit and a wonderful reminder that we are part of something much greater.

10. DON'T BE PERFECT

Taking steps toward leading a more sustainable life isn't about being perfect. It's about doing what you can. If you mess up, it's ok. Don't not do it because you can't do everything. If making small shifts feels more manageable at first, start there. The change begins with you.

Julia is the author of *Our Simple Song*, an eco-lifestyle blog celebrating a practical and purposeful approach to simple, slow, and sustainable living. Julia and her family live in San Francisco and lead a zero-waste lifestyle. You can follow her on Instagram @oursimplesong.

Sarah Montoya

Photo by Katya Mizrahi Photography

Sarah Montoya is a mother of three (ages 3, 3, and 4) and a pediatric chaplain at Stanford's Lucile Packard Children's Hospital. She and her family live in San Francisco's Mid-Sunset neighborhood. She was interviewed by UrbanSitter CEO Lynn Perkins, a fellow mother of three.



What are your favorite activities for families in San Francisco?

We love Recess Collective, the Academy of Sciences, and the Zoo. We also love various SF Parks & Rec classes, especially the baking classes.

Where would we find you if you had a day off?

I would go on a hike, ideally in the North Bay somewhere. If I stayed in the city, I'd start with a good cup of coffee followed by yoga. Then I'd hop around checking out small shops.

Can you tell us about your position as chaplain?

My role is focused on the spiritual, religious, and emotional needs of patients and their families. My job is mostly to listen and hold space for people to process their experience. In more complex situations, I work with people to explore how their theology may or may not impact their medical decisions.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

To say a prayer of blessing and gratitude for children who go home healthy.

How did your career evolve into your current position?

I am an ordained Christian minister. I started out wanting to work with college students, but my theology expanded and I became more interested in working in a multi-faith setting. I also observed that many of us don't have the tools we need to spiritually deal with illness and death.

What advice do you have for families about talking with children about death and illness?

It is so hard, and also so simple. First, sit with what you believe and what you are feeling. Make sure you are in a place of peace with the loss as much as possible—then tell the kids the truth. Use simple, direct, and honest language. If we can find a way to say simple things like, "their body stopped working" and "I don't know what happens after we die, but I hope xyz..." then kids can have space to feel sad about the loss without developing a fear of death. As for illness, I recommend a similar approach: get comfortable with the reality and tell the truth in simple, direct terms.

Are there skills from your role that transfer into your daily life with your family?

Yes, empathy. Learning how to listen and sit with people in pain and to validate even the slightest level of pain is very relevant. It's all about seeing the person in front of you and really listening and acknowledging their pain as valid. So much has led to the moment in which a patient and their family is crying in front of me and the same is true for my child. As a mom, that also means respecting that my kid really is that sad about the wrong color cup.

How do you manage both family and career?

I work part-time. I decided that the emotional labor of being a chaplain full-time took too much away from my ability to have that same level of emotional labor at home. I also meditate and pray in order to emotionally and spiritually release my families at the hospital so I can focus on being with my family when I'm at home.

What's an interest you'd like to have more time for?

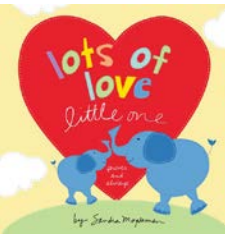
I haven't been as active in protests and social justice work as I would like to be. I want to do more with Moms Demand Action and volunteering for the 2020 Democratic candidate. I also love photography and would like to write more about parenting and theology. I've wanted to start my own blog for a long time.

Know a mom you want to spotlight in the next issue? Email editor@ggm.org with her name, email, and a few sentences about what makes her an awesome mom for our next Member Profile.

Love

By Laure Latham

“All you need is love,” sang the Beatles in 1967 before the Summer of Love, hoping that the whole wide world would get this simple message. Each of the books below tackles the theme of love, though not all with the same perspective. Whether fatherly love, self-love, parental love, or doomed love, love still has the power to change everything.

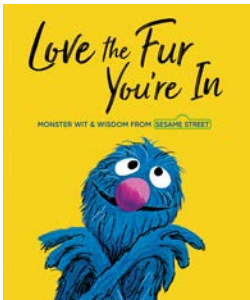


Lots of Love Little One

Written and illustrated by Sandra Magsamen

Perfect for parents or grandparents to read to the little ones in their lives, this book shows a number of ways to say “I love you,” such as “I love you more

than all the spaghetti served in Rome, and more than each and every dog loves her bone.” Each page shows brightly colored drawn-stitch illustrations of the verses, with the translation of “I love you” in several languages, including Hawaiian and Swahili. **Ages: 0 to 3 years**



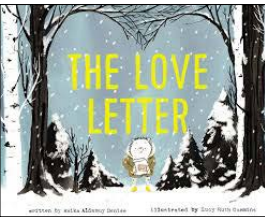
Love the Fur You're In (Sesame Street)

Written and illustrated by Random House

Loving others is fantastic, but loving yourself is just as good. In this Sesame Street book, kids will find 100 pages of great advice for being true to one's self and living life with a Sesame Street perspective—including “keep calm and cookie on,” “don't give a hoot—just

play your song,” or “don't hide your light under a trash can lid.” Using vintage illustrations, each page features a different saying that will delight young and old—in true Sesame Street fashion.

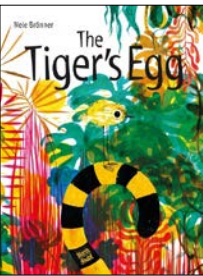
Ages: 4+ years



The Love Letter

Written by Anika Aldamuy Denise; illustrated by Lucy Ruth Cummins

The story's opening lines are: “Hedgehog was late. He did not like being late. It further frazzled his already prickly mood.” Hedgehog, Bunny, and Squirrel all live in a forest, but when they each stumble upon a formally composed love letter, they find their lives improved. The sweet story gets better when the three friends find out who wrote the mystery love letter and for whom the letter was written—none of them! Beautifully written, this book draws on nostalgia to show the ripple effects of a good deed and how words of love can impact others—intentionally or not. **Ages: 4 to 8 years**

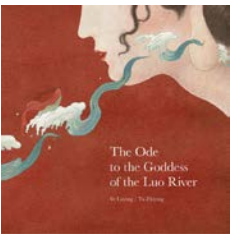


The Tiger's Egg

Written and illustrated by Nele Brönnner

Bored by his enclosure and his neighbors at the zoo, a tiger is very grumpy until a defenseless egg falls onto its lap (or rather, its head). Changing his mood immediately, the tiger starts caring for the egg. Eventually, the egg

cracks open and out comes a hatchling which the tiger views as a “little tiger bird.” Soon, the little tiger bird learns to roar like a true tiger—with fuzzy feathers and a beak. This story of transformative love will melt any child's heart. **Ages: 4 to 8 years**



The Ode to the Goddess of the Luo River

Adapted by Yu Zhiying, illustrated by Ye Luying

Not all love stories have happy endings, especially when they include mortals and heavenly creatures. *The Ode to the Goddess of the Luo River* is one of the most romantic Chinese poems and tells

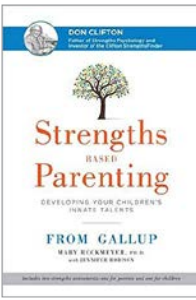
the story of an ordinary state official, returning from a routine visit to the capital, who sees a vision of a river goddess. She is so powerful and ethereally beautiful that he instantly falls in love with her. Alas, their love is not to be. Enjoy this beloved poem with new illustrations and discover a part of Chinese mythology rarely shared outside of China. **Ages: 9 to 14 years**

Laure is the author of the mommy blog Frog Mom (frogmom.com), as well as the book Best Hikes with Kids: San Francisco Bay Area. She writes for several parenting websites and lives in London, where she peppers adventures with her husband and two daughters with compulsory cream tea stops. You can find her on social media @frogmomblog.

Staying Positive

By Gail Cornwall

It took me several years of motherhood to understand that sacrificing my personal passions at my kids' altar wouldn't serve them well in the long run. After several more, I discovered a group of experts preaching a related message: Keeping children's passions in mind maximizes their fulfillment, achievement, self-confidence, and resiliency, now and over the course of their lives.



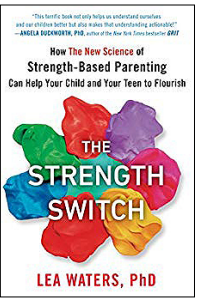
Strengths-Based Parenting: Developing Your Children's Innate Talents

Gallup's Mary Reckmeyer, Ph.D., is essentially the princess of strengths, her father having championed the concept in modern psychology circles. With an assist from Jennifer Robison, Reckmeyer writes the primer on “encouraging a child to do more of what he does best.”

The myth of well-roundedness makes us think we should be good at everything, leading us to focus on our deficits. That's a mistake, Reckmeyer demonstrates, because of a confidence feedback loop; that is, feeling capable increases achievement and achievement makes you feel more capable. “You'll accomplish a lot more by improving on talent than by trying to fix a weakness,” she says. As a parent, you can help your child be their best by helping them identify their propensities and creating “a positive, supportive environment where your children can apply those talents and build them into strengths.” Parents also need to take a look in the mirror: Are you scheduling weekends that play to your own strengths or what will look good on Facebook? But there's comfort reflected there too. Your kid can (and should) get what they need from lots of different sources. “You don't have to play all those roles. You don't have to be a well-rounded parent.”

Though repetitive in places, Reckmeyer's book is easy to read, in part thanks to relatable anecdotes—like how Steven Spielberg's mom reacted to his request to film cans of cherries exploding inside a pressure cooker—and BS-free prose (e.g., “From the Torah to Twitter, there's always been advice on how to bring up children”). And it includes practical advice on how to get started, including access to Strengths-Spotting, Gallup's online tool for identifying talents in children.

BONUS: Because mindfulness is part of identifying one's strengths, Reckmeyer's *How Full Is Your Bucket? For Kids* is a must-have picture book to augment strengths-based parenting attempts. Waters recommends *Sitting Still Like a Frog*.



The Strength Switch

Lea Waters, Ph.D., takes things a step further, teaching parents how to integrate a strengths-based approach into a more general positive parenting philosophy. “Instead of asking what's going wrong, ask what's going right,” she says. When it comes to disappointing behavior, say to yourself: “I wonder what underlying strength is motivating

them to do that” or “What strength does my child have that could help her handle this differently?” She calls this shift in perspective “the strength switch,” and it comes from having a slightly different take than Reckmeyer. In Waters' book, all children have all the strengths (she identifies more than 100, pulling from Gallup's set and several others), defined as “things we do well, often, and with energy.” While it's important to identify, name, and foster the ones that come most easily to children, a parent's positive framing can also influence how they view “what comes hard.” She writes of her own son, “The more I commented on his success in organizing his things, the more he understood himself to be a strong organizer, and therefore the more likely he was to remember to stow the bike.” Waters echoes Reckmeyer, kids must be made to know that to have weaknesses is to be human, not flawed.

In chapters that read like TED talks, Waters goes on to discuss the nitty-gritty of how to parent from a strengths-based perspective at various stages. That includes supporting concepts such as mindfulness, growth mindset, modeling, scaffolding, emotion coaching, building self-control, effective praise, and more.

The book and its website, www.strengthswitch.com, are a veritable treasure trove of positive-parenting guidance.

Gail works as a stay-at-home mom and writer in San Francisco. Read about parenting and education from the perspective of a former teacher and lawyer at gailcornwall.com/articles.

Healing Through Self-Care and Self-Love

By Alissa Harrison

Connecting with valuable resources as a mother has helped me grow into a healthier, more aware, and happier person. Sometimes, I wish I had become a mother earlier in my life because of the inspiration and wisdom I have today. I've come to learn and appreciate some things in life happen only when you are most open and ready for it. Growing up as the eldest child, I had my fair share of responsibilities taking care of my siblings and home to support my parents' career growth. Therefore, when I was in high school, I decided to fully enjoy and experience my college and career journey before I settled down and raised my own family. It was a gift that I gave to myself—a time for me to begin growing into the woman I wanted to become.

“Being gentle with myself and acknowledging I am and do enough are valuable messages.”

While pregnant with my first child, I discovered new gifts—learning new practices of self-care and self-love I was failing to embrace. Limitations in my pregnancy, like hyperemesis and medication-induced exhaustion, enabled me to set healthy boundaries. I learned to say no to others to focus on myself and my needs. I finally had time and space to focus on my health. I began prenatal yoga classes at Ocean Yoga in Pacifica, connecting with instructor Samantha Corsiglia. Living in a distracting, information-ready, noise-heavy world, meeting with her weekly refined the unnecessary, delivering the clarity I needed in my life. I was nurturing myself through Samantha's yoga sequences and meditations specialized for mamas. By providing encouraging, non-judgmental, direct insight, she has helped me learn to prioritize and practice self-care through proper nutrition, movement, and sleep. This special time also allowed me to bond with other mamas, happily sharing foods and problem areas of our bodies.

Postpartum, Samantha's valuable messages of being gentle with myself and acknowledging I am and do enough are



extremely valuable. We hug ourselves while chanting together, “I am enough.” She encourages us to believe in these words—it is a transformative, healing experience, each and every time, never fails. Coming to class, I am always exhausted and overwhelmed. Acknowledging I am in a safe space, I relax. My busy mind of responsibilities centers. Inspired to practice healthy, much needed self love and self care—I've begun working on myself, loving myself, and being grateful for my body, mind, and babies which are truly vital to

the sustainability of my well-being and happiness. Not only for me—my family especially.

But postpartum healing can be a long journey. During my second pregnancy, I was haunted by memories of the complications during labor, delivery, and recovery of my first baby. Samantha helped me realize that healing from traumatic birthing experiences is essential to bonding with my babies and feeling safe and content as a mother. What an invaluable gift I didn't realize I needed so much—healing and putting myself back together. As a result, I am considering seeking help with healing from my traumatic pregnancy and birth experiences.

Motherhood has been the best gift I've given to myself. Spending quality time with my babies brings me closer toward a higher caliber of life I've been seeking. I have experienced the most joy, growth, and satisfaction in these moments—grasping the true meaning of gratitude regardless of any challenges I face. I am grateful to have found Samantha, a trustworthy resource who looks forward to lifting mamas up like myself. I hope that all mamas find a way to nurture themselves, whether through someone who inspires or encourages them, or by following their inner voice.



Alissa is a freelance designer and marketer and mom of two active little explorers, Zack and Gene. She enjoys helping others while being creative, stroller walks at the beach, and daily practices of mama self-love and self-care.



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Reclaiming Our Unicorn Space: Tuning in to Passions Outside Motherhood

How can we rebalance our lives to make room for activities
that make us uniquely ourselves?

By Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss

Photos by Marie Hamonic Photography



The year was 2007, and my sister Michelle was the first of her friends to get married, buy a home, and have a child. On a visit to my sister's new home, Marissa, a close friend of hers from high school, was sipping wine and scanning the cluttered fridge door. Her eyes landed on a posed family photo that showed my sister's husband and then two-year-old son wearing matching winter sweaters. The photo gave Marissa pause. "Who IS this person?" she asked. "What happened to the Michelle I used to know? The one who wrote poetry and got all the cool kids to wear green lipstick to school? Who is this matching sweater lady?" My sister had always been an overachiever and in order to overachieve as a parent, she had dwindled any time or care for herself to nonexistence. With that, Marissa scheduled an intervention. She kidnapped Michelle from her home, painted her nails green, and dragged her to the city to experience bottomless bloody Marys and a taste of the wild and passionate woman she once was.

My sister's friend reminded her of the rule-breaking, fearless, and freethinking individual she used to be. Michelle remembers that day with a special fondness. By partaking in some of the little indulgences she took for granted in her pre-kid days, she was reminded of the woman she once was and longed to tap into once more.

Marissa is what Eve Rodsky, author of the book *Fair Play*, would call a "spiritual friend." Rodsky explained in her recent talk at New York City's Strand Bookstore that spiritual friends are "friends who wake you up when you're sleeping. Who say to you,

'I see you and I know there's someone vibrant and amazing in there. And that was who you were before children and I'm going to bring you back.'"

Marissa helped her let go of a lot of the little details and assumptions she used to hold of what makes a "good mom..." things like matching sweaters and creating one Hallmark moment after another. This eventually freed up time to find herself again and pursue her own passions, like planning international travel adventures to see all the wonders of the world and taking the steps toward becoming a yoga instructor. In a sense, this intervention helped her find her "unicorn space" once more.

What is unicorn space?

In her book about rebalancing domestic responsibilities, Eve Rodsky introduced the phrase "unicorn space" to the mom scene. "I found it very condescending to have all

"Unicorn space is something that we do that not only brings us joy but also impacts others in some way. It's what makes us interesting."

these articles on 'What's your passion?' or 'Find your purpose!' Because I had no f-ing time to find my passion," Rodsky writes. "It was [not] until I could do my own rebalance that I could write this book." Rodsky broke down what "unicorn space" looks like in an interview with *Thrive Global*. "[It] is about the active pursuit of what makes you uniquely you and how you share that with the world. When I was [doing everything] for my family, there was no time for my unicorn space. But now that we rebalanced, I get to go into the world and be a worker and a partner. I also had time every single day to write a book, and that's my active pursuit of who I am."

"It just takes 10 minutes of thinking about how do I actively pursue what makes me, me?" Rodsky explained. The key is to take small steps, any step and to actively work towards rebalancing and shifting that neverending list of to-do's, or eliminating some altogether.

Unicorn space isn't about going to spin class or getting your nails done either. These two activities fall under "self-care" and are also very important. Unicorn space

is something we do that not only brings us joy but also impacts others in some way. It's what makes us interesting. "It has to be an active pursuit, so not just reading, but writing. Not just eating pie, but baking that pie. These pursuits are not just tied to our partner longevity, but our actual longevity," states Rodsky.

The key to our survival

There is plenty of research out there to back Rodsky's claims. One 2018 study published in the *Journal of Positive Psychology* showed that more frequent and greater pursuit of creative activities (e.g., painting, writing) led to overall long-term happiness. A review of health, wellness, and happiness data between 2000 and 2012 surveying over 9,000 adults for an average of 8.5 years, known as the English Longitudinal Study on Aging (ELSA), showed a direct correlation of

encouragement," she writes. "But that has not been a requirement of parenting until recently, and it's destroying all of us."

Passionate parents

Parenting nowadays has whipped many of us into a frenzy of pursuing the best schools, living in the best neighborhoods, and shuttling kids around to the most high-status extracurricular activities. But what about the example set by adults in pursuing and living a life worth living? What about the pursuit of interests and passions? Is it possible that to truly and effectively parent our children, we need to lighten our loads a bit and model getting devoured by a book, hosting a letter-writing campaign, or dragging the kids along to events they might find boring but light us up inside?

"Screen time is a dirty word now, I know, but it was a fact of life when I was a child" writes Fox. "Television and books allowed [moms] time to do what they wanted. And





when they did what they wanted, we learned that their passions had value.”

Dee Martinez, mother of two kids ages 4 and 7 in San Francisco, would agree. She has a degree in theater and was a working actor before getting married and having children. She now pursues this love of the arts outside her full-time job through Cornerstone Church, where her family regularly attends services. Martinez works alongside other talented and creative professionals who work for organizations like Pixar and YouTube by doing all the choreography for major church productions and serving as an assistant director.

When asked about tradeoffs to pursuing her passion, Martinez reflects, “There’s always that sense of guilt that you feel, so [I’m] having to battle that. My kids don’t eat as well [during a project]. They don’t go to sleep at the proper time. Their consistency is what gets lost. But they completely understand and when they see me doing my thing, it’s so nice. They’re like, ‘Wow, who are you?’”

Battling mom guilt

Pursuing interests outside motherhood guilt-free is a difficult balance and one for which mothers tend to shoulder the burden more than their partners. Perhaps the key lies in knowing which details to overlook and even dismiss (yes, you’re having plain

noodles for dinner again tonight) and which details are worth a harder look. Another key may be finding a venue compatible with family involvement. Martinez states that what makes her passion work well for her family is not just spousal support but also being involved in an institution aimed at supporting families.

“Cornerstone is so inclusive and really

has something for everyone, especially kids. I try to get my daughter more involved because she has a passion for performing,” states Martinez.

Reclaiming unicorn space

How can a mom start to reclaim her unicorn space? Martinez advises, “If you can take the time to peek into the past and try things that you used to, using the resources you have now, that may spark something. The more often you do it, the less hard it is to go back to the mundane [life] of serving your kids constantly. You’re able to set aside this time and show your kids that we all need our time and it’s not 24/7 about them.”

Fox offers this thought about her own mother who has passed, “What I loved about her—what I still love, what still makes me ache for her when I allow myself a few private moments of grief—were the moments of watching her do something that had nothing to do with me.”

Jennifer is the mother of two little unicorns and has rediscovered her long-lost passion from her high school newspaper days through writing for GGMG Magazine. Find more of her unicorn droppings at jenniferkuhrbutterfoss.com.

How to Reclaim Your Unicorn Space

- 1. Reflection**— What lights you up or used to light you up before kids?
- 2. Engagement**— Find a way to impact others with your answer.
- 3. Letting Go**— What can you delegate or let go of to free up more time?
- 4. Consistency**— One daily family routine will help you connect and then claim unicorn space guilt-free.
- 5. Benign Encouragement**— Encourage, don’t force, your kid’s interests. Just model your own.
- 6. Trust and Freedom**— Allowing kids more freedom to do things independently will free you up.
- 7. Screen Time**— Screens let parents get time for themselves.



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Loving Parenthood Without Wine

Exploring ways to relieve the stress of parenthood without alcohol

By Emily Beaven

Dinner time has always seemed like a witching hour in our house; and so it became natural to open a bottle of wine to help ease the chaos. After an especially stressful day, I looked at my husband as I sipped my second (or was it my third?) glass of sauvignon blanc and casually asked, “I shouldn’t need wine to parent my kids, right?” He brushed it off. “Everyone drinks, it’s part of parenthood. The kids are wild.” But I felt uneasy. When had I become dependent on a glass of wine or three each night to “get through it all”?

My drinking habits seemed relatively normal to everyone but me. After all, I was parenting in the era of the “The Wine Mom” phenomenon. The term officially appeared in Urban Dictionary in 2015, defined as:

A middle-aged female (usually a mother) who enjoys drinking a refined, complex red or white wine most likely bought from Whole Foods with her other middle-aged female friends while exchanging neighborhood gossip. Common topics during this odd ritual include but are not limited to: annoying children, idiotic husbands, fundraisers for an elementary or middle school, that one neighbor who enjoys starting drama, and other neighbors who choose not to maintain their lawn. Wine mothers also tend to post their gatherings on Facebook.

Wine Mom has birthed hashtags, Facebook groups, and memes such as “*The most expensive part of having kids is all the wine you drink.*” There’s swag with “Mommy Juice” etched on oversized wine glasses, “Mama Needs Some Wine” on slippers, magnets, coffee mugs, and t-shirts. I felt like I couldn’t go anywhere without encountering it, including GGMG events such as: book clubs (with wine), mommy meetups (with wine), painting (with wine). I was even offered a shot of tequila from the sample guy at Mollie Stone’s as I shopped with two kids in my grocery cart...at 11 a.m. It seemed like parenting and drinking went hand-in-hand.

In *Marie Claire*, Keith Humphreys, an addiction specialist and professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Stanford



Zachariah Hagy on Unsplash

University School of Medicine, likens the marketing of alcohol to women to the way big tobacco brazenly tapped into women’s lib in the ’70s with its now-notorious tagline, “*You’ve come a long way, baby.*” Women drinking more heavily and more often—and for college-age women in particular, drinking nearly as much as men—is a phenomenon of the past 20 years. “It wasn’t something that came from women, that they spontaneously decided they should drink a lot more,” Humphreys explained. “It was driven by very conscious marketing to women, that ‘alcohol is freedom’ and ‘alcohol is equality.’” Clearly these marketing tactics are working. Alcohol use among women is significantly up according to a recent large-scale study published in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

But how was I supposed to quit when it seemed so normalized? Maybe there was something wrong with me. Maybe I was a problematic drinker, someone who couldn’t handle her booze the way other people could. Was I an alcoholic? I felt alone and isolated. I had one male friend who was in AA and I was curious about it, but it didn’t seem like the right fit for me. I googled some terms, but what popped up didn’t seem right either—I didn’t



Mini Anna Photography

necessarily need rehab. And then I came across a term that started to resonate with me: Sober Curious. It turned out I wasn’t alone at all.

The Sober Curious movement has been featured in *The New York Times*, *PBS*, *USA Today*, *The Guardian*, *Today*, and *Marie Claire* within the last year. As millennials have embraced healthier lifestyles, they’ve questioned the pressures to drink. “People are more invested in their overall wellbeing [these days],”

Ruby Warrington, founder of Club Soda NYC and author of the book *Sober Curious*, told *Bustle Magazine*. “As we change our diets, work out regularly and adopt other wellness practices, it becomes harder to reconcile the way alcohol really makes us feel. I think a lot of people are beginning to ask if a few hours of ‘pressing pause’ on stress, anxiety, or loneliness is worth the inevitable payoff the morning after.”

Warrington, who is known for coining the now-famous term “Sober Curious,” defines it as “...choosing to question every impulse, every invitation, or every expectation to drink, rather than just kind of going along with the dominant drinking culture.” Being Sober Curious isn’t black or white, it’s a spectrum. Warrington adds that it means different things to different people. Some may “...choose to abstain from alcohol completely, and for other people it may just mean more mindful and conscious drinking choices.”

When Julie Houghton, a career and life coach, mom, and GGMG member, learned how alcohol plays a risk in getting cancer, she said it was a “big wakeup call, especially since I have so much cancer in my family history.” Compared to non-drinkers, women who consume just three alcoholic drinks per week increase their breast cancer risk by 5 percent, according to *breastcancer.org*. And according to the CDC, alcohol-related deaths claim the lives of an estimated 88,000 people per year, making it the third leading preventable cause of death in the U.S.—double the amount killed by our current opioid crisis—a statistic that has more than doubled over the past 20 years (Source: National Center for Health Statistics). Houghton decided to go 100 days without drinking and timed it so day 100 would fall on her birthday. She said, “When I got to day 100 I felt so great that I decided to just keep going.”

Houghton goes on to add, “Once I did start to question drinking, I noticed how pervasive it is. I think Wine Mom culture is the result of millions of dollars in marketing that alcohol companies have spent to convince moms that they can’t “do it all” unless they have a glass (or more) of wine. It promotes the idea that we’re not enough—that we need this drink to get through dinner with the kids or the bedtime routine, and that’s just not true. Now that I’m not drinking, I’ve realized I’m actually a lot more patient, less irritable, and more capable to handle things like my kids melting down at the end of the day than I was when I was having my nightly glass or two of wine.”

For me, wine was something I used to help transition from day to night, to “unwind.” I tried to curtail the habit, but it never worked; I would sustain it for a while, but slowly found that one glass would turn into two, three, or sometimes more. I got more and more Sober Curious, which ultimately led me to discover *This Naked Mind: Control Alcohol, Find Freedom, Discover Happiness & Change Your Life*, by Annie Grace. Grace uses psychology and neuroscience to expose the unconscious desire to drink along with “liminal thinking,” which means that through the conscious exploration and acceptance of new ideas and truths, you can influence your unconscious mind.

Grace maintains, “Today’s society has conditioned your unconscious mind to believe alcohol provides pleasure, enjoyment, and support—that it is vital to social situations and stressful situations alike.” Her book “reverses that conditioning by stripping away your false beliefs about alcohol.”

After reading *This Naked Mind*, I realized I perceived wine as a

“My drinking habits seemed relatively normal to everyone but me. After all, I was parenting in the era of the ‘The Wine Mom’ phenomenon...”

vital way to relax, when in fact it had the opposite effect—it created more stress and anxiety in my life. *This Naked Mind* helped me understand that alcohol had no positive attributes in my life—regardless of what society tried to tell me. So my Sober Curious journey ended with my decision to quit for good in January 2018. I was nervous that I would feel weird or isolated in social settings, but I didn't. If anything, I felt empowered knowing I was in control. I wasn't worried about saying something foolish in front of a colleague or client, and the best part was—no more hangovers!

I honestly don't know if I'll ever drink again. Parenting two children and having another career outside the home is extremely challenging. I am far from a perfect parent, but I feel more confident and equipped for the challenge being sober. For now, I'll stick with a sparkling glass of La Croix.

Emily Beaven is a residential Real Estate Agent at Compass, mother of two, and passionate supporter of reproductive rights and Waldorf education.



How to destress without alcohol

In a recent article in *Psych Central*, Rachel Hart, a coach who works with women who want to take a break from drinking, provides tips for those reconsidering the use of alcohol as a stress reliever. Hart suggests exploring your results (instead of getting wrapped up in right and wrong):

- Do I like the results I am getting from using a glass of wine as my go-to method to relax?
- Do I have other options to relax?
- Is there a lot of internal chatter about whether to drink at the end of the day?
- Am I dealing with a lot of cravings?
- Do I find myself regretting how I spent my evening or wishing I didn't feel so groggy in the morning?

For those ready for an alternative, Hart describes “consuming fun” and “creating fun.” Drinking wine is similar to scrolling Facebook and watching Netflix for hours. “These activities take very little energy to accomplish, so the brain keeps going back for more.”

Creating fun requires more energy—but it rarely leaves you with negative results. We can create fun by playing interactive games, making art, making music, reading, writing, running, dancing, sewing and singing.

- Hart recommends asking yourself the following questions:
- How do you want to spend your time?
 - How do you want to feel?
 - Are there hobbies you'd like to start or return to?
 - Would you like to have fun as a family?
 - What refreshes you?
 - What supports you?

Could you have a drinking problem?

- Moderate drinking is defined as one drink a day for women
- Heavy drinking is defined as eight or more drinks per week
- Binge drinking is defined as four or more drinks on a single occasion for women

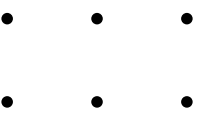
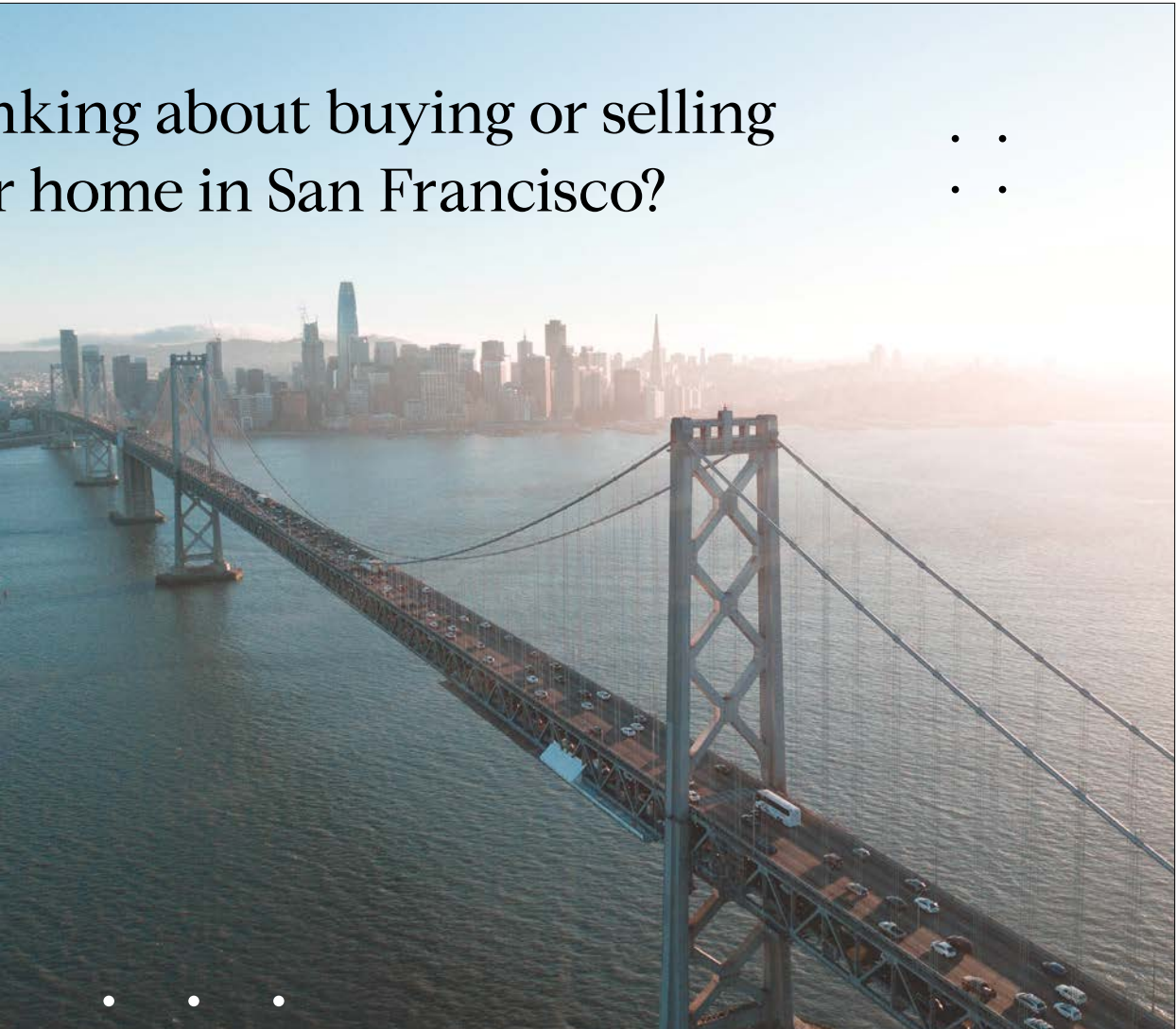
Alcohol Use Disorder (previously known as alcoholism or alcohol dependence) can be categorized as mild, moderate, and severe, depending on how many symptoms a person has. To assess whether you or a loved one may have AUD, here are some questions to ask.

In the past year, have you:

- Had times when you ended up drinking more, or longer than you intended?
- More than once wanted to cut down or stop drinking, or tried to, but couldn't?
- Spent a lot of time drinking? Or being sick or getting over the aftereffects?
- Experienced craving—a strong need, or urge, to drink?
- Given up or cut back on activities that were important or interesting to you, or gave you pleasure, in order to drink?
- Continued to drink even though it was making you feel depressed or anxious or adding to another health problem? Or after having had a memory blackout?

If you have any of these symptoms, your drinking may already be a cause for concern. The more symptoms you have, the more urgent the need for change. A health professional can conduct a formal assessment to see if AUD is present. Visit alcohol.treatment.niaaa.nih.gov for more information.

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A Many Splendored Thing

Making the time to connect with family in small ways can reinvigorate your bonds

By Veronica Reilly-Granich

Photos by Bhavya Thyagarajan Photography



How does your family nurture love on a daily basis? Ultimately, there are as many answers to this question as there are families, but some general principles apply broadly. Simple things like eating together, being fully present for your family members for a few minutes every day, and developing shared passions can strengthen your bonds immensely. Finding the traditions and rituals that bring your family together, whether they are passed down from family, adapted from other places, or created fresh, is another way to reaffirm your love for one another. Most importantly, choose what works for your family and listen carefully to what your children need in this moment of their lives. Things change as we grow and learn together, and there is no one right way to nourish love.

Eat together

We all have to eat, so this can be a simple way to connect without adding more to your plate. Kiran Gaind, a modern parenting coach who founded The Connected Family (theconnectedfamily.net), shared that her family bonds over planning and preparing dinner most days of the week. Her children, ages 7 and 10, help plan the weekly meals and have started cooking sometimes as well. She cautions that it isn't necessarily realistic for modern families to eat dinner together every night, but finding a meal to share a few times a week—which could be breakfast or brunch on the weekends if dinners don't work—can create the space for family members to hear about what is going on with each other.

Echoing the idea of making meals the center of a tight-knit family, Wendy (not her real name), a research psychologist, college professor, and mother of three kids ages 9 through 14, says she gets up each morning and makes breakfast for her kids. She usually eats with them. It is important to her to know that they start each day with homemade, nutritious food in their bodies. Despite working more than full time, she and her partner also do their best to come home and have dinner as a family each night.

For Andrew Casteel, breakfast is also the time to connect with his 3-year-old son. After a good morning hug, they eat some cereal together and begin the day. Casteel counts his partner, many friends, his son's godparents, and a nearby brother and sister as part of his immediate family, and they all bond at a weekly home-cooked dinner. In addition, many weeknights see guests joining them at the dining table, which in turn feeds the loving community that supports Casteel and his partner as relatively new parents.

Be fully present

You can be present for your children in big and small ways. Wendy makes sure to give each child a quick snuggle before they go to sleep—even her 14-year-old football player! Two of her children still like her to lie in bed with them for a few minutes; her daughter doesn't like to talk too much, while her oldest son may tell her about his day. Her youngest son does not like to cuddle but just wants her to listen to him talk about whatever is on his mind. In thinking about what keeps the love strong for her family, she says, "Part of it is homing in on one kid and figuring out what they need and giving it to them in the moment."

Presence is a central component of love, including familial love. Parenting coach and founder of Parenting Paths (parentingpaths.com) Aki Raymer says, "Focus on helping your child feel seen and loved in those first few moments of waking up, picking up, and going to bed, before focusing on the logistics." If you can go one step further and prioritize spending just 15 minutes a day focusing on your child(ren), that is a great way to build love and



connection. Get down on their level physically and follow their lead. It may help to set a timer. This will help your family get through busy times when you can't slow down and connect. Raymer suggests that, "If you do this regularly or daily, then when you can't connect or give them attention, you can let them know that you can talk and play during your regular time. Your child can count on it and will be more willing to wait. Also it helps build trust; your child will know that when you say you will do something with them, you will do it."

At the same time, Raymer encourages parents to do what is realistic. If you have multiple children and you can't give them individual, focused time each day, get down on the floor and play with them together for a few minutes. It is a great opportunity to be more aware of the sibling dynamics

"Things change as we grow and learn together, and there is no one right way to nourish love."

happening and to reinforce things like turn-taking or listening to one another. Your children won't remember that you gave them 15 timed minutes apiece each day—they will remember that you were there playing with them! And if you can't do it every day, do it as often as you can.

Casteel's appreciation of parenting has

deepened through a simple practice he calls Dadku. Each day he tries to find one moment with his son and he writes a short haiku about it. So many moments are slipping through our consciousness all the time, but pausing to collect a few of the beautiful ones can truly increase the joy that you find as a family, no matter how you do it. (For inspiration, check out the moments Casteel has captured at dadkus.com).

Share your passions

Many people find partners that share at least one of their own passions, and you can often build on this to create a shared family activity or interest. Gaind says that she and her husband both love soccer and have integrated it into the rhythms of family life. She adds that, "There is soccer in the backyard, soccer on the weekends, we just

visited Spain and we saw a soccer game in Barcelona together...We have made this part of our family culture. Now the kids are just as into it as we are." You might develop a family love of music, art,

hiking, or any of thousands of possibilities in the Bay Area. Not only will it give you an activity to spend time doing together, but you can also connect around planning for and learning about your shared interest.

Wendy unexpectedly bonded with her daughter when she came to work with her. Due to illness and lack of childcare, her



daughter was forced to come to her mother’s college class. Halfway through teaching the class, Wendy looked to the back of the room and saw her daughter with rapt attention listening to the lecture. Afterward she said, “Mom, you are a really good teacher.” On the other hand, Wendy’s partner focuses on spending time on the weekends enjoying a shared passion, like video games, with each child on an individual basis. In this case, he follows the child’s lead in choosing the activity they engage in together. Again, there is no one right way, but being open to discovering and sharing interests with your child can help you get to know one another in new ways.

Create small traditions and rituals

There are so many possible rituals of love and connection. Daily transitions are a great place to build these moments in. You can also add some fun to these interactions; for example, Raymer shared that she and her daughter use different kinds of kisses to say goodbye, including “butterfly kisses” where you “kiss” with your eyelashes. Raymer suggests that “it’s really about making and thinking about what kind of experience you want to have and you want your child to have.” Again, it

is so individual, and there is no one right way to do it. If it brings joy to you and your family members, go with it!

A related way of fostering your family’s love and connection is to establish traditions. From Casteel’s weekly dinner to visiting the same place as a family on a yearly basis, these traditions can be as varied as families are. They don’t have to be complicated either: Raymer visits IHOP with her daughter, something they both enjoy. One mother shared that she likes to print out recent photos regularly, go through them with her child, and then send some to friends and family. Families often develop traditions around holidays that are meaningful for personal or religious reasons. Raymer says, “The magic really lies in the feeling that it is something special that happens regularly and there is something missing if it doesn’t happen.”

Be curious

We all go through the daily motions of asking friends, family members, and co-workers, “How are you?” or “What did you do today?” These generic questions invite the sort of generic answers and shrugs many parents complain about receiving from their children. Instead, try to think of specific questions to ask your family members and use the information

you have about what is important to them or what is going on with them currently. For example, you might ask, “Did you play with Yolanda at recess today?” or “What did you sing in music class today?” Raymer suggests finding time in your day to do a round of Rose, Thorn, and Bud with the family. If you aren’t familiar, each family member would share a Rose, the best thing that happened during the day; a Thorn, the worst thing that happened during the day; and a Bud, something new that was learned. If your children are reluctant to share, model it yourself first. The things you say may inspire them to share.

Take care of yourself

When asked what barriers she found to nurturing love and connection as a family, Wendy said, “The biggest barrier to connection is lack of self-care. When my plate is empty I have nothing to connect with.” It is so important to fill your own well so that there is plenty of positivity for you to share with your family. This includes individual self-care, nurturing your relationship with your partner, making time for friends, and engaging in an activity that you love, even if it isn’t a shared family passion.

Family love is grown on a daily basis. It is unconditional. It is hugs and kisses and saying “I love you.” It is cooking dinner together, soccer in the backyard, and breakfast at IHOP. As Raymer said, “It is not so much about one big trip, but more about memories of always doing things together like decorating the house for a holiday or eating a meal together regularly.” It doesn’t have to be perfect. Just showing up and doing your best day after day is the greatest gift you can give your children.

Veronica is an educator and writer who loves to eat and go on local adventures with her partner and two young daughters. She deeply appreciates all the people who gave their time to make this article possible and accepts full responsibility for any errors.

Find out more about parenting coach Kiran Gaind at theconnectedfamily.net or visit her Facebook group Pressure-Proof Kids. Connect with parenting coach Aki Raymer at parentingpaths.com.

From the Forums
What You LOVE about San Francisco

- The Buy Nothing community!
GGMG!!!
- I love walking everywhere and that my neighborhood grocery store, coffee shop, and butcher know me.
- The fact that both my kids can happily dive into any playground in SF and find a group of new “friends” to play with, often who speak other languages and/or are of a different race etc.
- I love that I’m learning how to/teaching my boys how to live without excess space...the last decade of living here has me conditioned to feel very comfortable with my family of 4 in a small 2 bdrm.
- Our free language immersion programs in our public schools. All the free museum days and things like the SF Library Discover and Go program. Exposing my kids to incredible performances at Symphony Hall, ACT, Orpheum, many with inexpensive Groupons or Goldstar offers.
- Weather, community, politics, muni, employment, walkability, museums, music, theatre, restaurants, parks, beaches, and proximity to everything else SF doesn’t offer.
- The breathtaking views that I get on an average walk to run errands, the awesome food (from Michelin Star restaurants to food trucks), the multiple newly-renovated & fantastic kid parks that I can walk to, all the kid-friendly activities (Cal Academy, zoo, Exploratorium, etc), being able to go weeks without using our car, never having to set foot in a strip mall, great hikes like Lands End... hoping to never leave. I grew up in the suburbs and find them suffocating.
- I love the foghorns at night. I love my neighborhood and the fact that I can’t walk more than a few blocks without running into people I know. I love living near the ocean. I love walking my son to school. I love commuting via cable car. I love the views. I love that there are so many amazing things to do, all the time.
- The view of the Marin headlands when driving north on GGB. Lands End. The de Young and Cal Academy and the Legion of Honor. Crissy Field runs with the view of GGB that even after a decade still never, not once, ceases to take my breath away. Fresh produce year-round. Lemons in our shared tree out back. Block parties. Different languages on every storefront when we only walk one block. Ocean, everywhere ocean. Music and art. That I can go anywhere in jeans and a fleece. Composting as a given, not an oddity. But most of all, the people who live their lives asking why and how and can we do better. That these are the people my kids will look to as examples of being human. It always comes back to the people.
- Progressive environmental movement, proximity to ocean, access to culture and arts and sports, and WEATHER.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

My Pronouns are They/Them

By Mariposa (They/Them/Theirs)

I am one of the few GGMG members who uses they/them pronouns. I'm an Indigenous mixed solo parent of a very active threenager, and I constantly break the stereotypes of what it means to be a female birth parent in expressing my gender identity. My parent name is Me'me', and I am always trying to figure out what my role is in the "mom world." My gender identity is "Two-Spirit," which holds both the masculine/feminine energies that I express and feel every day.

San Francisco lies on unceded Raymatush Ohlone land, and the concepts of transphobia and cissexism were imposed here by way of colonization. Gender is not binary; there are more than two genders, not just in indigenous societies but globally. Many cultures across the world have celebrated more than two genders for a millennia. Visit www.ihs.gov/lgbt/health/twospirit/ to learn more about the role "Two-Spirit" people hold in native nations and communities. Importantly, only native people can claim "Two-Spirit," and it is considered disrespectful if a non-native person claims this.

I wanted to make sure my child understood what being "Two-Spirit" means, so along with other two-spirits, Our Family Coalition, GGMG, and SURJ (Standing Up For Racial Justice), I curated my vision of having a "Two-Spirit Storytime/Hour." I loved seeing my kid learn and be in a storytime where we, as two-spirit peoples, are seen and celebrated. Dancing, Native Drag Queen, reading a two-spirit book called 47,000 Beads, Two-Spirit Elder Storytelling, singing, and eating woodland native snacks are just some of the magic that gets created. There is a belief that my Haudenosaunee ancestors held—and that we still hold—that our impact should last for seven generations from now. I hope that the joy and awareness from five different Two-Spirit Storytime/Hours in this city will have an impact on the next seven generations. All are welcome at the next one in June 2020.

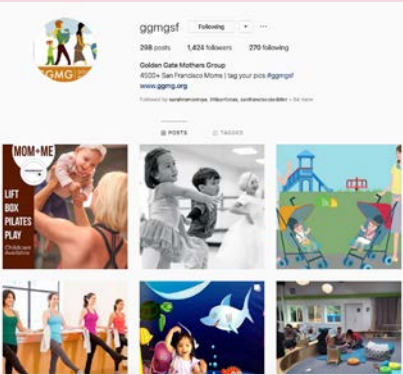
I have always known I am two-spirit, and it was after I gave birth that instead of using all pronouns I chose to use "they/them." This doesn't mean I have no pronouns; it means I have chosen they/them just as someone chooses she/her or he/him. This was an important mark for me in my Me'me'hood journey, to remind people who meet me that I am not only a mother and a father, but that I encompass all as a parent.

You can learn more about this topic by visiting: nonbinary.wiki/wiki/Gender-variant_identities_worldwide and www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/two-spirits



Landa Lakes, a Native American drag queen reading 47,000 Beads at Two-Spirit Storytime

SOCIAL MEDIA



The Social Media Committee is excited to report that our engagement on all forms of social media has steadily increased. We now have over 1,400 followers on Instagram and over 6,000 likes on Facebook!

Starting off 2020, we'd like to hear from you about what kind of content most appeals to you. Information on events and happenings? Informative articles? A dose of humor to get you through your day? We want to make sure we're catering to YOU, so send us a note and let us know.

We couldn't be happier that volunteers have increasingly requesting social media coverage. In addition to supporting everyone from our devices at home, we've begun attending various GGMG events in an official capacity (albeit behind our cameras and phones), documenting the hard work of our volunteers in real-time. If you'd like someone from the Social Media Committee to be present at your GGMG event, give us a holler in advance, and we'll do our best to make that happen.

Remember to like/follow us on all forms of social media (@ggmgssf) and repost/retweet/share to your heart's content. And if you attend our events, don't forget to post your pictures and include the hashtag #ggmgssf. You may just get reposted/retweeted/shared yourself!

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

2019 in Review

On December 4, 2019, GGMG closed out the decade, and honored our hard-working volunteers at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event at China Live. This year our volunteers organized 700+ events this year, from neighborhood get togethers to GGMG's annual Spring Fling and Fall Fest celebrations. The warm, caring community you find at GGMG wouldn't be here without the efforts of our volunteers, and we are grateful for the time and energy that they have given.

Thank you also to the following donors who provided raffle and goody bag items for the event. Without their generosity, these incredible gifts of appreciation would not be possible!

Aether Beauty	Nest Maternity
Aldea Home & Baby	Peninsula Family Coaching
Alyse Panitz Photography	Primary
Ambiance SF	Seabird Preschool
Camp Galileo	SF Zoo Early Childhood
Children's Creativity Museum	Programs
Diana Teich Therapy, Licensed	Sketchbook
Marriage and Family Therapist	Sports Basement
Firecracker Math	Steve & Kate's Camp
Golden Gate Doula Associates	Stitch Fix
Great Pretenders	Susie Cakes
Hygeia Breast Pumps	TableTopics
Kendall Crane Styling	The Flower Box
Kerner Chiropractic	Third Haus
Little Feminist	Third Love
Lovejoy's Tea Room	Toycycle
Macy's	UrbanSitter

SOCIAL EVENTS

Save the Date for our annual Spring Fling!
Sunday, April 5 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Randall Museum



This year we'll be having an egg hunt, along with a bounce house, and of course, the wonderful sponsors that'll be joining us with fun activities for the children. Don't forget to bring a few of your trains to use on the toy tracks in the railroad exhibit, or you can rent them for a nominal fee at the front desk. More information on the event will be announced closer to the event date.

We're looking for volunteers to help with set up, break-down, and the egg hunt for the event. All volunteers will receive a thank you gift. If you're interested, please email RSVP@ggmg.org.

MEMBER SUPPORT

Making Friends as a Parent

It can become harder to maintain our social circles as we age. There are so many demands on our time, from children to spouses to work. While it may feel like there is no time left in your schedule for fun with friends, maintaining personal relationships is one important form of self-care. If time with friends has taken a back seat for you, it can feel intimidating to expand your friend group. Here are a few tips for developing friendships after kids:

- Join a GGMG neighborhood meetup (like Coffee + Stroller walks or play dates) to meet moms who live nearby
- Leave your children with a sitter and attend a GGMG Moms Night Out event (like wine night or a book club)
- Reconnect with old friends
- Introduce yourself to the woman at the cycling bike next to yours and invite her for coffee after class
- Create a profile on a friend-finding app like Bumble BFF or Peanut
- Introduce yourself to three new people at your next party and leave with contact details to meet again if there's a connection

Putting yourself out there can be hard, but the rewards are huge. Check the GGMG forum for easy opportunities to meet new moms. For additional resources or support, reach out to member.support@ggmg.org.



CAREERS & ENTREPRENEURS

Get Out of Survival Mode and Overcome Burnout
Do the challenges of life as a busy mom prevent you from showing up as your whole self? You're not alone. Most parents today are stuck in an unsustainable cycle of survival mode that seems impossible to escape. In this free webinar, trained therapist Sarah Argenal outlines a new approach for busy moms so they can overcome burnout for good. Sarah's Whole SELF Lifestyle™ approach is a four-step framework that helps busy parents address the logistical and psychological challenges they face when balancing life. In this virtual training, you'll engage in a real-time discussion based on how this framework applies to you personally, with an emphasis on creating a life that leverages your unique blend of values, strengths, and goals. This webinar is for every type of mom, from SAHMs to those working outside the home. A recording of the webinar will be shared with registrants.

DATE: Thursday, March 5
TIME: Noon to 1 p.m.
PLACE: Online webinar (login details sent after registration)
COST: FREE

Moms Networking Lunches - Downtown San Francisco
The Careers and Entrepreneurs Committee invites you to join one of their regular Mom Networking lunches. Look for the GGMG Moms Networking Lunch sign on the table. Pregnant moms, working moms, SAHMs—all are welcome!

DATE: Wednesday, February 12	DATE: Tuesday, March 10
TIME: noon to 1:00 p.m.	TIME: noon to 1:00 p.m.
PLACE: 218 Montgomery St. (Cafe Venue)	PLACE: 4 Embarcadero Center (Boudin)
COST: FREE	COST: FREE

PARENT EDUCATION

Child Behavior Management for Parents: Keeping the Peace and Staying Balanced
The Parent Education Committee is sponsoring a workshop for GGMG members with a child expert from the Child Mind Institute (typically \$2000 value). Dave Anderson, PhD, Sr. Director of National Programs and Outreach, will review evidence-based strategies for parents, emphasizing techniques that promote positive behaviors with age-appropriate boundary setting. Parents will have the opportunity to ask questions regarding the various situations in which they typically encounter behavioral challenges. We will also highlight developmental considerations from elementary through high school, helping parents to build and maintain healthy and positive parent-child relationships across all ages. Snacks and light refreshments provided.

Date: Monday, February 3
Time: 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Place: 200 Brannan St., Community Room
Cost: FREE

NEW ARRIVALS



Diana C. **Baby Kyle Connor**
Erin F. **Baby Seraphine Kaypa**
Erica R. **Baby Sydney Taylor**
Jennifer Sato **Baby Arisa Satoko**
Catherine V. **Baby Owen Theodore**

Congratulations to Erica R.! 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.



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/ggmgNewArrivals.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR (2019)



Congratulations to Viona Seshadri, our Volunteer of the Year! Viona is co-chair of the Neighborhood Meetups Committee and director of the Castro/Noe/Haight/Panhandle Neighborhood Meetups Committee.

Viona and husband Pattabi are parents to Rem (3), and Viona is an interior designer.

VIONA, WE WANT TO KNOW...

Your favorite pastime: These days the only time I have for myself is when I'm driving. I've been really enjoying a variety of podcasts! It helps me connect with the outside world.

Your favorite piece of baby/kid gear you could not live without: I could make a different recommendation for every phase of a child's development, but I'd say that this year it's my Airfryer. It makes dinner preparation so much easier, even fun.

Your favorite destination: Istanbul forever.

Your favorite restaurant: NOPA. We used to live close to the restaurant when my husband and I first moved to SF before having Rem. After so many years it never disappoints!

Your favorite film: So many faves, but recently *Roma* struck a chord with me.

Your favorite parenting advice: It can be overwhelming and lonely if you don't have family in the Bay Area. Join a mothers' community like GGMG to connect with other moms and form your own community! And if you're a GGMG member but haven't been participating in the events, just pick one to start with and you'll be amazed at how helpful it is! GGMG has been the best source of parenting and child care resources for me.

VIONA WILL ENJOY A GIFT CARD TO BURKE WILLIAMS.

KIDS ACTIVITIES

Lunar New Year celebration at Little Footprints Preschool
Kids Activities invites you to celebrate Lunar New Year and ring in the Year of the Rat. We look forward to sharing Lunar New Year traditions through fun crafts, activities, and snacks. Come dressed in your finest digs and win prizes for "Best Dressed for the New Year" and "Best New Year Rat" contests. For more kid fun, this indoor space has a climbing wall, ball pit, and monkey bar dome. We can't wait to kick off the year with you and share in the luck, health, and happiness.

DATE: Sunday, February 2
TIME: 10 a.m. to noon
PLACE: 308 Randolph St.
COST: \$5



Considering a Move to Marin?

This FREE Seminar is for you!
You will learn all about Marin's:

- Public Schools and Preschools
- Communities and Towns
- Microclimates
- Commuting to/from San Francisco and so much more!

For more info and to register visit:

MyMarinHouse.com

March 10th, 10am
March 11th, 6pm

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COMPASS

Coffee + Stroller Walks



Calling all GGMG mamas and babies! Would you like to meet neighborhood moms, grab a coffee, and enjoy a stroller walk together? We’re organizing this Coffee + Stroller just walk for you! You’ll meet at a coffee shop before you go out for an hour of fresh air, light exercise, and great conversations!

This event will be on every third Wednesday of the month. Please remember to RSVP so we can put you in touch with other attendees via email prior to the walk.

- Date:** Every third Wednesday: 2/19, 3/18, 4/15, 5/20, 6/17, 7/15, 8/19, 9/16, 10/21, 11/18, 12/16
- Time:** 10:30 a.m. to noon
- Location:** More than 10 locations throughout the city. Please select the date of your walk and a list of locations will be available for you to choose.
- Cost:** Free

North Beach Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Beacon Coffee & Pantry, 805 Columbus Ave.

Marina Green Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Peet’s Coffee, 2080 Chestnut St.

Lower Pac Heights Stroller Walk
Meeting Location: B.Patisserie, 2821 California St.

Richmond/Golden Gate Park Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Rise & Grind, 785 8th Ave.

Baker Beach Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Bazaar Cafe, 5927 California St.

NOPA Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: The Mill, 736 Divisadero St.

Duboce Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Duboce Park Cafe, 2 Sanchez St.

Mission Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Dolores Park Cafe, 501 Dolores St.

Noe Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Bernie’s Coffee, 3966 24th St.

Sunset/Golden Gate Park Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Beanery, 1307 9th Ave.

Cole Valley Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Flywheel, 672 Stanyan St.

South Beach Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Crossroads Cafe, 699 Delancey St.

Potrero Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Farley’s, 1315 18th St.

Mission Bay Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Cafe Réveille, 610 Long Bridge St.

Bernal Stroller Walk at Pinhole Cafe:
Meeting Location: Pinhole Coffee, 231 Cortland Ave

Visitacion Valley Stroller Walk:
Meeting Location: Mission Blue Cafe, 144 Leland Ave

Weekdays

GGMG x Little Oceanauts \$5 Afternoon Special
Looking for something fun to do in the afternoon after school? Little Oceanauts in Ingleside is the perfect place for children to run off their energy before dinner time! Meet fellow GGMG moms and enjoy an afternoon playdate together. Sign up now!

Please enter GGMG Members’ special code to reveal hidden event ticket created exclusively for GGMG members: **GGMGOceanauts20**

- Date:** Monthly on second Wednesdays: 2/12, 3/11, 4/8, 5/13, 6/10
- Time:** 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
- Place:** 1917 Ocean Ave.
- Price:** GGMG members pay special rate of \$5 per kid. Infants 6 months and under Free. Parents/caretakers Free. Must RSVP and PREPAY, limited spots available. Non GGMG members please pay at the venue.



GGMG x Imagination Playhouse \$5 Afternoon Special
Looking for fun things to do in the afternoon after school? Imagination Playhouse in Richmond is the perfect place for children to run off their energy before dinner time! Meet fellow GGMG moms and enjoy a fun afternoon together. Sign up now!

Please enter GGMG Members’ special code to reveal hidden event ticket created exclusively for GGMG members: **GGMGImagination20**

- Date:** Monthly on Second Wednesday: 2/12, 3/11, 4/8, 5/13, 6/10
- Time:** 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
- Place:** 5628 Geary Blvd.
- Price:** GGMG members pay a special rate of \$5 per kid. Infants 6 months and under Free. Parents/caretakers Free. Must RSVP and PREPAY, limited spots available. Non GGMG members please pay at the venue.

Evening



Monthly Wine Happy Hour and Book Club
The South of Bernal & Glen Park neighborhood meetups team hosts a monthly Book Club at Sippin’ Wine Bar in the Outer Mission. We meet every 4th Thursday of the month and try to read a different book each month. Sippin’ also has an amazing happy hour until 8 p.m. with \$5 glasses of wine!

Stay tuned on the GGMG website for an Eventbrite link to RSVP and info on the book we are reading that month.

- Date:** 4th Thursday of the month: 2/27, 3/26, 4/23, 5/28, 6/25
- Time:** 7 to 9 p.m.
- Place:** TBD in the Excelsior neighborhood



Moms Night Out: Excelsior
The South of Bernal & Glen Park neighborhood meetups team is having our monthly Moms’ Night Out. February’s neighborhood is the Excelsior. Join us for some drinks and light food and the company of our amazing mamas.

Stay tuned on the GGMG website for an Eventbrite link to RSVP

- Date:** Thursday, February 20
- Time:** 7 to 9 p.m.
- Place:** TBD in the Excelsior neighborhood



Moms Night Out: Glen Park
The South of Bernal & Glen Park neighborhood meetups team is having our monthly Moms’ Night Out! March’s neighborhood is Glen Park. Join us for some drinks and light food and meet other amazing mamas.

Stay tuned on the GGMG website for an Eventbrite link to RSVP

- Date:** Thursday, March 19
- Time:** 7 to 9 p.m.
- Place:** TBD in the Glen Park neighborhood



Weekend

90-Min Private Yoga Class at 6th Ave Yoga Tree
It’s the new year! With the busy and perhaps stressful holiday season behind us, let’s start 2020 with a bang. Whether you are fulfilling new year resolutions or just need a moment to yourself for a recharge, GGMG invites you to a private 90-minute yoga class with Kari Marble. Check-in will begin at 12:45 p.m., for set up and to share special requests/needs with Kari. Tea and light refreshments will be provided after class, so stick around to catch up with other moms and dads.

This event is open to members and their non-member friends—other moms, dads, etc. All are welcome! Adults only please to minimize distractions.

- Date:** Sunday, February 9
- Time:** 1 to 2:30 p.m.
- Place:** Yoga Tree, 182 6th Ave.
- Price:** \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Non-members can apply the extra \$5 toward a GGMG membership.



Messy Art Lab Open Studio Playdate
Looking for something to do on Sunday afternoons after your little one’s nap and before dinner? Messy Art Lab is the answer!

Messy Art Lab is a process-oriented art experience. They focus on the exploration of materials, colors, textures, art recipes, and all the squishy-gooey-messy stuff kids love to get their hands on. All materials and art supplies are non-toxic and made from scratch.

Perfect for children ages 1-5, but all ages welcome. Enter GGMG Members’ special code to reveal hidden event ticket created exclusively for GGMG members. Code: **GGMGMessyArt20**

- Date:** Monthly on first Sundays: 2/2, 3/1
- Time:** 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Place:** Messy Art Lab, 345 Judah St.
- Price:** \$5/kid. Caretakers/parents free. Spots are limited. Must RSVP and pre-pay. Non-GGMG members pay \$20 at the venue.

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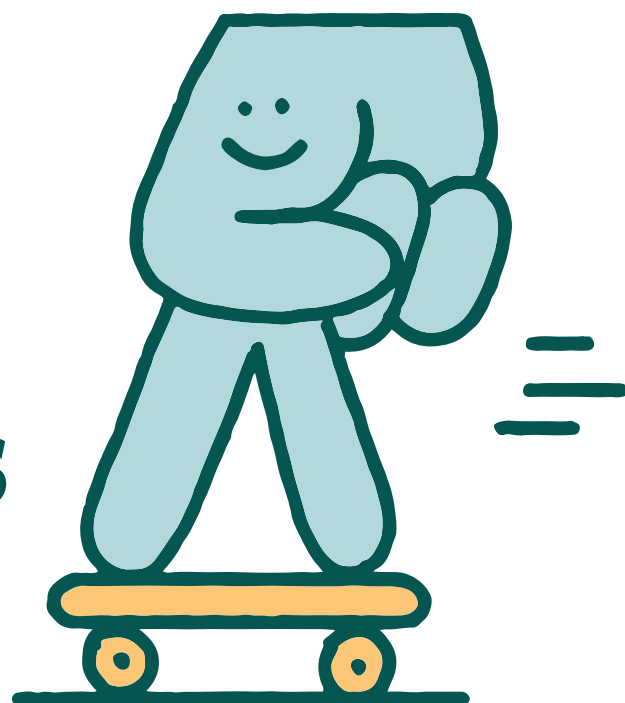
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Boundaries and Affection

By Victoria Dvorak

It's a known fact that I suck at emotional boundaries. I like to think that I have good emotional boundaries, but the bigger picture of 2019 tells me otherwise. People I let into my life have needs, and I tap my own emotional reserves to help. There's the woman who, through every avoidable action of her own, was homeless and needed work, so I gave her work and a home until it became unbearable for my family. There's the nice barista at Starbucks on whom I projected feelings of loneliness and isolation, so I reached out to him and in turn, he tried to "save" me by sending church members to my home.

What do good emotional boundaries look like? For me, it's not listening to my heart. This sounds counterintuitive. Of course, we should follow our hearts, right? Wrong. Following one's heart is not the same as following one's instinct. Instinct is predicated on the fact that it keeps us safe. My heart leads me to behave in compensatory ways—I credit my parents.



Mary Cassatt, *Mother's Kiss*, 1890–91

everything spoken on the phone when listening in and then thwarted my plans to cut class that day. Any attempt to share how much I didn't like their intrusion was met with a wall. They would have made great spies in another life.

I don't remember much physical affection between my parents, nor affection from them toward me. Like all little kids, I looked to my parents for comfort and can remember clinging to them, but as my need for physical affection was rarely reciprocated, I gave up. I can't remember any affection after the age of six. It's no wonder that I grew up to require five feet of personal space around me, but I'll let you into my heart. I'm not keen on physical affection either. I don't like shaking hands. I'm not a hugger, and

if you're not a hugger nowadays, you're weird. Ninety-nine percent of my friends hug me. Hell, sometimes perfect strangers want a hug, and let me tell you, it's awkward as hell to burst that happy, hug-wanting bubble with rejection. I've found some workarounds such as lying about my health: *I have a touch of mono, my kids brought home lice, have you heard of chiggers?*

I'm not a total reptile. I happily hug longtime friends whom I haven't seen in awhile or if I've had a particularly moving time with a friend, entrenched in deep conversation about life. I'm affectionate with my husband. When not caught up in the daily kid-related life, we have little light between us. I credit my husband with the affection. Left to my devices, we wouldn't be affectionate, but I married a hugger. With my kids is where all decorum goes out the window. Every morning is Christmas morning when I see them. On any given day, I use a dozen terms of endearment when calling to or speaking with my kids and go through just as many iterations of *I love you*. I can't help it. The forces of motherhood don't permit me to refer to them as something so simple as the names I've given them. No, I need to call them poppet, chicken-bird, baby-bird, and I must tell them, *you're the best thing ever; I couldn't love you more; you make my heart so happy*.

I'm glad the path I chose counters my upbringing, for better or worse. Now I just need to keep adding to my inventory of physical ailments for why I want people at arm's length. Ideas?

Victoria lives in SF with her family. They hug a lot.

“On any given day, I use a dozen terms of endearment when calling to or speaking with my kids and go through just as many iterations of *I love you*.”

My parents have tough emotional boundaries, but they don't have physical boundaries. When they come over, they walk into rooms without knocking. My mom rifles through all our cabinets just looking for things, nothing in particular but just nosing around. My parents loathe waste and they comb through my home looking for things they deem excess, but really I think they're looking for treasure. “Why you have so many bottles (for water)? I take some, ‘kay?’” Knocking before entering, a practice grounded in mutual respect, was not a thing growing up. They entered our room when they wanted. Personal space? Nope. A private phone call? Forget it. They had no qualms about picking up the other line and eavesdropping. They couldn't understand me when I spoke English to them, but for some reason, they were able to understand



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