

JUNE/JULY 2022



GGMG

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magazine

REJUVENATION





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LETTER FROM
THE EDITOR:

Unnatural Beauty

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is a Cole Valley mom of three and a huge proponent of Supergoop's Glow Screen, which has done more to improve the appearance of her skin than any treatment ever has.

The culture of beauty rejuvenation always repulsed me. As a young person, I vowed to eschew treatments and grow old naturally and gracefully, statements proclaimed with certainty and clarity....as I twirled my naturally blond hair and pursed my young, collagen-rich lips.

Fast forward a decade and a half—years spent navigating career and relationship drama, making the poor health choices that come with being young and overconfident in an alcohol-

drenched culture, and birthing three children (and enduring the associated sleeplessness, body changes, and stressors of parenthood). My once-smooth skin was now lined and sagging, sunspots had begun to take up residence on my cheeks, my lips were noticeably shrunken, and the gray hairs were sprouting faster than my stylist's most valiant efforts could cover them up. I found myself performing a set of mental gymnastics to convince myself that a little cosmetic intervention didn't mean I was compromising my values. By my late

30s I started twice yearly Botox and endured a couple rounds of IPL, a laser-based photofacial that breaks up pigment to reduce the appearance of freckles and sunspots.

A few years into these treatments, I don't feel guilty, but what I have noticed bothers me is the culture of secrecy surrounding them. When asked whether they've undergone interventions, many women are coy or deflect. I know women who won't even admit to their partners they've had Botox. To me, this secrecy overlooks a responsibility that comes with privilege and does a disservice to women everywhere, perpetuating the illusion that youthfulness and beauty are a natural gift.

In this issue, our writers posit that, although you can't turn back the clock, you can bring new energy and perspective to your life. Julie Houghton tackles career burnout, which studies reveal is growing in the COVID era and which affects working mothers particularly hard. She reveals the extent of the problem, and offers ways to manage stress and complete tasks without being consumed by them. Yuliya Patsay steps into the science of sleep, providing pathways toward reclaim-

ing your energy. And from the archives, Rhea St. Julien gives tips on reinvigorating your sex life post-baby.

There's only so far that water and moisturizer can take me. I'll happily endure the discomfort of an injection if it softens some

of the grooves that time has carved into my forehead. And I'll always be honest about it too.

Sonya Abrams

“I'll happily endure the discomfort of an injection if it softens some of the grooves that time has carved into my forehead. And I'll always be honest about it too.”

HOUSEKEEPING

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NEXT ISSUE: Perspectives

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

THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: Splitting the house to keep half of us COVID free to preserve some of spring break; KN95s, air filters, and positive on Mother's Day; Sprained ankle, hosting family from abroad, and COVID for everyone in our household; All the feels, as my not-so-little kids prepare to “graduate” from elementary school; Deadlifting 180 lb. for the first time.

LETTER FROM
THE BOARD:

Resetting and Coming Back Stronger Than Ever

By Connie Lin



Connie and her family moved to a new house during the pandemic and no, we still don't plan to get a pet. She can't wait to see all of you in person at our GGMG events.

These past couple years we've admittedly been in “maintain” mode for GGMG. With full plates as moms, workers, business owners, and more, our team (all volunteers!) had their hands full even without the busy slate of in-person events we're known for. Along with all of you, GGMG volunteers and board members adjusted to social distancing and virtual school and work, wore masks, got our vaccinations and boosters, fought for toilet paper and pantry staples, and yet,

life went on. While lots of new moms continued to join as GGMG members (welcome and glad to have you here!), our volunteers shifted, as new circumstances meant changing jobs, new babies, new homes, moving into or out of San Francisco, and more.

Now that mandatory mask mandates are starting to fade away and families are beginning to see more than just their pods in person, it's a great time to rejuvenate our GGMG community and start up in-person stroller walks, mommy meet-ups, kids' events, and more. But while our board and volunteer team has held on as long as we can, we are now short-staffed and could use your help. Being part of our

GGMG volunteer team means getting to lend your skills and energy toward improving our community, building friendships, and getting practical experience that can also help with career re-entry or pivots. Our volunteers meet every other

“Being part of our GGMG volunteer team means getting to lend your skills and energy towards improving our community, building friendships, and getting practical experience that can also help with career re-entry or pivots.”

month to connect and coordinate upcoming events, and our board meets on a similar schedule to tackle GGMG-wide initiatives and goals.

We could use immediate help with communications, marketing, recruiting, and the *GGMG Magazine*. There are opportunities for both heavy lifting (great for building up your resume) as well as smaller, flexible options. We also have a number of leadership roles open, from board directors to committee chairs. Please email recruiting@ggmg.org if you are interested or would like to learn more.

Thanks again for being part of our amazing GGMG community. Can't wait to see you at our events soon!

Connie Lin

COVER OUTTAKES



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

Cover photo by Bhavya Thyagarajan Photography
Models: Lily Brotherton, James Brotherton (8), Grace Brotherton (4)

Sonoma Kid-Friendly Wineries

By Christine Chen

Wine tasting with young babies is easy—they sleep and are basically an accessory. The challenge comes when they are toddlers and unable to sit still. Luckily for me, mine are experts and enjoy swirling despite not being allowed to taste, as they have been visitors since birth.

Francis Ford Coppola Winery, Geyserville has a pool where wine and food can be delivered, while kids play bocce and board games. There is also a teepee with a kid’s library. A museum inside the winery features props from Coppola films like *The Godfather* and *Dracula*.

Landmark Vineyards, Kenwood: Every Saturday from May through October, visitors can ride a horse-drawn carriage for a free tour. Afterwards, parents can picnic and taste wine on the lawn or by the pond, while the kids play in the grass.

Castello di Amorosa, Calistoga is a 121,000 square-foot replica of an Italian castle from the Middle Ages. A one-hour tour features everything from gargoyles and knights in shining armor to a dungeon and an opportunity to meet the winery cats, peacocks, sheep, chickens, and other farm animals. No strollers are allowed inside the winery.

Benziger Family Winery, Glen Ellen: Kids love riding the tram through the property and learning about agriculture, while sheep and cows make appearances along the route. The tram even travels into the wine caves.

Matanzas Creek Winery, Santa Rosa: This winery is best enjoyed when the lavender is in bloom and the scent permeates the property as the kids play cornhole under the massive oak trees.

Preston Farm and Winery, Healdsburg: This cat-friendly winery has gardens, bocce, sheep, and of course, cats. Sorry, no dogs. If you’re lucky, you may get to help bottle-feed a lamb.

Cline Family Cellars, Sonoma: Kids will love the experience of tastings in an updated farmhouse, in outdoor cabanas, and by a pond. See the barrel room and meet the winery’s resident turtles, birds, fish, and donkeys, Fancy and Pudding.

To escape the fog in SF, Christine can be found at various wineries during the summer, asking to “revisit” a taste, while her kids add their commentary about vintages and grape type.

San Mateo

By Sonya Abrams



The county seat of the Peninsula and home to more than 100,000 people, sunny San Mateo offers a range of family-friendly activities and restaurants. The perfect place to escape the city fog, **Coyote Point Recreation Area** is spread out over 670 acres along the bayshore, and features a beach, wooded walking and biking trails, watersports including windsurfing camps for kids, a playground, numerous picnic areas, and **CuriOdyssey**, a science museum and native animal zoo. Located directly under SFO’s landing path, it’s also a great place to spot planes with airplane-obsessed little ones. **Downtown** San Mateo is home to **Central Park**, which has a huge playground as well as Japanese tea gardens. Weather not so cooperative? Check out **Safari Run**, a huge indoor play space hosting open play as well as camps and fitness classes for kids. San Mateo’s cultural and ethnic diversity is reflected in the wide variety of food options open to intrepid explorers. Introduce your children to Hawaiian cuisine at **Takahashi Market**, where you can grab food perfect for a family picnic. A mecca for ramen, San Mateo offers many soup spots, but **Ramen Parlor**’s shorter lines make it the most family-friendly option. And for a sweet treat, try the (arguably) best cupcakes in the Bay at **Sibby’s Cupcakery**, open Wednesday through Sunday.

Sonya is a San Francisco-based mom to three elementary-aged children and always orders extra pork with her ramen.

Unforgettable Spa Experiences

By Colleen Morgan

Nestled in Japantown for over 50 years, **Kabuki Springs & Spa** offers communal baths and traditional holistic therapies. Based on Japan’s famed sentos—public bathhouses—clothing is optional, but on All Gender Tuesdays, bathing suits are required.

Archimedes Banya, located near the former Hunters Point Shipyard, is a Russian bathhouse blending ancient Greek, Turkish, German, and Russian traditions. They are known for their Venik Platza, a form of body therapy involving careful lashing, patting, compression, and rubbing of fresh birch or oak tree veniks soaked in hot water.

Pearl Spa and Sauna is a nude, women-only spa based on jjimjilbangs, public bathhouses in South Korea. They offer traditional 30-minute exfoliating body scrubs that remove rolls of dark gray skin (gasp!) to reveal smooth, glowing skin underneath. The Clay Room and Himalayan Salt Room are comfortably heated for relaxation before or after your body scrub. For a less fancy, but equally effective experience, try **Imperial Spa** down the street. Both are located in Japantown.

Urban Temple Facial Therapies & Reiki Center in Oakland offers a Welcoming Reiki Facial, which includes energy work and meditation that will leave you “floating on clouds after the treatment is over.” Licensed Esthetician, Shamanic Practitioner, and Certified Reiki Master/Teacher Oran Alexander states, “It is my passion to see you looking and feeling good from skin to soul.”

Osmosis Day Spa Sanctuary in Freestone is known for their Cedar Enzyme Bath, “a therapeutic body treatment from Japan found nowhere else on this continent.” Immerse your body in a mixture of soft, ground cedar, rice bran, and living enzymes to boost circulation and metabolism, reduce stress, and beautify the skin.

While not a spa enthusiast, Colleen thoroughly enjoys the stories of those seeking rejuvenation, from the relaxing to painful, zany to spiritual, luxurious to no-frills and everything in-between.



Revitalized Spaces

By Sandy Woo

Walking around the city, one can see glimmers of San Francisco returning to its pre-pandemic self—for the better, hopefully. Judging by the endless number of construction projects, there certainly seems to be increased energy and bustle. Much of the booming activity has revitalized or is in the process of revitalizing unused, dilapidated spaces. These renewed places ideally provide more places to relax and opportunities to partake in the surrounding beauty rather than displace folks. The following is a sampling of recently completed and in-progress projects in various city neighborhoods.



The Parks at 5M in SOMA opened to much fanfare and includes a performance area, children’s playground, and dog run. Long considered a “dead zone,” it is the newest green space in a concrete jungle, behind the offices of *The San Francisco Chronicle*. It is considered a privately owned public open space (POPOS) with 26,100 square feet of space, which also includes affordable housing.

The Presidio is getting a lot of love and upgrades. Set to open July 17, **Presidio Tunnel Tops** is shaping up to be the event of the year. With 14 acres of new space above the freeway tunnels connecting to the Golden Gate Bridge, it also has a 2-acre children’s play area, picnic and campfire gathering spaces, and several trails.

Already open, **Battery Bluff** is a 6-acre spot along the Presidio Promenade built on the western set of Presidio tunnels. History buffs, nature and gorgeous-view enthusiasts, and gun battery fans of all ages will enjoy this new addition. You can visit the gun batteries for the first time since they were built more than 100 years ago!

On the site of the old Francisco Reservoir, unused since 1940, **Francisco Park** was born. Situated in one of the densest parts of the city (Russian Hill), this park holds expansive views overlooking Aquatic Park. Highlights include a fenced dog run, nature exploration for children, and a sustainable rain catchment system.

For parents with kiddos who love transportation, the **Van Ness Improvement Project** is finally complete. Driving is albeit a bit inconvenient on Van Ness now that you cannot make a left turn anywhere, but the benefit is a 30 percent reduction in time on the Bus Rapid Transit system (BRT). Plus, the lollipop-like art sculptures are noteworthy.

Moving west, we’ve got **JFK Drive**, a mecca for every type of low-tech recreation and the source of sometimes contentious activism to keep it car-free. The east side is now permanently car-free with expanded shuttle service every day and disabled accessible parking.

When 700,000 gallons of water turned **Stern Grove** into mud last year, organizers and fans alike worried that the loss wasn’t just the last concert of the season. Thankfully, the 85th season is set to start Sunday, June 12, with another exciting lineup of free concerts (sterngrove.org).

If you make it to the southeastern side of town, **India Basin Shoreline Park** has one of the best views of any park. Here, you can see remnants of the old shipyard at Hunter’s Point. While the park has always been there, construction is underway for the India Basin Waterfront Park project and is cool to see take shape.

Sandy is inspired by all the refreshing new vistas; she somehow wishes this energy would rub off on her.

Taking Time to Play

By Jerome Padilla

Some days at work can be harder than others. For me, one thing that always remains the same is the excitement I see on my young children’s faces when I pick them up. I know this time is fleeting; kids always grow up too fast, so I want to enjoy these moments. When we get home, chaos ensues. Between the mad dash toward getting dinner ready and helping with homework, lies the other fleeting moment that can be easily overlooked—the special act of playing.

Ever since I moved from the Philippines to this country as a young boy, I have always been caught up in the whirlwind of adjusting to a new life. This included my parents, who worked hard to provide us with stability. More often than not, this stability did not have much financial room for fancy toys I’d see in commercials or on the escalator ride inside the old FAO Schwartz store in Union Square. What I did have was even better than any toy: an active imagination. I remember finding a two-foot metal rod, tying a rope to it, then tying the other end of the rope to my backpack. Presto! I had a proton pack ready for my ghostbusting adventures.

Being reminded of the kid inside you is one of the most enjoyable parts of being a parent. However, it takes a little more work to not just be reminded of it, but to also live in the present with that same imaginative fervor you had when you were a kid. It takes energy to actively push back adult sensibilities and responsibilities and set aside quality time to play with your kids. Now, I’m in a fortunate position that I can afford those fancy toys for my kids like the ones I used to gawk at. I’ve realized, however, that no matter how elaborate or expensive these toys are, over time, they tend to lie somewhere collecting dust. Toys don’t play with themselves.

Despite its many wonders, not even LEGO, one of my favorite toys, is capable of playing by itself. I’m sure you’ve assembled a LEGO set together only to think about how not to break it. This strong but natural mindset sometimes is what prevents me from enjoying that special act of playing. We get



“Being reminded of the kid inside you is one of the most enjoyable parts of being a parent.”

caught up in the idea that playing with a LEGO model can cause it to break apart. Well, breaking it apart is a part of the imaginative chaos. There’s joy in putting it back together, even if it’s wrong.

It was a special revelation to me how much I genuinely enjoyed playing LEGOs with my kids. I realized that playing LEGOs allowed me to momentarily escape my busy mind. The orderly aspect of instructional assembly mixed with the randomness of making whimsical models became a hobby my kids and I enjoyed. This shared passion was our daily dose of fun. It also led to a pretty awesome collection of LEGOs

that we organized into a LEGO room. The LEGO room stands now as a proud reminder to people who visit us, of how serious we are about playing.

There are a few methods I employ to promote that imaginative surge through play. We like to re-enact stories from books or movies using our toys as main characters. A simple story can act as a template to build an immersive world using toys or objects lying around the house. We like to make changes to the story, like giving our characters cooler names and over-the-top accessories. After a while, we’ve built an intricate dioramic world ready for our story to unfold.

It’s undeniable that the nature of play has changed. It takes more energy to actively engage our kids through play when there’s a multitude of technological options available that feels easier. I think it’s important for me to genuinely enjoy the act of playing, and I like to think the kids find it more important to play with their parents than the toys themselves. We continue to build our relationship through play resulting in common interests that go beyond toys. With a future ripe with information overload, I hope my kids will be reminded to set aside their adult sensibilities and take time to play.

Jerome Padilla is a biotech engineer and a father of three kids. He is a musician at heart who enjoys driving home freestyling to instrumental beats and playing violin/piano duets with his wife.

Personal Growth

With Julie Santiago



Julie Santiago is a former Wall Street trader turned transformational life coach and inspirational speaker. Her signature coaching program, Awaken Your Life, is based on 10 years of research in neuroscience, mindfulness, positive psychology, and holistic leadership development. juliesantiago.com

What are the most common transformations you see in your line of work?

There are two types of transformations: inner and outer. Most of us try to reverse engineer our lives, thinking, if I get to this point, get this job, make this much money, I'll be happy. We constantly chase happiness, falsely thinking that when we get this thing we want, we'll get happiness or peace on the inside. However, lasting growth is about doing the inner work, which helps us be more confident, alive, present, connected to ourselves, and less overwhelmed by life. As women, we are often depleted because we do so much for others, and then we want others to fill us up. It takes the pressure off our relationships when we fill our own cup. Outer transformations include things like improved relationships, career changes, leaving partners, finding love, moving cross country, starting a business. The outer transformation is a reflection of the inner.

"I deeply believe every woman knows who she is and what she wants but she's scared to admit it."

What do women who experience the most dramatic growth have in common?

They're done settling. They know they're here for more. They're committed to being the best versions of themselves. It's a real commitment.

What do women who experience the least growth have in common?

Fear. We all experience it. We're so afraid that growth means change. One of the reasons we stay in an average job or marriage is that we're afraid the change would shake things up too much. So we justify our decisions by saying, "Well, I guess it's not that bad." We talk ourselves out of having our

own standards. There's a Maryanne Williamson quote: "It is not our darkness but our light that scares us." We are afraid to shine our light. Fear of failure and fear of success holds us back. So we settle and end up miserable.

What are some important tools that women can use to support their personal growth?

- 1. Self-care is first and foremost. If you're depleted, you're not helping anyone. Most women fill their teacup halfway and go around offering all their tea to everyone, and then they're exhausted. The real work is learning to fill your teacup so that it overflows. And keep the teacup for yourself and give to others from the saucer. Self-care may be different things for different women, but it's probably alone time like a massage, yoga class, or at a coffee shop.
- 2. What other people think of you is none of your business. Nobody cares as much as you think they do, so let go of everyone's opinion.
- 3. Be fierce about boundaries. Sometimes you have to say "no" to others in order to say "yes" to yourself. If it doesn't light you up or fulfill you, say "no."
- 4. Practice gratitude. Sometimes life sucks and it's hard, but there's still stuff to be grateful for. Learning to look for the good is key to moving forward when life is difficult.
- 5. Find a community of women to support you. Women evolved socially to be in a tribe; we weren't supposed to go it alone. We raised families with close relatives. Now we feel like we have to go it alone and be perfect, and it's killing us. Find a group of women you can be real with, celebrate with, and fall apart with. Your partner can't do all of this for you. Having a group of women to share life with will fulfill you in ways nothing else can.

If you could give the women you work with a superpower, what would it be?

I want them to trust themselves. I deeply believe every woman knows who she is and what she wants, but she's scared to admit it. The ability to trust the whispers in her heart, the intuitive pulls, that's learning how to trust herself. And then have the confidence and courage to act on what she hears and knows.

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CONTEST

Conversation Starters

What started as a personal passion for great conversation has blossomed into America's most popular conversation game with over 40 editions sold in stores throughout the U.S. TableTopics Questions to Start Great Conversations are the award-winning conversation starter sets that help millions of people spark fun and meaningful discussions with their family and friends around the dinner table, at parties, on road trips – wherever!

Two winners will receive a tabletop edition with 135 question cards stored in an attractive acrylic cube, a TO GO edition with 40 questions to throw in your bag or car to have on hand when you are out and about, and a paper placemat pad with 48 questions to help make mealtime conversations fun and easy.

Enter the contest by emailing contest@ggmg.org with "Conversation" in the subject line. Winners are picked at random.

Learn more about TableTopics at tabletopics.com.



NEW ARRIVALS



Chandini D. & Erin D.
AnneMarie Montani

Baby Anugrah Christopher
Baby Malaya Flordeliza

Congratulations to Chandini D. & Erin D.! They will be getting joyful moments captured by Anna Munandar from Mini Anna Photography. Anna specializes in capturing joy and every milestone in your family, from birth to college. See her work at minianna.com.

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.



Getting Sleep(y)

By Laure Latham

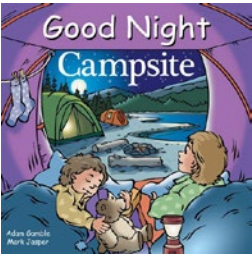
When you wish upon a star, does it make a difference who you are? Maybe not, but reading the right book will undoubtedly help many a child doze off to slumberland at naptime or bedtime. While babies can sleep up to 20 hours a day, young toddlers sleep between 12 to 14 hours in any 24-hour period. Sleep is an essential building block for your child’s mental and physical health. Hopefully, these books can help with the snooze factor.



The Wonderful Things You Will Be
Written by Emily Winfield Martin
As a bedtime poem, this one is a wonderful declaration of love to your baby. Full of promises and things to come, this book focuses on all the things that your little one will be able

to do and the type of person they will be. Rather than a career-driven book about becoming a computer programmer or a gardener, this is about being open to the world and happy. As a bonus, this lovely book is a *New York Times* bestseller.

Ages: 0 to 3 years



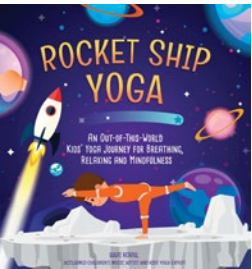
Good Night Campsite
Written by Adam Gamble and Mark Jasper, illustrated by Cooper Kelly
Just in time for camping season, this title in the *Good Night Our World* series will quickly become a favorite at home. This book has all the best aspects of a camping trip. From pancakes in the morning to hiking

during the day and roasting marshmallows by the campfire, it'll make you wish you were camping. Or maybe you'll take the book camping and then it'll be even better! Whether you dream about camping or camp in real life, this is a gentle way to ease into naptime or bedtime. **Ages: 0 to 3 years**



The Best Bed for me
Written and illustrated by Gaia Cornwall
Going to bed is an opportunity for young Sweet Pea to imagine better sleeping methods inspired by animal behaviors. What if Sweet Pea could sleep in a tree, like koalas do? Or sleep in the sea while swimming, like whales do? You will find that there are a lot more ways to sleep than you thought possible. If your young crew likes animals and going to the zoo, this book will make a perfect bedtime story.

Ages: 3 to 5 years



Rocket Ship Yoga: An Out-of-This-World Kids' Yoga Journey for Breathing, Relaxing and Mindfulness (Yoga Poses for Kids, Mindfulness for Kids Activities)
Written by Bari Koral

What better way to go to bed than to reach for the stars, strike a pose, breathe deep, and relax? This book is a great way to get kids to wind down after a long day and get ready to sleep. Incidentally, pajamas happen to be just the right outfit to wear when practicing stretchy yoga poses at home, so your little ones can become stronger and more flexible. Thanks to the Pose Gallery (in space, no less), anybody can keep up with the poses as they increase in difficulty. **Ages: 4 to 8 years**



Malice
Written by Heather Walter
What if the princess fell for the evil fairy with dark powers? In this creative retelling of *Sleeping Beauty*, Alyce is a twisted soul who meets Princess Aurora, the last of her kind. Surrounded by the Graces—faeries who make elixirs that enhance the lives of their patrons—Alyce just wants to be celebrated like her peers. However, she is The Dark

Grace, incapable of bestowing anything but curses. Lovers of mystical worlds and authentic relationships will not be able to put this book down. Note: this could cause issues with sleeping.

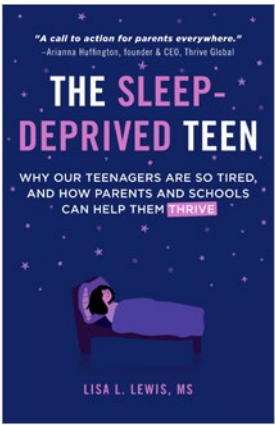
Ages: 8 to 12 years

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

Just Sleep

By Gail Cornwall

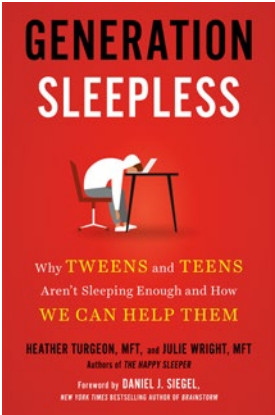
If you’re one of the many GGMG members with kids in public school, you likely already know about Senate Bill 328 moving start times later at middle and high schools across the state. Two new books explain why our legislature and governor became convinced that the logistical difficulties involved would be well worth the benefits to tweens and teens. They’re worth reading, even as the parent of a toddler, in order to lay the groundwork for a healthy home life later.



The Sleep-Deprived Teen: Why Our Teenagers Are So Tired, and How Parents and Schools Can Help Them Thrive
Freelance writer Lisa Lewis was one of the handful of people who led the charge on SB 328. I know, because she emailed me about it at the time. A lot.

Several years later, her book is packed with data on teens and sleep, including surprising histories, like the fact that no one really studied teen sleep until the 1970s, and that national school start times have crept earlier over the last 100 years from around 9 a.m. to 8 a.m. Louisiana’s *average* start time of 7:40 a.m. requires some kids to be ready for a bus before 6 a.m.! Lewis explains why teenagers today are so sleep-deprived in clear prose that’s well-paced and accompanied by end-of-chapter summaries. She points to some best practices for individual parents and teens but says: “Being intentional about sleep can only do so much. Even if teens were to chuck their smartphones ... it’s likely they *still* wouldn’t be able to get enough sleep, given how early they have to wake to get to school on time.”

She writes about how opponents of shifting school start times argued that kids would just go to bed later. And then she drops research showing they don’t; they actually get more sleep. “Shouldn’t teens get used to being able to function while exhausted? Isn’t this good preparation for ‘the real world’?” she asks rhetorically. “No, and no. [It] isn’t like training for a marathon. It’s not as if getting by on too-little sleep builds endurance.” In this no-nonsense manner, Lewis summarizes the science with clarity and efficiency, breaking up the info dump with stories about electrodes hanging off kids at Stanford’s sleep camp and Andre Iguodala upping his points-per-minute by 29 percent after a sleep makeover.



Generation Sleepless: Why Tweens and Teens Aren’t Sleeping Enough and How We Can Help Them
Family therapists Heather Turgeon and Julie Wright tackle largely the same subject matter, but they focus more on providing advice for making changes in the home.

They suggest that a bunch of what we associate with adolescence and smartphone use may be driven by sleep loss: moodiness, apathy, difficulty concentrating, a short temper, negative thoughts, relationship conflict, and depression and anxiety. “What if you knew that one simple daily habit would boost your teenager’s mental health threefold, improve their grades and love of school, make them a better athlete, dramatically reduce their stress and anxiety, cut their chances of getting in a car accident in half, and ward off chronic health conditions like type 2 diabetes, obesity, and cancer?” they begin. “The irony is that we have this powerful panacea available to us... and every day we systematically neglect it.”

Then they coach parents and teens on how to take “a sleep-forward approach” by identifying what’s stealing sleep and creating new habits: “[Go] outside for breakfast, walk to school if possible, spend the first period outside (hint to schools), and sit outside or go for a walk or a run before 10:00 a.m. on the weekends.” Suggested changes range from ensuring your child has a pillow they like to improving home life generally with methods the authors debuted in a previous book. And it all culminates in “The Sleep Challenge” tool, a printable version of which can be found at *thehappysleeper.com*.

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



Kayleigh began her career as a customer experience associate at Luke's Local, a locally owned grocery chain. It has expanded into two brick-and-mortar shops, offering same-day food delivery app service and selling delicious in-house food made from scratch by their talented chefs. Kayleigh's drive and commitment to developing a vision-ary plan integrating strong company cultural values propelled her into the leadership roles of customer experience manager, director of ecommerce, and now chief operations officer. Kayleigh is passionate about listening to her people to grow their business.

What is your leadership style?

Collaborative, teaching, and empathetic. I am always open to learning from anyone, regardless of their role. I view our employees as full people. I do a lot of listening to our staff I manage directly. I also love teaching. I was a tutor all through college. I really like that I get to do that with people that I care very deeply about.

How have you and your team grown, not just by profit and volume of customers, but in the way you work together, both operationally and spiritually?

My favorite thing to do is to get on the floor, cashier, get on the line, and stock shelves. It really shows you what our people are doing and what they need. This approach guides my priority list for the company and my biggest lesson in a leadership position. It can be really easy to detach what is going on on the floor or whatever the equivalent is if you're not in retail because my responsibilities are so vast, bigger picture, future-focused, and furthering expansion. But every time I spend time on the floor with our staff, it's been an important learning experience and a reminder to stay connected to what they are doing. I never want to lose that. I want to preserve our culture because it's what has allowed us to help us make so many improvements and grow.

Describe your personal passion for connecting technology and brick-and-mortar foundation in servicing your community?

Whenever we are about to decide, like where to add more tech, I ask myself, "How is that going to work with our grocery first model?" I always come back to how I think about food. It's one of the most grounding things in the world. It's grounding because it literally comes from the ground. But it's so easy to become disconnected from what's going on in the world

around you, especially with our phones and the state of the world. Being able to cook or go shopping for a meal from all this fresh produce you can see and touch, and share that meal with somebody else, it's grounding. I never want an injection of technology to take away from the Luke's Local experience of connecting with the food and the people who are growing it and bringing it to you.

"I always have to make sure I am taking care of myself as a whole person and I am encouraging everyone else to do that"

What would you like to say to all the little girls who want to be in a leadership position like yours one day?

You always make it a priority to take care of your own mental health and not do possibly more than you need to. I always remind myself, "Yes, my job is important. Yes, this is an amazing place to work and we want to continue to thrive, but not at the expense of anybody's actual health." I always have to make sure I am taking care of myself as a whole person and I am encouraging everyone else to do that.

It starts with the people in charge. It's about making that part of your culture. We all want the same thing. We want Luke's Local to continue to be around and succeed. When you take breaks and you take care of yourself, you actually become more productive. You are genuinely capable of caring about the success of your tasks.

Alissa is a mom of 3- and 4-year-old boys and is building out her portfolio, AlissaHarrison.com. Alissa enjoys connecting with other strong, empowering women who lead by example, expressing the passion, dedication, and courage to share their talents with their community, thereby helping others grow. Have a recommendation or would you like to be interviewed? Email her at alissaggmgmag@gmail.com.

Kayleigh Kahn

Chief Operating Officer, Luke's Local

Interviewed by contributing writer
Alissa Harrison

Photograph by Katya Mizrahi

Go the F**k to Sleep

What is rest, its importance, and how you can get more of it.

By Yuliya Patsay

What is your immediate reaction to the term *self-care*?

A bathtub with essential oils that you can't wait to soak in, OR that same bathtub that you can't wait to... drown the person inflicting the words self-care on you?

Self-care can bring up some feelings (as evidenced by your reaction to the question), but it doesn't have to mean baths and a mani/pedi (but if those are your jam then spread them on thick!). At its core, taking care of yourself is attending to your needs, which includes your physical,

emotional, mental, and spiritual needs. If you were to visualize a pyramid of taking care of your needs, attending to your physical needs would be the foundation of that pyramid, and sleep is chief among those.

Let's talk about sleep, baby

Gaby Makstman, local mom and self-taught biohacker explains that she is someone who uses data to make informed choices about her life to optimize for longevity and feel her personal best. "I started tracking my data using a Fitbit and then a WHOOP (wearable technology), and noticed that my recovery score improved in parallel with my quality of sleep." WHOOP's recovery score quantifies how your body is adapting to stress and your readiness for the day. Gaby began to "experiment with hacks to increase my recovery score by addressing sleep quality." This approach was not something that came naturally. She admits that (like many of us) she "didn't use[d] to value sleep or take naps even as a

child" but her perspective shifted after reading *Why We Sleep* by Professor Matthew Walker, director of UC Berkeley's Sleep and Neuroimaging Lab. The book made a compelling case for why sleep was important, and that both the quantity and the quality of your sleep matter.

Ways to improve sleep:

1. Address sleep disruptors including the usual suspects—caffeine, alcohol, heat, noise, light, and your children! Quiana Darden, entrepreneur and mom to a daughter with autism, can relate to sleep struggles. She encouraged her daughter to sleep in her own room by a certain time so Quiana can wind down in the evening. This not only meets Quiana's needs but reinforces her daughter's independence. Quiana shares that her daughter benefits from being on her own too and Quiana doesn't "feel any guilt about that."

2. Create a routine: Just like the nap schedules and wind-down routines you create for your infant, you can improve your sleep hygiene by creating a wind-down routine (not to be confused with wine-down) and by going to bed and waking up at the same time every day (including on weekends), in order to train your bodies to expect sleep.

3. Adjust your sleeping environment: Where and how you sleep matters, so work on creating an environment with reduced heat, light, and noise. Gaby swears by Happy Ears earplugs.

4. Explore supplements: Chat with your doctor about myriad supplements and natural remedies to improve sleep like melatonin, valerian root, and magnesium. Or try drinking tart cherry juice before bedtime, which according to Stacy Sims, author of *Roar*, contains a naturally occurring melatonin!

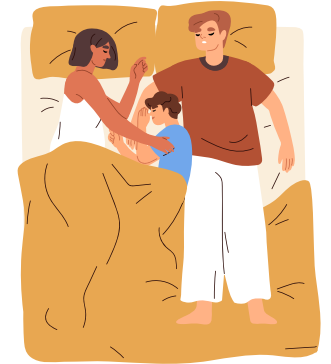
5. Experiment with activities that support sleep: Reducing media and incorporating movement and mindfulness practice are at the top of the suggestion list. Caitlin Massingill, a CEO and single mom is a proponent of Yoga Nidra and practices it before bed to improve sleep quality.

Sleep is not limited to sleep at night either. Naps are also on the menu of rest options. Latoya Dixon Smith, boudoir photographer, mom of two, and

self-proclaimed nap queen, shares that if she's overwhelmed, unsettled, or anxious, her go-to solution is a nap. "It slows my mind down. Sleep is another way I can escape to another realm and listen to what my body is really trying to tell me. Accessing these subconscious thoughts does more for me than I can comprehend with my logical mind."

Incorporating movement

Kathryn Blaze, a virtual personal trainer with a focus on kettlebells, is (as you'd expect) a huge proponent of the concept of "movement as a rest mechanism." But Kathryn shares that she's "had to unlearn the conventional fitness industry perspective that movement has to be hard, that you must sweat and that you should feel spent afterward." Instead, she finds the opposite to be true and proposes that movement can be "more intentional, realistic, and approachable." Kathryn recommends that if



In *Sacred Rest*, Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith shares seven types of rest she has found lacking in the lives of those she encounters in her clinical practice and research: physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, sensory, social, and creative. She explains that a deficiency in any one of these types of rest can have unfavorable effects on your health, happiness, relationships, creativity, and productivity.

"The most important element of sticking to self-care is identifying your why, so take time to articulate why rest matters to you and why you are going to make time to do it."

you're having trouble starting or getting motivated, focus on mini-movement sessions (or as she calls them movement snacks) throughout the day. Every few hours, stand up and do some squats or push-ups. It doesn't have to be a big-time commitment and it doesn't have to be all or nothing. Kathryn suggests that the goal should be to just get your body out of a seated position because even if you're working out six days a week in the conventional sense, it's not enough because most of us are sitting without movement for the majority of the day. Bottom line: just move somehow.

Taking care of your physical needs is not enough

If you still feel burned out and depleted despite sleeping seven hours a night, eating right, and moving, you might need to attend to more than just your physical rest.

So why aren't you prioritizing rest and sleep?

Besides the pressure of providing for yourself and your family, and societal issues (such as racism, climate change, and war), there are two possible reasons you may not prioritize sleep: our culture and a lack of role models.

Autumn Saunders, who guides women through self-discovery through rest and healing and creative arts, offers this sentiment: "Our cultural definition of what is

ok is out of bounds. Our trajectory of what is acceptable in terms of labor, what is accepted to be extracted from the human body is so far away from what is sustainable or regenerative."

Christina Garertt runs a successful coaching and



speaking business and shares that in her community “a lot of women, moms, in particular, are burnt out and exhausted.” She knows that “our lives are busy” and that our culture applauds busyness, so her radical act is “teaching my community to rest.”

What happens if your need for rest is not met during the day?

Revenge bedtime procrastination is the decision to sacrifice sleep for some leisure time as a result of a schedule lacking in downtime during the day. Instead of revenge at bedtime, try incorporating moments of rest and downtime throughout your day as recommended by Holly Conti, business owner and mom. She shares, “Our business really lights us up but I also give myself pockets of time for self-care. I have a gratitude practice, take a daily 25-minute hike, drink water, and have mantras on the mirror.”

You can even opt to begin the day with some self-care, like Julie Neale, Bay Area leadership coach, mom of two, and founder of Mother’s Quest. She created a menu of morning practice options inspired by her podcast guest Lindsay McCarthy, co-author of *The Miracle Morning for Parents and Families*. It includes writing, practicing sun salutations, reciting a Jewish prayer, silent meditation, pulling a tarot card, exercising, enjoying a cup of tea, or taking her dog for

a walk. Julie shares, “even if I’m tired or wake up late, I can still do some part of my morning practice. It keeps me very grounded.”

Anastasiya Rutus, a local mom and rest coach who helps people integrate a sustainable self-care routine into their lives, suggests creating a list of what brings you joy and emphasizes that it doesn’t have to be anything monumental. “It can be something that takes two to five minutes and when you have that pocket of time (standing in line, for example) just consult your list and do it!” For her, “self-care can be as simple as staring out the window with no one touching me.”

Ultimately, that which rejuvenates you is personal. Marron Gebremeskel, coach, author, and mom of three shares that “rejuvenation for me looks like waking up at 5 a.m. and having that time to myself. It’s usually when I can be creative and write.” Marron writes poetry and acknowledges that when she’s delving into her creative process, she is happier. She gifts us this sage advice that applies to both creativity and rest: “Pick it up when it falls on your lap.”

How can you protect your rest and self-care?

Know what you need, advocate for yourself, and communicate to the people



who can support you, including your children. Christina Garrett relies on her five children to work together so that she can tackle her to-do list and have time for herself. She shared her “train and trust” method in which she demonstrates to her kids what the standard operating procedures for cleaning are (a.k.a. this is what “done” looks like), then writes down a daily task list and turns it over to them to self-organize and accomplish. Beyond the daily tasks, the kids have a lot of freedom and her philosophy is “show me you can handle this freedom by doing what is being asked of you and when it is asked.”

The most important element of sticking to self-care is identifying your why, so take time to articulate why rest matters to you and why you are going to make time to do it. Christina offers us her why for consideration: “You need to prioritize rest and sleep so you can serve!”

Anastasiya Rutus has this final food for thought: Rejuvenation is not just for our benefit. Our kids soak up everything you do, not just what you say. Modeling rest for her children is her why and she isn’t shy about sharing that with her family. “I take my time to rest. I don’t sneak away to do it, I say it loudly, and communicate it to my family.” In this way, she hopes her child will understand why she is doing what she is doing and will hopefully experience the benefits for themselves one day. By resting she knows that she can “be fully present and show up and be the person I want to be.”

Yuliya (it rhymes with Goo-lia) is Soviet-born and San Francisco-raised. She is a storyteller, voice actor, and speaker and is working on completing her first book, which will be out in October 2022.

Books on Rest and Sleep

- *Daring to Rest: Reclaim Your Power with Yoga Nidra Rest Meditation* by Karen Brody
- *Do Less: A Revolutionary Approach to Time and Energy Management for Ambitious Women* by Kate Northrup
- *Do Nothing: How to Break Away from Overworking, Overdoing, and Underliving* by Celeste Headlee
- *Sleep Smarter* by Shawn Stevenson
- *Pause, Rest, Be: Stillness Practices for Courage in Times of Change* by Octavia F. Raheem
- *24/6: The Power of Unplugging One Day a Week* by Tiffany Shlain

Let wearable tech help:

- Fitbit monitors sleep and activity.
- WHOOP analyzes heart rate variability and resting heart rate to determine a daily recovery score, and shows you how specific lifestyle and training behaviors affect recovery.
- Oura Ring is a health and fitness tracker reporting a range of data about sleep and recovery.
- Apollo provides touch therapy, a safe, non-invasive stress relief tool for adults and children.



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How to Heal Burnout in Your Life and Career

The unrelenting demands of work and parenting are leaving women physically and emotionally exhausted.

By Julie Houghton

Stress and burnout are rising at alarming levels among women, according to global consulting firm Deloitte. In its 2022 survey of working women, Deloitte states that 53 percent report higher stress levels than a year ago, while 46 percent say they feel burned out. Stress and burnout are the number one reason why 40 percent of working women are currently looking for a new job. Deloitte says that one-third of women surveyed have taken time off work because of mental health issues, and 60 percent feel that they need to hide that fact from their employers.

In addition to work, parenting is burning women out. According to Motherly's March

2022 annual State of Motherhood survey, 38 percent of mothers reported feeling completely burned out. Stay-at-home mothers are particularly hard hit, with 55 percent reporting they "always" or "frequently" feel burned out vs working moms (who reported 11 percent and 38 percent, respectively).

What is burnout?

Burnout, as a phenomenon, was first described by psychologist Herbert Freudenberger in 1975 as a condition of physical and emotional exhaustion resulting from unrelenting demands on a person's energy, responsibilities, and resources. He identified this condition after

observing volunteers working at a free clinic in New York City. The impact of excessive work left the formerly idealistic mental health workers depleted and weary, resenting patients and the clinic.

Although burnout is a word that is now tossed around in all sorts of circumstances, research shows that it continues to be particularly prevalent among those in caretaking roles such as teachers, health-care workers, therapists, and social workers. Given that women are often the primary caregivers at home (not only for children but often for aging parents too), it's not surprising that rates of burnout are so high among mothers, whether they work outside the home or not.

How burnout affects your brain

Burnout is particularly toxic because our brains are not designed for chronic stress. Research from the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden reveals that burnout actually changes the structure and functioning of our brains. Specifically, chronic stress and burnout lead to difficulty regulating negative emotions and make us more susceptible to depression, lack of inspiration or ambition, or feelings of low confidence or low self-esteem. In addition, burnout leads to an increase in memory issues and problems focusing—in other words, brain fog. It's a vicious cycle where brain fog makes it harder to get things done, but the demands on us don't let up, which only increases our stress and overwhelm, leading to greater feelings of burnout.

Complete the stress cycle to help heal burnout

In their book *Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle*, authors (and sisters) Emily and Amelia Nagoski say one key to healing burnout is "completing the stress cycle." This concept is based on the idea that burnout stems from two distinct components: stressors and stress.

Stressors are things that activate the stress response in our body. Stressors may be external: for example, a deadline at work or the fact that the mortgage is due. Stressors may also be internal, such as self-criticism, negative body image, or worries about the future. Whether they are internal or external, your body interprets stressors as potential threats.

In contrast to stressors, stress is the neurological and physiological shift that happens to us in response to one of those threats. When we are faced with a stressor, our bodies and brains respond with a flight, fight, or freeze response. For example, if you see a lion, you run to safety. According to the Nagoski sisters, however, decades of research indicate that it's not the fact that you escaped the lion that lets your body know you are safe. It's the fact that you ran. Your body speaks the language of bodies (in this case, running), so if the lion was suddenly struck dead by lightning before you got to safety, your heart would still be racing and you'd still feel like you

want to run, fight, or hide even though the threat (or stressor) was eliminated. You would still be left needing to do something like run home, cry, or dance in celebration with your village-mates to let your body know you are safe. In other words, removing the stressor isn't enough. You have to complete the stress cycle by doing something your body understands.

Likewise, just because we met that deadline at work or wrote the check for the mortgage, your body doesn't understand that the threat is now gone.

"Given that women are often the primary caregivers at home (not only for children but often for aging parents too), it's not surprising that rates of burnout are so high among mothers, whether they work outside the home or not."

Especially if we're in a situation where stressors are chronic, your body stays stuck in the middle of the stress response, forever waiting for some sign that the threat has passed and you are now safe. When you don't complete the stress cycle it can lead to burnout as well as serious health problems.

So how do you let your body know you're safe so you're not carrying around all of that unprocessed stress? According to the Nagoski sisters, physical activity is the number one way to complete the stress cycle but other options include breathing exercises, positive social interaction, laughter, affection, crying, and any sort of creative expression. Incorporating any of these activities for even short periods of time into your daily life can be one step in healing burnout.

Decreasing the stressors

In addition to practices to complete the stress cycle and let our bodies know we're safe, what can you do to decrease the stressors themselves? Given that burnout stems from unrelenting demands on our time and energy, one way to start to reduce the stressors

and start to heal burnout is to look at what you're telling yourself you "should" be doing and evaluate whether that is "in fact" true.

These "shoulds" can show up in any aspect of your life. It's not uncommon to have a critical inner voice telling us what we should be doing (or should have done) when it comes to our careers, our relationships, our parenting, our health, our homes, or our appearance. The list goes on and on.

But the truth is, these "shoulds" often represent ideas we've inherited

somewhere along the way—from our parents, friends, culture, workplace, or other institutions—and they may not be in alignment with our true beliefs or values.

As an exercise, try making a brain dump of all the things you tell yourself you should be doing in your life and career. Then, for each item on your list, journal your responses to these questions:

- Where did this "should" come from? Does it represent my desires or someone else's?
- Does this "should" feel true to me?
- How does this "should" make me feel? (e.g. energized vs. stuck, empowered vs. limited)

Once you've applied the lens of these questions to the things you are telling yourself you should do, notice if there are



any “shoulds” you actually want to cross off your list altogether—the ones you’ve inherited that feel untrue, make you feel stuck, or are driven by fear. Are there ones you want to revise to make them feel more in alignment with who you are? And finally, which ones are the keepers—the ones that don’t feel like “shoulds” at all but actually represent the beliefs and values in which you do want to ground your decisions? Being intentional about that can help you be intentional about what you say yes to and what you say no to, quieting that inner voice and allowing you to decrease the stressors in your life.

Manage your energy, not your time

When we think of overwhelm and burnout we also have a tendency to feel like we need to be better at time management so we can just get it all done, but the truth is that managing your energy is what’s most important, and that starts with knowing what energizes you. Our bodies and our emotions hold clues to the best way to spend our time and energy. When we force ourselves to just forge ahead doing something we don’t want to do but are telling ourselves we must, we miss that important information. Slowing down to check in with your body and emotions before you dive into a task can help you move forward faster and with more intention.

According to business coach Jennifer Lee, author of *The Right-Brain Business Plan*, “If we’re not pausing to be present with our felt experience, we won’t truly know if we’re getting the right stuff done.” As an exercise to reconnect with that inner compass, identify one to two specific tasks that are currently on your to-do list and ask yourself how you feel in your body when you imagine doing that thing. Do you feel relaxed or tense? Now notice what emotions come up when you imagine doing the task. Do you feel happy? Resentful? Something else? If there is fear, is it mixed with curiosity and excitement or is there a sense of dread? Based on that body and emotion check-in, ask yourself: Does this task energize or drain me? Do you feel more alive when you think of doing this thing or does the idea of it leave you feeling



depleted or maybe even a bit dead inside? As an ongoing exercise, practice taking note of what feels energizing and what feels draining throughout your day for a week or two and see what patterns you notice, not only in terms of which tasks fall into each category but also the extent to which you have activities in your life that energize you. Once you have that information, you can be more intentional about making shifts. When you increase the number of things in your life that energize you, you can also increase your capacity to deal with the things that don’t.

How to manage the tasks that drain you

What about those items that don’t feel energizing but that need to be done? You can be just as intentional about those so that you can manage them without slipping into a state of burnout. For any items that feel draining, first, ask yourself if it’s true that this needs to be done right now (or at all). We can have a tendency to let things linger on our to-do list that are not urgent or might not even be necessary (for example, cleaning out the basement) but just their presence on the list week after week contributes to stress and mental load. If a task does need to be done now, also ask yourself if you really need to be the one to do it. Where do you need help? What (potentially hard) conversations do you need to have to get help or to say no? If you conclude that you must do that

draining task, are there ways to make it simpler, easier, or more energizing? That might mean finding an accountability buddy or even someone who will just let you vent about it. Maybe it means breaking the task into baby steps or completing it in small pockets of time, or on the flip side, getting childcare so you can focus and get through it all at once. Would something as simple as turning on some energizing music or having a snack to eat while you do it help? Finally, identify your WHY in doing this thing. In other words, if the task itself doesn’t motivate you, can you find something about it that will? For example, if you feel unmotivated at work, can you find motivation in the financial freedom it gives you while you take the time to figure out what type of work will be more fulfilling? If you are unmotivated to do the grocery shopping and some batch cooking on the weekend, can you find motivation in the vision of yourself being able to relax for a few minutes when you get home from work that week rather than having to cook while taking care of hungry, cranky kids? Taking the time to go through questions like these can help you be more intentional about what you say yes to so you can limit the number of “lions” in your life, protect your energy, and help keep burnout at bay.

Julie is a career and business coach with almost 10 years of experience helping women find careers and launch businesses that are in alignment with who they are. She’s a mom to two amazing kids and one very cute dachshund poodle mix. You can connect with her at juliehoughton.com or julie@juliehoughton.com.



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Sex After Kids: It Can Happen to You

Parenting can make physical connection with your partner challenging, but putting in the effort can revitalize more than just your sex life.

By Rhea St. Julien

Photograph by Lindsay Lovier



Relationships evolve over time as you peel away the layers of the onion of each other, getting to know your real selves through mutual exploration. However, the changes that parenting brings to a relationship are about as subtle as smashing that onion with a sledgehammer.

My husband and I had been married for eight years before our daughter was born, so our ways of being together were well established. Then, suddenly, there was a tiny time bomb, right there in our bed, exploding our hearts with love, but also leaving us picking up the shards of our relationship and holding them up to the light, seeing what we could still salvage.

“You never cuddle me anymore!” My husband complained. He was right—nights of snuggling on the couch together were fully over. Not only did we not have time to relax anymore, but more essentially, after a whole day of having a small human attached to my body, if I got a moment of personal space, I didn’t want to share it.

However, something magical happened when I stopped hugging my husband. Our sex life got a lot freer. Before parenting it was a bit buttoned up, a tad tame, actually. Parenting made us grow up in so many areas, and sex was no exception. It was slightly less spontaneous, as we had more finagling to do to get the bed to ourselves, but once we got there, the gloves—and everything else—were off.

Perhaps it was the experience of natural childbirth, really getting into my animal self in the presence of my husband and birthing my kid in all my mammalian glory. Maybe it’s that we never have time to have long and winding conversations, so we are expressing ourselves a bit more creatively with our bodies. Whatever the reason, becoming a mother has made me better in bed, more comfortable in my body, and more empowered.

These are my suggestions for how to rock your sex life, post-kids:

- 1. Go on day dates.** Why pay for the babysitter to sit there and watch your cable while the baby sleeps, so you and your partner can struggle to stay awake over fancy dinner food? Have the sitter come in the afternoon, take the kid out of the house, and you’ll have the whole place to yourself for a few hours, if you know what I mean. Then you and your sweetie can catch up over cocoa or cocktails!
- 2. Build the pressure by flirting more often.** Even if you are strapped down with children on every limb and there’s no way you are going to want to have sex once they are all asleep, go ahead, flirt with your partner. You’re not a teenager, so don’t worry about being a “tease.” Raise the level of sexual tension in your house every chance you get. This will make both of you prioritize sex when the moment does arise, and will probably make the sex more exciting, too!
- 3. Take your sexuality seriously.** At a family wedding a few years back, the DJ interviewed the longest married couple,

my aunt and uncle, about what their secret was for a long-lasting marriage. I don’t think they were ready for my uncle’s reply: “If the sex is good, you can pretty much put up with anything else.” My aunt nodded sagely and patted my arm. If that advice holds, then the opposite is true as well: when the sex is bad, or non-existent, everything else seems harder to bear. I know that in my relationship, when we have not had sex in a little while, we start being snappier with each other. Having periods of sexual drought in a married relationship is totally normal. However, you can’t accept it as status quo; you have to work hard at getting back to having a sexual connection, no matter what it takes. See a couple’s therapist, talk about the underlying issues, re-configure your life so you have more alone time together. Don’t give up and assume it’s not important. You are, and it is. Seek help if you need it. There’s no shame in it, and only freedom can come from it.

“When our daughter pulls on our heartstrings about our weekly dates, my husband and I sometimes remind each other that we were together before she came along, and long after she leaves home, our relationship of two will be what remains on a day-to-day basis.”

Don’t ever feel guilty about putting time and energy into your primary relationship. It will pay off for your child in the end to have adults in his or her life that are connecting on a visceral level. When our daughter pulls on our heartstrings about our weekly dates, my husband and I sometimes remind each other that we were together before she came along, and long after she leaves home, our relationship of two will be what remains on a day-to-day

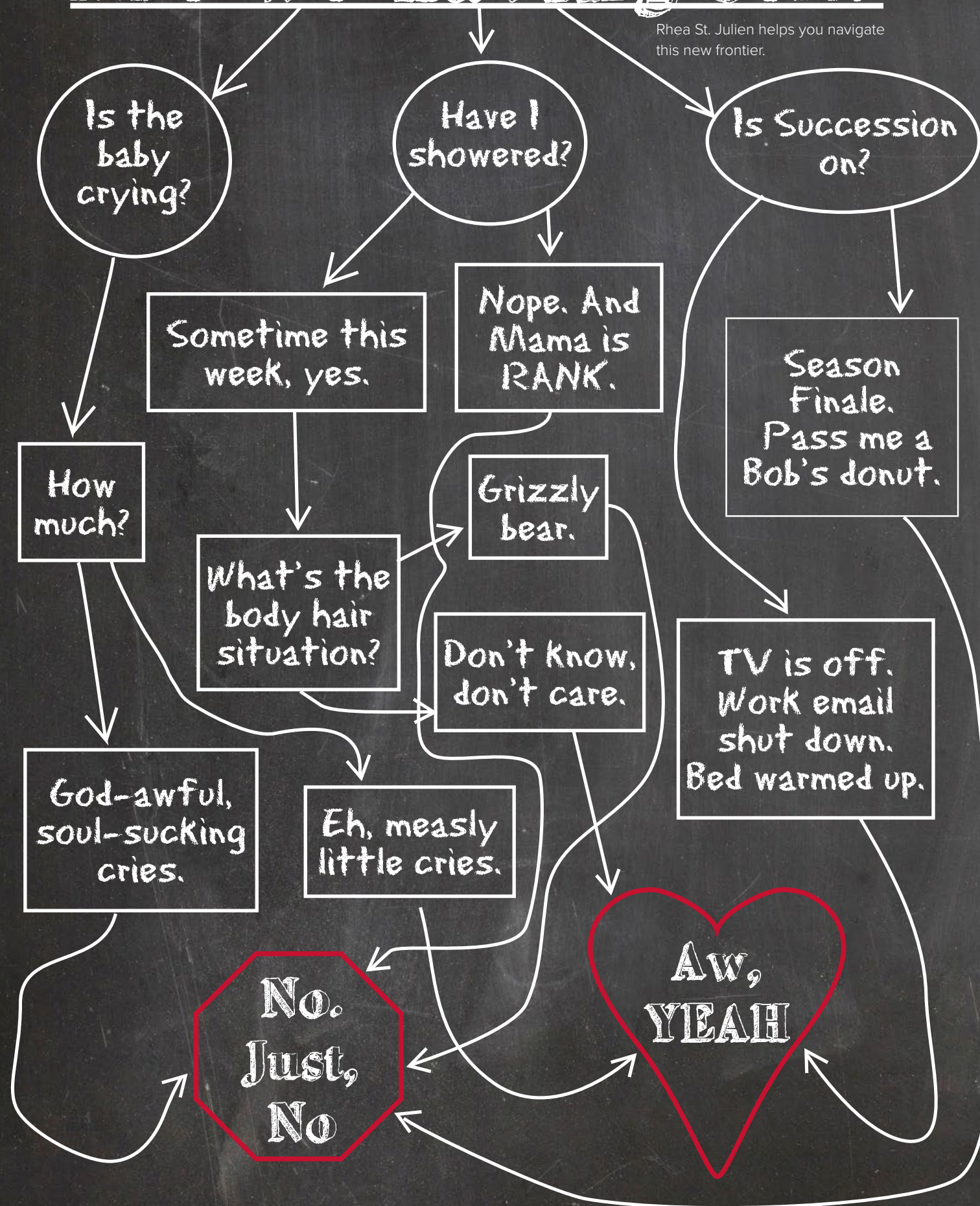
basis. Investing in it now will yield dividends for the whole family in the future.

Originally published in the February 2014 issue of *GGMG Magazine*

Rhea is a psychotherapist who specializes in working with women and non-binary people who have experienced trauma. For more about her practice, check out rheastjulienpsychotherapy.com.

Are we having sex?

Rhea St. Julien helps you navigate this new frontier.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Celebrating Pride Worldwide

San Francisco is bringing back the LGBTQ+ Pride Celebration and Parade this year after two years of cancellations due to the pandemic. Elsewhere in the country, large parades will also take place, including yearly celebrations in LA, New York, Chicago, and many other cities. The largest Pride parade in the U.S. took place in New York in 2019, when more than 4 million people joined the celebrations. Hosting the events in June each year commemorates the Stonewall Uprising in New York's Greenwich Village, which took place in June 1969.

Outside of the U.S., many other cities also host yearly events in joyful celebration of LGBTQ+ pride. The biggest of these events is the São Paulo LGBTQ Pride Parade, which is hailed as the largest parade in South America, rivaling the country's famous Carnival event. In Europe, the Madrid Pride, or Orgullo Gay de Madrid, is the continent's largest Pride event, with 3.5 million attendees at one point. Compared to their beginnings in the 1970s, the American and European Pride celebrations have become mainstream events openly joined by the public, and are sponsored by corporations and the cities hosting the events.

Outside of Europe and the U.S., most Pride celebrations are still straddling the line between social protest and public celebration. The Tel Aviv Pride in Israel is currently one of the largest in the world, but it was only within the last 15 to 20 years when that event became more than a political demonstration and gradually morphed into a social celebration. The Taiwan Pride in Taipei is still mostly a social protest event, without the commercial and political support that their Western counterparts have, and consists mostly of a march, rather than full street closures and celebrations.

This year will be San Francisco's 52nd Pride event, taking place at Civic Center for a two-day celebration, starting at noon on Saturday, June 25, and culminating with a march down Market Street for Sunday's parade. This year's theme is Love Will Keep Us Together. The parade is free and open to the public, but you can also purchase a limited number of grandstand tickets to get a better view. This year's event will include 200 parade floats, 300 exhibitors, and more than 20 community-run stages and venues with local musicians, dancers, and other entertainers.



NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS (FORMERLY MEMBER EXPERIENCES)

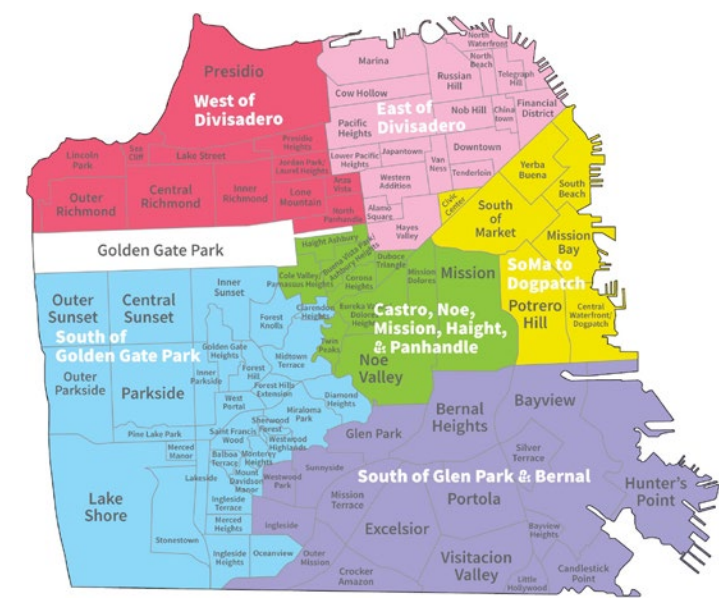
Connect with Your Mom Community

There is nothing quite as rewarding, bewildering, and isolating as being a new mom, but having a mom village can make all the difference! The Member Engagement Committee is now the Neighborhood Meetups Committee because we want to return to our core purpose of creating opportunities for moms to interact socially within their respective neighborhoods, although we encourage you to attend events all over our great city! Our committee welcomes new members, helps them meet other moms, and turns online connections into real-life friendships.

We organize various types of events throughout the year but primarily focus on quarterly New Mommies and Babies Meetups and our ever popular Mom’s Night Out events. We also organize several other member mixers such as coffee and stroller walks, books clubs, yoga/fitness classes, mani/pedis, and more. We’re excited to restart our in-person gatherings and hope to see you at an event near you!

Neighborhood Groups

We broadly divide the city into six groups as outlined in the map below.



We hold our quarterly New Mommies + Babies Meetups in every neighborhood group (depending on RSVPs, we may sometimes consolidate groups). These events are geared towards moms with babies 12 months or younger. Our next event is in August but if you can’t wait until then, please contact us at newmoms@gmg.org to be placed into an existing newborn playgroup.

For moms of babies older than 12 months, we recommend attending one of the Upcoming Events (read further for details or view the GGMG calendar) to meet moms in your area. Or, simply

reaching out and posting to the bulletin board can also do wonders. There are many moms seeking companionship and playdates and we want to help you all connect!

Our committee is always looking for new moms to join our group of dedicated volunteers. If you have ideas for new events you want to attend or simply want more wine nights (LOL), then come join a fun group of moms and volunteer with the Neighborhood Meetups Committee. Volunteers receive generous benefits including a free GGMG membership after one year of service and most roles take just a few hours a month or less.

If you have questions or want to learn more about volunteering, please contact neighborhoodmeetups@gmg.org.

Upcoming Events

Glen Park Coffee + Stroller Walk for Mommies (and Babies!)
Would you like to meet neighborhood moms, grab a coffee, and enjoy a stroller walk together? We’re organizing this Coffee + Stroller Walk for you! We’ll meet at a coffee shop before we go for an hour of fresh air, light exercise, and great conversation!

- Date:** Every Wednesday
- Time:** 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- Cost:** Free
- Place:** Bosworth and Diamond side lot by Pono Skincare in Glen Park and we can figure out which coffee shop to stroll to

More stroller walks will be started in other neighborhoods soon!

Happy Hour at SPARK Social SF for All Mommas!
Neighborhood Meetups Committee presents: Happy Hour for All Mommas and kids at SPARK Social SF! An opportunity to relax, meet other moms, eat and drink, and feel free to bring your kids if you like!

Questions? Email leejessiesf@gmail.com

- Date:** Thursday, June 16, 2022
- Time:** 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Cost:** \$5, includes food and drink
- Place:** SPARK Social SF, 601 Mission Bay Blvd. North (Look for the GGMG sign)

GGMG Mommies + Babies Meetups August 2022
Are you looking for your own mom village? Sign up to meet other moms!

If you have children under 12 months old or are expecting, we would like to invite you to a small, casual gathering where you will meet GGMG moms similar to you. Snacks and drinks will be provided while you and other new moms meet, connect, and take the first steps to plan a stroller walk, find a workout buddy, or plan a playdate for your little ones.

- Date:** Wednesday, August 31
- Time:** 5:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- Cost:** \$5, includes food and drink
- Place:** TBD, four to six locations in different parts of the city, will be emailed to participants close to the event date

CAREER & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Coming This Fall:
Free Career Change Workshop

Do you feel stuck in a soul-sucking job and long to do something that feels more fulfilling—even if you have no idea what that might be? Do you know you’re in the wrong career but feel stuck by fear or self-doubt when you think about trying to make a change? Do you dream about starting your own business but feel scared to take the first step? Whether you’re going back to work after maternity leave, thinking about returning to the workforce after a break, or are currently in a job and just know you’re meant to do something more, this workshop is for you.

Join career coach and GGMG mom Julie Houghton this fall for this popular workshop from the Career & Entrepreneurship Committee and take the first step toward finding work that is in alignment with who you are! Details will be posted on the GGMG calendar in the coming months, or if you would like to be notified once a date is set, please email us at entrepreneurs@gmg.org.

PARTNERSHIPS

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

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

- Committee duties in Friends:
- Input new offers by local businesses (Friends) looking to provide substantial (20 percent or more) discounts to GGMG members
 - Maintain our relationships with our current Friends
 - Seek out potential new Friends who provide services useful to our members
 - Negotiate new business discounts
 - Update members on new discounts

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

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

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Social Media Committee promotes and shares photos of events, which in 2022 are happily returning to be more in-person. We have more than 1,800 Instagram followers and are followed by more than 7,000 people on Facebook. Thank you to all who continue to remain engaged with GGMG!

We hope that as the world shifts back to normal, we can add more volunteers to our committee as well as a Chair of Social Media. If you are interested in social media or public relations and want to get more involved in GGMG, please reach out to social-media@gmg.org.

We would love to hear what content you find most appealing. Event information? Informative articles? Things to make you laugh in these strange times? Feel free to send us a note to let us know.

Please like/follow us on all forms of social media (@gmgsgf) and re-post/share to your heart’s content. And if you attend a virtual or IRL event, post your pictures with the hashtag #gmgsgf. You might just get reposted/shared yourself!

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

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Rejuvenation Through Reading

By Jessica Perry

I spent the winter semester of my junior year in college gallivanting around the misty hills of Scotland—drinking hot tea, poring over novels, and seeking out romance. What was a 20-year-old Northern Californian doing in a chilly city overlooking the North Sea? I was looking for my “Jamie Fraser” under the guise of studying abroad. This is the power that novels have had on my life. I read *Outlander* and felt compelled to transplant to Scotland. Novels, especially those involving romance, are my guiltiest pleasure and will always hold a special place in my heart.

My mom calls them “brain floss”—the little indulgences we take to rejuvenate our minds and alleviate what is taxing us. We read them and feel lighter, ready to take on more of what life throws our way.

When real life gets tough, I have turned to novels with romance for comfort time and time again, most recently during the pandemic. To be able to function and be present for my children during the tumult of the past two years, I needed to be able to draw my strength from life’s smallest pleasures. I took comfort in knowing that what I read would end favorably with absolute certainty. This calmed me during unpredictable times.

The types of books that have sated me have run the gamut over the years, ranging from 100 percent smutty romance novels (yes, I have belonged to a “Smutty Book Club”) to fiction with romance as a subplot. I will argue that Jane Austen is the original romance novelist and the one who got it all started. Austen’s most famous protagonists are all strong women who end up with men they dismiss for one reason or another and then come to love in the end. This is the classic romance novel formula. She may have been a nineteenth century novelist, but she’s one of the only authors of her time to make her readers believe that women had agency AND that their internal moral compasses would lead them in the right direction.

About 15 years ago, supernatural romances—a marriage of my two favorite cheesy genres, horror and romance—made their way to mainstream literature. I couldn’t help imagining myself as Sookie Stackhouse (from *The Southern*



Vampire Mysteries / True Blood series), living near the bayous of Louisiana with her sweltering love interests, Bill and Eric. Don’t even get me started on the werewolves.

Shortly thereafter, dystopian romances made their way into the mainstream. *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* both featured strong, independent heroines who fall in love all while trying to redeem

the state of their current civilization. These types of books gave me great perspective: their civilizations may have completely disintegrated, but at least they had the comfort of companionship during societal decline.

It should also be noted that there’s a plethora of fiction with romance as a subplot, some of which I’ve mentioned above. I have also read endless Jennifer Weiner, Sophie Kinsella, and Jane Green books that transport me directly into golden east coast summers, where the location is almost a point of romantic interest itself—the languid summer nights, the protagonist’s toes wiggling themselves into the hot sand, melting ice cream dripping down fingers onto the ground at dusk. These books provide a whole other kind of romanticized escape with the actual romance being a secondary focus.

More recently, there has been a wealth of more diverse romances featuring young people of color and members of the LGBTQ communities. Jasmine Guillory and Sonali Dev have all gotten me through some of my more difficult moments where I needed an escape and sustenance for the soul. Dev, much to my delight, put a new spin on all of Jane Austen’s

most famous novels. Her *Raje* series, starting with *Pride, Prejudice, and Other Flavors*, made me yearn for Mr. Darcy while also wanting to indulge in and learn about South Asian cuisine (his character was a talented chef).

The one constant in the life of a mother is change. Sometimes I run straight for it, ready to take it on. Other times, I retreat into defensive mode. Sometimes I need to dive into *Twilight* to get me through—and that’s okay.

Jessica is a writer, editor, and mother living in Marin County. She delights in sharing her guilty pleasure reading with her friends and is a firm believer that everyone will be rejuvenated through diving into a good book.

Jessica’s Guilty Pleasure Reading List

Romance Novels:

Outlander by Diana Gabaldon
How to Flirt with a Naked Werewolf
by Molly Harper
Happy Hour at the Casa Dracula
by Marta Costa
The Proposal by Jasmine Guillory
Pride, Prejudice, and Other Flavors
by Sonali Dev
The Love Hypothesis by Ali Hazelwood

Fiction with Romance as a Subplot:

Golden Girl by Elin Hildenbrand
Summer Secrets by Jane Green
That Summer by Jennifer Weiner
The Hunger Games by Susan Collins
Twilight by Stephenie Meyer
Serena Singh Flips the Script by Sonya Lalli



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