

Encouraging Your Wellness

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Positive Parenting—Getting Your Kids to Think for Themselves

Ah, the end of summer...hot days, harvesting gardens, vacations, and of course, that most brilliant statement that we wait for from our kids:

"I'm Bored!! There's nothing to do!"

Some parents jump right into "fix-it" mode, suggesting several options available to their children, "You could ride your bike, you could do a puzzle, you could..." How sad for these kids to miss out on the opportunity to think for themselves.

When kids have any problem, and we jump to fix it for them, several negative messages are sent their way: "I don't believe you can handle it, so I'll do it for you" or "I am so much better equipped to solve your problem than you are!" In an attempt to help, we are undermining our kids' self confidence and robbing them of opportunity to gain valuable problem solving skills. As one astute parent in my class said, "This is a good way to assure your kids live with you well into their 30's!" I think she was right. After all, if you do their problem solving for them, and they don't gain these valuable skills, they will be increasingly dependent on you for all of their problem solving needs.



Let's face it, it is hard for us parents to see our kids

What exactly is EMDR and how can it help?

EMDR has become such an important and effective part of my practice that I want to spread the word on how helpful I have seen it be. EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. It has been researched since 1989 when founder Dr. Francine Shapiro made the chance observation that eye movements could reduce the intensity of disturbing thoughts. Since then, EMDR has evolved through the contributions of therapists and researchers all over the world. When I first heard about EMDR, I was a major skeptic. It sounded like a form of hocus pocus therapy that was simply not for me. But, as I read more and more research, I could no longer deny that there was something amazing happening for people who underwent EMDR. Results from meta-analyses indicate that EMDR is superior to no-treatment and equivalent in outcome to once superior cognitive behavioral treatment approaches. However, these studies also conclude that EMDR is more efficient than other trauma treatments.

Dear Readers



I hope this issue of [Encouraging Your Wellness](#) finds you happy, healthy and enjoying these final days of summer. And, as always, I hope you find this newsletter informative as well as inspirational in helping you be the person, parent, and partner you want to be. Please let me know if you have a topic you'd like me to include in the newsletter—I'd be happy to take requests.

Summer has been good to me. I have traveled with my family, celebrated my grandfather's 100th birthday, and biked, hiked and camped to my hearts content. Even more important is a renewed promise to myself that I will enjoy each day of my life. I thank my client who recently shared a quote with me that I found particularly meaningful: "Everyone dies, but not everyone LIVES." What a magnificent reminder that we must **intentionally** live our life to bring joy, meaning and contentment. I recently came across a worksheet entitled, "10 things I do just for myself." Here's my challenge to you—take 20 minutes of quiet time and find out if you do 10 things just for yourself. They don't have to be extravagant. Sitting by myself on my porch in the coolness of the morning was on my list. If you cannot list 10, start with 1 and increase by one each week. I wish you all the same renewed spirit I am feeling as summer comes to a close. Happy Reading!

"It is our job as parents to equip them to think the problem through and mobilize them to create solutions."

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struggle. We want to feel useful; offer our wisdom. But when our kids face real challenges away from us, it is our job as parents to equip THEM to think the problem through and mobilize THEM to create solutions. That can only happen if we allow our kids to practice their own problem solving with us there to help guide and encourage their belief in themselves to do so. So when your child gives you the "I'm bored, there's nothing to do" routine, start by saying something like, "Oh, man, I hate when that happens to me. What are you going to do?" When they come back with, "Nothing, there is nothing to do" give them your full confidence in solving the problem by saying to them, "I'm sure you'll figure it out, let me know what you come up with." and allow the problem solving skills to blossom. Then, continue to encourage these skills when your child comes to you with other problems. "I forgot to do my homework" "I told my best friend that I didn't want to be friends with them anymore"

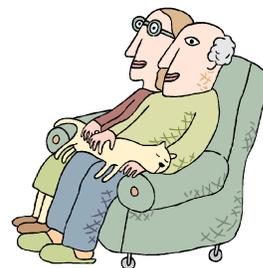
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Most studies on EMDR have focused on it's treatment of trauma, however, most therapists who use it have found it to be successful with anxiety, grief, phobias, negative self view, and performance anxiety. In addition, I attended a training on EMDR where the instructor was using it with Olympic athletes to enhance performance.

During EMDR, the therapist works with the client to identify a specific problem or memory as the focus of the treatment session. The client is asked to call to mind the disturbing issue or event, as well as feelings and beliefs associated with the event. The therapist then facilitates bi-lateral movements to access both hemispheres of the brain. This is done most commonly by me using a small machine that simply taps back and forth in your hands. The client's job is to simply notice whatever comes to mind, as well as their emotions, without making any effort to control direction or content. These "sets" are continued until the memory becomes less disturbing and is associated with positive thoughts and believesexhausted after a day of caregiving and wanted to be alone, she wondered if

Couple's Corner– Maintaining Individual Identity in Your Relationship

Just as children and adults go through developmental stages, so do relationships. It is normal for early relationships to focus on commonalities and on increasing the attachment in the relationship. Often, much time is spent together to develop and strengthen this attachment. Even for couples who are very committed, a normal and healthy part of an ongoing relationship is Differentiation. Differentiation is the ongoing process of defining, revealing, expressing and activating ones self identity. Being a part of a healthy relationship does not mean that you will happily and forever see all things the same as your partner. I have had the pleasure of knowing couples who have effectively managed very different views on political issues, religion and world affairs. Ideally, we came together with our partner because we found them interesting and we respected WHO they were. In the context of a relationship, we need to continue to encourage and love our partners individual self as well as their role as partners. When your partner sees something very differently than you, do you respect their right to see it their way? Or do you feel you must conform them to your way of thinking? Do you respect your partners individual interests, or do they feel threatening to you and/or the relationship? Attachment, the act of connecting, and differentiation, the act of still being ones self in the context of the relationship, are both required for the long-term health and happiness of the individuals and the couple.



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or “I failed that class just because my teacher doesn’t like me!” To all of these, you can respond with empathy, followed by a “What are you going to do? How are you going to handle it” type statement. Yes, your kids might initially be angry that you are not jumping in to fix-it mode, but as their confidence grows, you will see the benefits. Just recently, a parent shared with me that when she used this skill, she was amazed at how capable her son already was in coming up with potential solutions. How wonderful that both she and her son are now believing in his ability to think for himself, and come up with solutions to his own challenges.

“What are you going to do? How are you going to handle it?”

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thoughts and beliefs about oneself such as “I did the best I could.” During EMDR, the client may experience intense emotions, but by the end of the session, most people report a great reduction in the level of disturbance.

I am a transformed skeptic! Clients in my practice have been nothing short of amazed by the process, and how they can put down “weights” that they feel they have been carrying for years. They look inquisitively at the machine after EMDR, and question how such a simple thing can have such a powerful effect on them. Over two million people worldwide have found EMDR to be a treatment that has effectively relieved their psychological distress. I have used it with young children, adolescents and adults, and achieved the goals the clients had set forth.

If you are interested in learning more about EMDR, ask me, or visit the EMDR International Association at emdria.org If you would like to consider it as a treatment for yourself, I would be glad to assess whether it could be helpful to you.



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If you are in need of individual, couple or family help, call me. Together with you, I will design a treatment plan that helps you achieve your goals and gets you on the road to feeling life more fulfilled. I specialize in working with teens, adults and children who are struggling with depression, anxiety, low self-worth, past experiences of abuse, and who are believing there must be more to life than what they are currently experiencing. I look forward to speaking with you.

Dear Pam,

My brother is the type of parent that gives in every time his child begins to throw a fit. She has really become unruly and my husband and I have a really hard time being around and seeing this. Should I say something, and if so, what?

I agree that it is hard to watch this, especially when you likely know that the child is suffering as kids feel very *insecure* when they see that their parents are not in charge. But, say the wrong thing at the wrong time and you'll likely alienate your brother. Remember that advice is usually only received well if it is asked for. Unsolicited advice usually has the effect of raising a person's defenses. Coming across as a "know it all" can also be offensive when someone is struggling. First, ask yourself if you see your brother struggling as a parent. If he is parenting as he chooses and doesn't see it as a problem, leave it alone. But more likely, as his child throws fits, he becomes self-conscious and possibly embarrassed. When this happens, you can become a support to him. It could go something like this:

"Parenting is really hard. I am sure glad I had some help along the way. If you ever need anything, I would be glad to help you."

Or "Every parent faces some challenges, and you're not alone. I just read a great (book or article) on how to handle it when your kids throw fits to get their way. Would you like me to share it with you?" Parenting with Love and Logic is a great one to share.

Remember that parenting is a really hard job, and not everyone is born with equal skills. Try to find two things your brother is doing right for every one that he needs help with. You'll get a lot more mileage out of being his supporter than his critic.

