

THE PEACEFUL PARENT HOLIDAY GUIDE



THE PEACEFUL PARENT
LISA SMITH • PARENT COACH

THEPEACEFULPARENT.COM



Hi, I'm Lisa. I am a Mom, Parent Coach, international best selling author of "The Angry Parent: How to Find Peace in Your Parenting Through the Message of Anger." I help turn frustrated parents -- who regularly default to yelling, threatening and punishing -- into peaceful leaders within their household.

As a former dominant parent, I found the path to Peaceful Parenting and am dedicated to helping other parents find their way too!

When I'm not coaching, you'll find most likely me at a basketball game rooting on my son or traveling somewhere new. I am obsessed with cross-fit, personal development, and romance novels. You'll almost always find me with a Starbucks iced green tea in my hand.

I've put together a holiday guide for you for December.

Feel free to read and follow along day-by-day or to Netflix box-set it and read the whole thing! Some of these short pieces have appeared on my blog, and some are fresh from Santa's workshop.

I hope that it gives you support and inspiration through this hectic, sometimes difficult, sometimes wonderful time of year.

Lisa
XO

DAY 1:

ENERGY LEAKS

In household management books (thanks Martha!) there's often a list of tasks to do weekly, monthly and yearly and often in the winter section, there will be something about getting the water and heating system checked before the winter sets in.

The idea is that by doing so that you avoid burst pipes and need to call out the engineer at the super-expensive holidays' rate when things go wrong.

Today, I'm asking you to look for energy leaks in your family life and get things plugged up a bit and repaired before the holidays come.

So get yourself a journal, you can use it for reflection throughout the time you use this guide, and write a list of the energy leaks that you are putting up with.

Here are some examples, feel free to tick any off and then add any others that you notice:

- You don't have morning and evening routines for your kids, so things get a bit out of hand when there's no school bus to catch.
- You have not set limits on screen time. A whole vast expanse of time opens in the holidays that can easily get swallowed up by screen time unless you set limits in advance and start getting your kids used to them.
- You have a load of clutter around the house and things that you have meant to donate but have not got round to donating. Things will get even more cluttered when the holiday gifts arrive.
- You don't have help or a division of tasks. Get your partner and kids to take responsibility for tasks where possible. Outsource help if that's a possibility for you.
- You don't have coping strategies when your kid acts up. I write about this in my book. --
> <https://coaching.thepeacefulparent.com/anger-book>



- The amount on your to-do list and on your calendar is just TOO MUCH for one person. Go through everything and cross off everything that you don't need to do or are just doing because you have been telling yourself you have to when you don't really need to.
- Worrying about other people's expectations can be an energy leak. Just because your mother-in-law thinks that ironed and monogrammed linen napkins are essential, doesn't mean this is true.
- Remembering your own experience of the holidays as a child can be an energy leak if they were not happy times for you. Be kind to yourself, amp up the self-care and take time to journal.
- Appointing yourself as 'The Entertainment Manager' can be an exhausting energy leak. It might be time to resign from that position and sometimes allow your kids to get a little bored.
- Lack of sleep. It's a super busy time of year and with all the parties sleep sometimes goes down the list of priorities. I don't know about you, but with good amounts sleep, I am a MUCH more patient and understanding parent.

There are many other energy leaks that you may find. You need to identify what yours are and then come up with a plan to plug them.

DAY 2:

MODELLING COOPERATION

'I just wish they would be more cooperative, I'm so fed up repeating myself.'

or

'Why can't they just get along, they're brothers, for goodness sake!'

Ever find yourself thinking thoughts like these, or something similar?

Listen, I know this might be hard to take, but your kids are never going to know how to co-operate if you don't model it for them first.

We have to model co-operation for our kids.

It needs to be taught patiently.

It needs to be modeled again and again.

It's a bit like making a croissant! You need to put in the butter and roll it and fold it and keep on adding the butter and rolling it and folding it.

Croissant making is fiddly and time-consuming, but the smell of freshly baked croissants?

Magnifique!

Show me a dominant kid, and I'll show you a dominant parent.

You can learn how to be a peaceful parent. It takes time and application, but it's so worth it.

Pass the croissants!



DAY 3: ELF ON THE SHELF - DON'T GET ME STARTED



People buy an elf and put it on a shelf. They tell their kids that the elf is watching them to see if they are behaving well.

If they don't behave well, the elf will tell Santa who then will score presents off the list of things that he was going to bring them.

Sometimes there's even the threat of NO PRESENTS.

I've seen them used in a fun way, where the elf gets up to antics in the house, and each morning the kids have to search out the elf and find out what mischief it's been up to...

But to use it as surveillance?

I ask you, would you like if your boss installed a security camera in your home to watch you all the time and if you didn't behave the way he wanted you to your pay got slashed?

Nope, didn't think so.

So why do we do this to kids?

Sure you can try to justify it and say it's just a bit of fun...

But does it feel like fun to the child?

Does it feel nice to know that your every move is being watched and that if you mess up, no presents are going to come your way?

Can you believe it? Here we are at the start of December and the holiday season is going to be quickly upon us.

There are many things about the holidays that I love, the chance to cozy up by the fire or watch a great game of football (Come on Patriots!). I love the sense of occasion, the feeling that it's a special time of year.

But, there's one thing mama, that makes me kinda mad.

I remember one mama waiting at basketball practice telling me that she loved December with her younger kids.

She said it was so much easier...

I was puzzled how this could be as; generally, there's so much going on over the holidays, and that just adds extra pressure, tension, and frayed nerves.

'Oh,' she said 'we've got an elf on the shelf, and the kids know that Santa won't bring them any presents if the elf sees them misbehaving.'

I took a deep intake of breath. You see I hate those things...

I don't think so.

Here's the other thing mama, now I'm on my soapbox....

Stay with me here.

Even if the elf could see the child and judge it's behavior, the elf would only see the outward behavior of the child. It would never know what was really going on for them.

So the elf sees the kid act out and sees them having a storm of emotion...

The elf elfmails Santa to tell him to score presents off the list.

But the thing is the elf has no idea what's really going on for the child. The elf has no idea about the child's feelings and needs.

That's why I encourage the mamas I work with to get curious, not furious.

When a child acts up what's really going on for them?

Are they tired?

Are they hungry?

Did they have a tough day at school when they didn't get picked for the team?

Did they spend recess on their own?

The elf can't ask. It sees what it sees and then punishes.

You CAN find out what's REALLY going on for your child.

When you do you open the door to a whole load more understanding and connection.

Those kinds of feelings feel a whole lot cozier than judgment and threats.

Maybe it works so well to use the elf, and it feels that nothing else does? Mama, I need you to know that threats and punishments aren't the answer.

Building connection works a whole load better and is much more sustainable.

Maybe you've already bought an elf?

Can you have the elf get up to mischief and laugh about its behavior together?

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS...

- Spilled ingredients on the table.
- Elf with empty chocolate wrappers/plate with biscuit crumbs.
- Elf hanging from Christmas tree, tied on upside-down.
- Elf with muddy prints or snow prints made with sugar.
- Elf playing with your child's other toys. e.g., toy tea party
- Elf playing on gaming equipment.
- Elf in dolls' house or doll's bed.
- Elf wearing an item of child's clothing. e.g., a sock or in a shoe.
- Elf with paper that is scribbled on.
- A letter from Elf saying the great things he or she has noticed about your kid. e.g., a time the elf saw your kid being kind or showing determination.
- A letter that the elf has written to Santa about why it's enjoying being in your home.
- Elf hiding in a cereal box at breakfast.
- Elf reading a book your child loves.
- Elf with art materials set out, and it looks as though they've been painting.
- Elf in someone's bed.
- Elf balancing on a pile of boxes from recycling.
- Come up with creative ideas with your child about the mischief that the elf could get up to and set things up together.
- Elf taking S -ELF- IE - sorry, I couldn't resist the pun. :-)



- You get to choose to make the holidays a time of connection. I hope these ideas give you some inspiration for connection.

DAY 4: DEAR SANTA, ENOUGH ALREADY

So yesterday, I wrote to you about my RAGE at how the Elf on the Shelf can be used to get kids to think they need to behave like some sort of 'good kid robot' or Santa won't bring them presents.

You see, I may be 'The Peaceful Parent' now, Mama, but that doesn't mean I'm this zen being who never gets riled up.

Remember, I became the peaceful parent partly because I had to say 'enough already' to all the yelling in my home.

So you may find this difficult to swallow, but I'm mad at Santa Claus.

Yup.

'Santa Claus? How can you be mad at Santa Claus, Lisa?' I hear you say.

Evidence

Here are some of the lyrics from Eddie Cantor's song 'Santa Claus is Coming to Town':

*'You better watch out, you better not cry
Better not pout, I'm telling you why
Santa Claus is comin' to town
He's making a list and checking it twice
Gonna find out who's naughty and nice
Santa Claus is comin' to town
He sees you when you're sleepin'
He knows when you're awake
He knows if you've been bad or good
So be good for goodness sake.'*



Now there's no denying this is a great Christmas tune that has stood the test of time so well. Its heritage goes from this one first sung on Eddie Cantor's radio show, Thanksgiving 1934 to versions such as one by Justin Bieber in his album 'Under the Mistletoe' in 2011.

BUT please see below for my complaint letter to Santa :-)



Dear Santa Claus,

Thank you for the lovely gifts that you brought for all of us last year. Malcolm particularly has enjoyed the game that you brought him, and it's been well used.

I love all those Christmas songs that come up this time of year...

I've denied that one about mommy kissing Santa Claus. I hope you explained to Mrs. Claus that the rumors are entirely untrue.

Anyways, it's that one about you coming to town that really gets to me.

First, you say that little kids need not to pout and cry.

It's a crazy and super intense time of year, Santa, and let me tell you, tears are gonna happen. Pouting's gonna happen. I think you're setting the peppermint cane too high here.

OK so then the song goes on about your list and how you're checking who's naughty and who's nice.

Seriously?

How can you be sure that you got your list right? How can you know what's going on in the heart of a kid who's having a hard time and is acting up?

Tell, you what Santa, if you send me the list, I'll be delighted to shred it all for you.

I know these days what with information laws we need to protect that data. I'm happy to shred it, and then you can just give presents to ALL the children.

That's what it's about isn't it Santa?

That's why you got started in this game?

The whole unconditional love and peace thing.

Then, I see from the song, that you've been keeping an eye on what the kids are up to. I know you care and I know you have best intentions, but you see Santa, the behavior you're seeing isn't the whole picture.

I work with a lot of the parents that you visit and let me tell you something I tell them:

You need to go beneath the behavior to the feelings and needs.

The way you're doing things at the moment just doesn't give you an accurate reflection of what's really goin' on for those kids you've got on your naughty list.

Santa, you've been good to my family for many years and I promise we'll still leave out the mince pie and brandy for you and the carrot for Rudolph (how do you stay sober with all the glasses of brandy?) but I need you to have a rethink on the whole 'naughty and nice' list.

Warmest holiday wishes,

Lisa

P.S. You'll knock it out the park with the new approach Santa, I know you will. Oh, and if you ever want to join us in The Peaceful Parenting Academy, just let me know. You'll be able to use some the ideas when the Elves are getting rowdy.

DAY 5:

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO SUCK AT AS A MOM?

Lately, I've been talking to clients about being willing to suck at being a mom, or a parent.

You know we put SO much pressure on ourselves, and we just can't be great at every aspect of being a mom.

There are so many aspects and requiring yourself to be good at them all would be like expecting yourself to be good at every subject at school, or every sport there is.

Impossible, right?

But, some of us still run ourselves ragged trying to be.

Who are we trying to prove it to with that gingerbread house that has three floors and a lift?

To ourselves?

To our partners?

To our child?

To other moms at the school gate?



It achieves nothing because whenever things go well, there's always the next situation to make 'just perfect.'

Few kids can live up to this either, because you seeing yourself as perfect as a mom, also requires them never to act up or have issues.

The cost of all this striving?

We don't allow ourselves to be in the present moment. Instead, we're there like the jury on 'Dancing With the Stars' marking our performance as a parent (and usually we're ranking ourselves bottom of the leaderboard).

Judging yourself all the time STOPS you from enjoying parenting and means that the fuse you have with your kids is super short.

We become all about getting tasks done for the holidays instead of really enjoying the time with our kids and noticing them.

We get so focused on party invites, presents to be bought, cards to be written, that we don't notice what they're good at and we're not available to talk about their feelings when they need you right there in that challenging 'bad-day-at-school' moment.

The thing about that is that in the future your kids will remember whether you had time for them or not.

Will they remember so much about you having ticked off all the things in your holiday planner?

Will they care whether the chocolate log with robin and sugar dust snow on top was bought or if it took you three days of log assembly, holly cut-out time and

robin modeling? (the first 20 didn't look like robins.)

Will they want you to have a magazine perfect holiday season, or would they just want you to have been there, doing the best you can and showing up for them as fully as you're able to?

Makes you think, doesn't it?

So to counter this, I've been asking my clients to come up with 3 things they're willing to suck at as a mom and three things that are a priority for them.

I know it's hard to admit that you suck at something as a mom, after all, there's all that cultural stuff about being the perfect mom, look at all those 50's ads of women in pretty holly covered frilly aprons bringing freshly baked pies out of the oven.

Further back than that, there's Marmee (Mrs. March) in 'Little Women' being the model of perfect mommyhood, uncomplaining and never taking time for herself.

The recent film name, 'Bad Moms' was meant to catch the eye as that's NOT what our culture says us moms should be.

I'm not asking you to say where you're a bad mom.

I'm asking you what you're willing to suck at because if you ask yourself to be perfect in every area as a mom, you're putting yourself under a WHOLE LOT of unnecessary pressure....

And eventually, that pressure might lead to RESENTMENT.

When I ALLOWED myself NOT to be the perfect mom, when I allowed myself to SUCK at some of the things that moms are meant to be able to do, you know what?

I felt more like ME...

And when I feel more like me, rather than some robot Stepford Mom, I'm a whole lot happier and so are my family.



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DAY 6:

2 WAYS I SUCK AS A MOM :) (AND WHY I'M PROUD)

On Day 5, I shared with you an exercise that I've been having my clients try. I asked them to come up with 3 things that they're willing to suck at as a mom and three priorities.

Today, I'm sharing two of the ways that I'm willing to suck at as a mom.

I think it's important you know that just because I'm a parenting coach, it doesn't mean that I'm some shiny unicorn of the parenting world. I have my challenges as a mom.

In fact, it's BECAUSE I had challenges as a mom that I was led to this work.

I LIVE the tools I teach every day.

So here they are, two of the ways that I suck as a mom:

I'm willing to suck at feeding my kid a homemade, organic, healthy meal loaded with vegetables every night.

You maybe know the score...

You try the 'let's make the vegetables exciting' cookbooks.

You try the 'let's hide the vegetables' cookbooks.

You try the 'I have a fussy eater, and these recipes worked for me' cookbooks. (didn't work for me, sister!)

You try the 'make the food look like a picture of Santa Claus coming down the chimney' cookbook. (didn't look like Santa to me and trying to make those carrots into a chimney shape was SUPER FRUSTRATING)

You even consider the 'let's grow the vegetables first and have daily visits to the farmers' market' cookbooks. (but you want to have a life outside cooking, and you have work)

AARGH, none of them work.

You end up cooking recipes that use every kitchen implement and gadget you own. You fill the dishwasher and leave the surfaces covered with bowls and bits of the food processor.

Then your child takes the tiniest amount and knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that there's no way they're eating it, but they're happy to decorate the wall and floor with it.

And there's only so much leftover pureed Santa picture a mom and dad can take.

Now my son is 14, he's at an age where he's busy.

He doesn't really love vegetables, and so I've decided, that you know what, if he eats a cucumber once a night, which I slice up for him, we're good.

He's gonna live to be 80 years old probably, and if the first 18 he isn't eating avocado and kale and Brussels sprouts every night, then I can live with that.

Another thing I'm willing to suck at is him learning to vacuum.

I did a lot of housework, was a child slave as a kid and I really want my kid to ENJOY his childhood.

There's this thing called YouTube. I say this sorta tongue in cheek, but when he NEEDS to learn how to vacuum, he'll be able to go to YouTube and learn how to vacuum.

Look, here it is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbXqklwkJt4> (over 83,000 views, so seems like I'm not the only mom with this plan. ;-))

And if he wants to know which tips are the ones that SUCK there's this one:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbXqklwkJt4> (over 291,000 views. That's a LOT of happier childhoods spent playing basketball rather than learning how to vacuum)

Listen, dear friend, if the home cooked organic food is your thing, and you LOVE to teach your child how to keep a house, I LOVE you for it. I LOVE that they're your thing.

They're just not MY thing.

They're not how I choose to act or be as a mom.

And tell me where I'm wrong, but there's probably some parenting things that don't come naturally to you? Rather than FIGHTING that you could decide just to suck at it as I did with the veg thing.

Or like the vacuuming example, it could be something that you DECIDE is not going to be part of your mom job description because that's not what you WANT for YOUR CHILD.

I don't want my son to be spending his childhood doing chores, so I take it off my mom job description that I need to teach him how to do the chores and make him do them.

If I choose not to, I don't have to.

What are you willing to suck at as a mom?

Name it, claim it, wear your badge proudly.

You still get to be a wonderful mom in the eyes of your child, and in the end, your RELATIONSHIP is what matters.

Until tomorrow, when I'll share some of my priorities as a mom. These are the things I'm NOT willing to suck at as a mom because they matter to me.

P.S. Looking at what you are willing to suck at as a mom is not meant to be some big guilt trip. We are OWNING our choices.

When we are up front willing to suck at things, we clear the space to let our brain rest on the things that are a priority.



DAY 7:

DON'T HATE ME

So yesterday, I was talking about a couple of the areas where I'm willing to suck as a mom. They were:

Cooking organic food from scratch with loads of veggies.
Getting my son to do loads of housework.

I asked you to consider some of the areas where you were willing to suck as a mom. This wasn't meant to be some big guilt trip thing.

It was about accepting that there's no way that anybody can be great at the whole mom job description that our culture gives us. It's just way too big a job description for one person.

Now I don't want you to hate on me this week as I talk about where I strive to do a great job as a mom. Sometimes, when you're finding things tough, hearing someone look at thing proactively can be hard to take. I get that.

Really that's an integral part of my work, helping moms to realize that they DO get to choose their priorities as a parent. You, as a mom, get to decide how this parenting story is going to play out.

It's about INTENTION...

And it's also about the COURAGE to say what you're doing isn't working, and you'd like some help.

I've been on a journey from being an angry mom that yelled at my kid to being able to be much more intentional about how I parent.

I now have things that I prioritize as a parent.

I'm not willing to suck at spending time with my kid talking about his feelings.

I'm not willing to suck at prioritizing homework and helping him with it when I can.

We also try not to be late to things, that's a priority to our family. We plan ahead, and we try to allow enough time.

So sometimes the things that you prioritize as a mom are things that are in alignment with your family values.

So if I'm not worried and stressing about how I didn't feed him Brussels sprouts last night, I have more time to focus on getting to Holiday gatherings on time which is a high priority to us.

I have more time to listen to his feelings when I'm not there cooking the organic cook-from-scratch meal that uses every kitchen gadget I own.

By being willing to suck in some areas we can clear the brain space to rest on the things that are a priority for us.



DAY 8:

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

So over the last couple of days, I've told you about what I'm willing to suck at as a mom and what I am not willing to suck at as a mom. Now it's your turn!

Today, I'd love for you to list at least 3 things/areas you are willing to fail as a parent:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

And there areas that are a priority with your parenting and you'd like to show up and give it your all:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Looks like a plan mama/dad!

DAY 9:

HOW MANY SLEEPS?

The stores are full of holiday food and decorations. I'm sure you've noticed. ;-)

There's all the mom pressure to pull the perfect holiday season out of the bag...

SO MUCH WORK.

Such high expectations.

It's a LOT of pressure.

It's enough that you don't sleep on those sleeps until Santa comes.

So what if we dialed that pressure down by not expecting every part of it to be perfect?

Where are you willing to suck at the Holidays?

Does all the food need to be cooked from scratch?

Do all the cards need to have a letter in them?

Does your kid need to have more presents than you can actually afford?

Do you need to plan endless holiday excursions with precision? (the ones that everyone ends up tired and grumpy on?)

Does the inside of every cupboard need to be cleaned just in case your super picky aunt looks in it?

Where are you willing to lower the tinsel covered bar?

What do you want to prioritize this holiday season? (3 things)

You get to choose what matters. When you don't try to do EVERYTHING, you leave more room for the things that matter to you and your family.

When you're not running around CRAZY you have more time to connect, you have more time to listen. Then the holidays have more chance of actually feeling like a holiday rather than just a massive hurdle to jump over.

When your kids jingle your bells. - CREATE a CALMER holiday season.

DAY 10:

MISSING LOVED ONES

Not all holidays are happy ones. I got a leaflet through the mail, and it talked about a little girl being upset as her Granddaddy wouldn't speak to her over Christmas.

When you turned the page, it told you that the reason that he wasn't speaking to her was because of the stage of his dementia.

Many kids also carry the burden of loved ones lost, be that humans or pets and feel the pain of that in the holidays.

It's so easy to think that a kid needs to enjoy the holidays as there is so much fun planned, but remember that your kid/kids might be dealing with big emotions of loss as we go through the holidays.

In the book 'Prayers from the Heart,' by Lorna Byrne Lorna writes 'Another time, a child will cry and cry, or the child will become what some parents call bold, but they are not really.

They are only trying to express the hurt and pain they are feeling, so don't forget to talk to the children about the loss...'

Has your child experienced a loss this year?

How can you deal with that with sensitivity over the holidays?

Sending you love and strength.



DAY 11:

MAC 'N' CHEESE HOLIDAY SEASON

Let this be the holidays you let go of traditions and say to yourself 'What do I really want?'

I imagine there are so many families in America, during the holidays that have all these expectations about what their kids should eat, do and behave.

Listen, most kids don't even like turkey and all the trimmings. I have 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, I have like 11 kids coming to my house, and I bought a massive tray of mac 'n' cheese, frozen mac 'n' cheese.

My girlfriend was like 'Lisa, you're serving mac 'n' cheese?'

I said 'Well I am, 'cause listen, kids aren't going to like anything, well maybe some will... but they don't like mashed potatoes. Kids don't love stuffing. They just don't want these kinds of things typically.

So rather than wait until they eat seven pieces of pie and then get mad at them, let them eat mac 'n' cheese, right?'

Why are we gonna wait until kids say 'I don't want mashed potatoes' and then be angry when they eat seven pieces of pie? You know?

I REALLY want people to release the expectations about how ALL of us should be behaving.

The holidays are supposed to be enjoyable, and it's like we do everything we can to make sure not only WE have a horrible time, but EVERYBODY ELSE does too.

You DO YOU!

You do it the way you wanna do it!

Have a mac 'n' cheese celebration day if you want. No judgment and happy holidays!



DAY 12:

THE 3 PS OF THE HOLIDAYS

Today I want to share with you 3 Peaceful Parenting Tips for the Holidays.

Each of them begins with P, so here they are,

the three Ps for the holiday season...

Pace the days - don't make them non-stop crazy from start to end. That's just like a racing car burning around the track too fast. Without heading into the pit-stop, a tire is going to BLOW. You don't have to see EVERYONE and do EVERYTHING. Take some time to slow down.

Progress, not perfection. (that's one of the peaceful parenting mantras) Perfect is fine for the magazines, but you're not in a magazine.

When you read about all the things the magazines suggest you should do ask yourself, do I really need to?

And then 'do I really want to?' and if you don't want to, then don't.

Just as your home doesn't need to be perfect, your kid doesn't need to be either.

They're not going to morph into some perfectly behaved kid just cause it's a particular time of year or day of celebration. They're going to have good moments and not so good moments, (don't we all! :-)) which takes me to number 3...

Presence - pick the good moments you want to focus on and remember. The whole day may not go smoothly (that's too tall an order). Your child may have a storm of emotion. Gift yourself with presence so you can notice those little moments when things are going fine.

Those are the ones to remember.

So to recap:

Pace the days.

Progress not perfection

Presence - pick the moments to focus on.

DAY 13:

CONVERSATION STARTERS

What if you decided that you were not going to look at your phones over a celebration meal and were instead going to do that old-fashioned thing called having a conversation?

Blank stares?

Where do we begin?

OK, lemme help. Here are some conversation starters for your mealtime. People can pass if they want to.

When did something turn out much better than you expected?

Where did you have your most favorite meal of all time?

Where will you travel to one day and why?

What will you be famous/remembered for?

If you were able to invent anything, what would you develop?

You have \$1M to give to charity. How would you use the money?

You get to choose a super-power. What would your super-power be and why?

Name one of the kindest people you have ever met and say what they did that was kind.

Who inspires you and why?

What's the funniest story you like to tell?

Talk about a time where you got found out but were forgiven in the end.

Make a playlist of three songs to create the start of a beautiful day.

What is your favorite kids' movie and why?

If you were to create a Pixar film what would yours be about?

What color just doesn't suit you and is there a time you had to wear that color?

If you were to design a school uniform, what would it look like?

You can start ANY kind of club at school or homeschool. What kind of club would that be?

If your pet was able to talk for one day, what questions would you ask it?

You get to create a dream garden. What does it look like?

If you were to be a record breaker, which record would you break?

What is your favorite holiday song and why?

What are your favorite 3 kids' books and why?

Invent a new kind of candy.

You are tasked with creating a healthy meal that kids will like. What do you cook?

You can travel anywhere in the world for lunch and arrive there and back in a moment. Where would you go for lunch and why?



DAY 14:

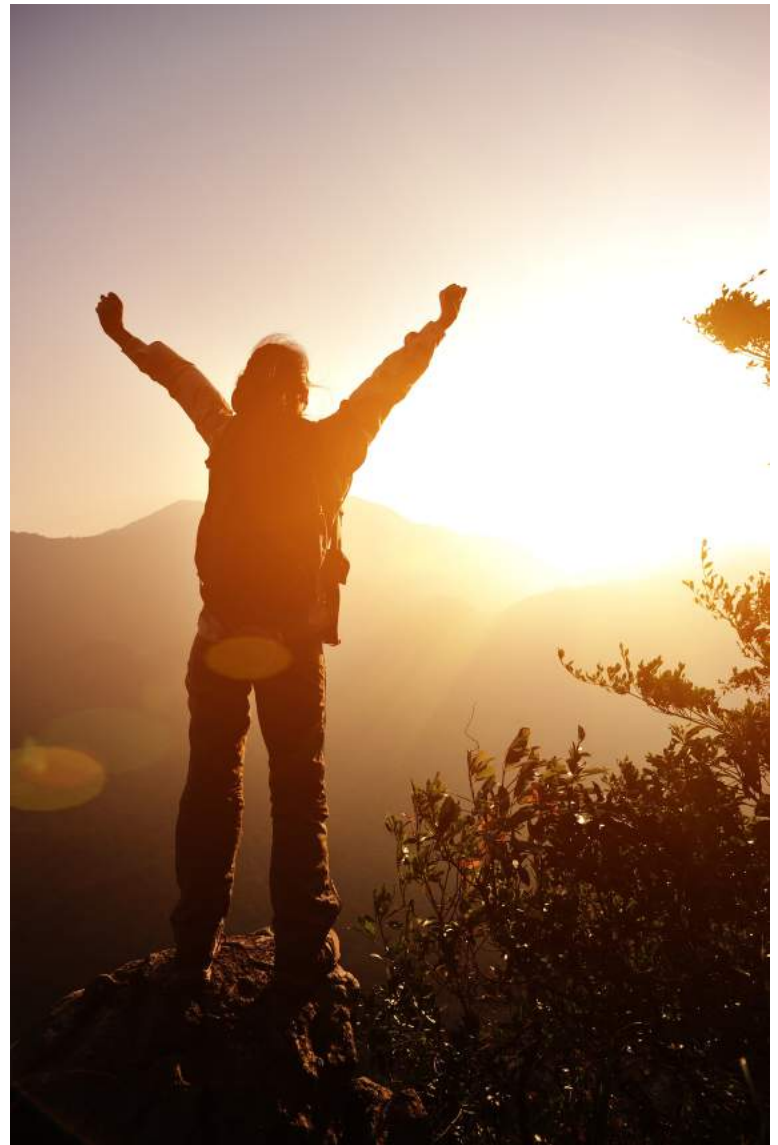
ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Thank you.

Two little words that mean a whole lot...

Thank you:

For reading this holiday guide
For being part of The Peaceful Parenting Community
For considering the possibility of change for your family
For that moment you catch yourself before you yell
For that moment you catch yourself before you shame them
For taking that big deep breath to calm yourself
For counting to ten
For going out of the room and saying why you need to go out of the room
For getting yourself the drink of water
For going to bed and getting some rest, even though you want to numb things out one way or another
For navigating relationships when the sea gets stormy
For never giving up
For pacing things at a speed that everyone can keep up with
For doing the things that get no thanks
For repeatedly doing the things that get no thanks
For being there in the darkest moments
For witnessing their light
For believing that you can change
For trusting that even when you get things wrong, you can start again
For asking the questions
For asking the hard questions
For setting the intentions
For doing your best
For failing and deciding not to make that mean that you are a failure



For when you say sorry
For when you accept an apology
For opening the door to communication after it's been slammed
For the visits to the doctors, dentist and the hospital
For being woken in the night
For the hugs and the cuddles
For helping Santa Claus
For caring about how things are
For all you do
For all you are
For all you care

Thank you.

DAY 15:

INEXPENSIVE FAMILY ACTIVITIES

The holidays can cost a whole load of money if you don't keep track of things. This can lead to regrets come January.

Today the challenge is to come up with a list of activities that your family can enjoy together that don't cost a ton of money.

Here are some ideas:

A walk somewhere new.

Using the craft kits that the kids were given as presents for birthdays or at the holidays.

Activities on The Artful Parent website -> artfulparent.com

Make a pizza or get a pizza base and top it together.

Have a sundae party - get different kinds of ice creams, fruit and toppings and everyone makes their own sundae. Kids can design a dream sundae if you draw a big outline of a sundae glass.

Jigsaws and board games

Learn some card games

Chocolate coin hunt. (not a good idea if you have dogs, as chocolate is poisonous for them)

Activities on Red Ted art website --> redtedart.com

Learn a holiday song together.

Junk modeling.

Bake something (packet mixes count!).

Find out if your local library or museum has low-cost or no-cost activities over the holidays.

Watch a movie and hold a film critic panel the next day.

Try an experiment featured on The DadLab YouTube channel. -> thedadlab.com

Make a holiday playlist together.

Have fun!



Oh, and remember, if you make something the end product doesn't have to look great or taste great. It's the making that matters.

Try not to do it all for your child, so it looks lovely and neat. We all know that you're great at coloring within the lines. ;-)

DAY 16:

COZY BY THE FIRE - BOOKS AND HOT CHOCOLATE

Yesterday you got together a list of activities you could do together over the holidays.

Today my suggestion is to get a holiday book basket and choose some fun books to read together over the holiday period. They don't all have to be holiday related books, just books that you'd like to take time to connect with.

You can go to your library and ask the librarian for some recommendations.

You can look through the books you already have and pick some out.

You can look for second-hand books that are in great condition.

There are online resources that can help you make good picks. Oh, and mamas and dads deserve to have their own reading baskets too.

Bookspiration

Podcast: Read Aloud Revival with Sarah Mackenzie - the podcast covers all sorts of topics relating to reading aloud, and there is also this Christmas book guide --

> <https://readaloudrevival.com/christmas/>

Booktube channel: The British Children's Author, Robin Stevens shares her monthly picks HERE --

> <http://bit.ly/robinstevens>

Grown-up Bookspiration

Modern Mrs. Darcy's Podcast entitled 'What Should I Read Next?' --> <https://modernmrsdarcy.com/what-should-i-read-next/>

Once you've got your books together all you need is a lovely cup of hot chocolate, and you're all set!

P.S. If you're not into reading you could also make up a movie list or go through the TV guide together and pick out 3 things to watch as a family.



DAY 17:

ASK ME LATER

Isn't it weird how as parents we think we're meant to know all the answers straight away?

So our kid asks about where the boundary line is, about how long they can stay out, about whether they can do that thing you're not sure about, about if that friend can come over ...

And we're somehow meant to know without ANY hesitation what the right way forward is.

It's as though someone is meant to have handed us this big rule book or guide when we became a parent. The big parenting guidebook covers absolutely every eventuality and tell you just what to do that will lead to the BEST outcome for everyone involved.

Did your big parenting guidebook arrive in the mail get?

Nope, mine neither.

Maybe they got lost?

Truth is NO-ONE gets a guide that has it all covered.

And so here we are...

Just humans muddling along sometimes, trying to do the best thing when we don't always know all the answers when we can't be sure just how things are gonna turn out.

Try this on for size:

'I don't know right now. Can you ask me later?'

Or how about this:

'Ask me when I pick you up from basketball. I'll have a better answer then.'

Wow, these are freeing let me tell you!

Truth is, you DON'T need to have all the answers straight away.

Missing the red-hot moment is OK. You can revisit a topic at any time. You can visit it multiple times until your kid understands.

You can say when you need more time to figure things out because sometimes life gets complicated and things need thinking over.

Allow yourself the time you need.

DAY 18:

ANGER IS A BEACON

I used to say things like 'You make me so ANGRY!' and then through all my work learning about conscious parenting, I learned that the other person wasn't making me angry.

The anger was happening inside of me, and it was because my triggers were being triggered, my buttons were being pressed.

I used to feel so guilty for being angry.

I used to think that the fact that I got angry made me a bad mom.

But anger is an emotion that's going to come up at times for all of us.

It's not the getting angry that is the problem. It's what you do with that anger that is the issue.

Your children will storm.

You will storm.

Sometimes things will get really messy, no matter how well you planned things and how many snacks you packed.

I'd like to open up the possibility for you that ANGER IS A BEACON.

Anger helps you to see that the person who is being angry is in some way not having their needs met.

Anger is the lava spewing from the volcano. The feelings and needs are at the base of the volcano. They are the cause of the eruption. Getting beneath the anger to the feelings and needs below is the way forward to a calmer family home.

So when you feel anger ask:

What am I needing?

What am I not getting?

You can't be there for kids if you're not there for yourself first.

If your child feels angry, check in with what they might be needing. This doesn't mean you have to give them everything they want. You might be surprised that when you ask these questions about your child that the REAL answer to what they need isn't what you first thought it way.

You may have thought it was all about wanting the toy in Target.

But when you dig down, you find that their real need was rest and some more connection with you.

What do they need?

What is the unmet need?

What do I need?

What is my unmet need?

This is important work mama/dad and if you want to do more that's the kind of thing we cover in The Peaceful Parenting Academy.



DAY 19:

FOMO IS NOT YOUR FRIEND

FOMO stands for 'fear of missing out.'

Today, I'd like to encourage you to look at your calendar or your to-do list and look at those things you have planned just because of a fear of missing out.

Ask yourself:

'Do I really want to do this thing?'

'Do I really have to do this thing?'

'Would it be OK not to go to X?'

'Would it be OK to do X instead of Y?'

'What if my partner did X and I did Y?'

'What if asked for or paid for some help with X?'

'Did I really enjoy that last year?'

'Is there an alternative that we could arrange that wouldn't offend people but would be more manageable?'

Sometimes we think we have to go to ALL the holiday events. I'm inviting you to question whether that is true.

What if the FOMO was about missing out on:

Unstructured time

Time for Rest

Time for connection

Time alone



DAY 20:

THE TEACHER TRICK SHE FORGOT

One of the amazing mamas that I work with in The Peaceful Parenting Academy realized that she had been forgetting a trick that she used when she was a teacher.

I want to share it with you today.

She was forgetting to 'catch them when they're good.'

I get it, it feels easier to tell your kids about the times when they're not doing what they should be doing. Those snow prints all over the kitchen floor aren't so great.

Yet when you notice and point out when your kid is doing something great it:

Helps them feel proud about their accomplishment.
Makes the great behavior more likely to happen in the future.
Builds a positive culture in the classroom or at home.
Stops your kid seeing themselves as 'the bad kid who can never do anything right.'

So catch them when they are good.

And when they are, use DESCRIPTIVE PRAISE. So say exactly what they did well.

'You put the dolls away so carefully' is much more useful than 'good job!'

Try it, you might be surprised.

DAY 21:

CHARLIE BROWN'S CHRISTMAS

'A Charlie Brown Christmas,' is a classic animation from 1965. In the film, Charlie Brown is pretty upset about how commercialized Christmas has become. Charlie wants Christmas to be about togetherness rather than about gifts and winning the lights and display competition (that Snoopy is entered in.)

If your Christmas wasn't about getting presents or about being seen to stage the 'best Christmas,' what would you want it to be about?

And on the same Charlie Brown theme:

When I think about Charlie Brown, I remember the teacher's voice.

Do you remember how it goes 'mwa, mwa, mwa...'?

Charlie and his classmates are not listening to the teacher, and so all she says becomes unintelligible.

When your kid is tired or hungry or emotional or distracted, and you talk to him or her, you sound exactly like Charlie Brown's teacher.

'Mwa, mwa, mwa...'

I'm sorry to break it to you.

It doesn't even help if you yell.

Then it becomes 'MWA, MWA, MWA!'

The way to stop sounding like Charlie Brown's teacher?

Wait until your child is calm. Wait until they are ready to listen. Wait until they feel safe, secure and connected with you.

My coaching work: I help mamas and dads not to sound like Charlie Brown's teacher. :-)



DAY 22:

PUNISHING FROM THE MIDDLE BRAIN IS A DISASTER

In that moment... you're all wound up, you're frazzled, you've had it UP TO HERE.

You were punished when you were a kid, and that old pattern comes back like horrible 1970s wallpaper. (the brown and orange swirly pattern kind)

So you say no more TV all week, you take away the electronics, you forbid them from seeing their friends, you ground them for a year, you cancel the music lessons....

You become the scary dominant parent that maybe you hated or were afraid of yourself as a child.

Your kid doesn't learn a lesson from this.

Did you?

Did you sit up there in your room thinking 'I sure am glad that my parents took away my TV time as that gives me time to think of the error of my ways?'

Or did you think something like:

'I hate them. They are always out to get me, and they never understand me.'

Punishment doesn't work.
Limits do.

Peaceful parenting isn't about permissive parenting.

You set out what the limits are in advance.



DAY 23:

THE DO-OVER

So it's all gone horribly wrong, and you've been the scary dominating parent that you promised yourself that you wouldn't be anymore.

You promised yourself that you wouldn't yell and that you'd take the time to understand what your child was feeling and needing....

And then all hell broke loose...

Instead of beating yourself up and calling yourself the worst parent ever, allow yourself a do-over.

When everyone is feeling calm, introduce the concept of a do-over to your family.

If any of you mess up, you get to ask for a do-over.

You go through the same thing again, but this time you act in a way that you wish you had the first time around.

When I think of a do-over, I think of an action replay in football.

The first time you fail to score the goal.

The do-over is an amazing and unique kind of action replay where you go through the motions again, but this time you get to score the goal!

You act just the way you wished you had the first time, with patience and understanding and from your higher brain. (We talk a lot more about acting from different parts of the brain in The Peaceful Parenting Academy.)

So allow yourself a do-over when you need one. Allow your child do-overs too.



DAY 24:

ONE MORE SLEEP - THE SCARY TRUTH

So tonight a man with a beard who you have never met is going to climb down your chimney and come into your bedroom while you are asleep and then he's going to leave some unidentified parcels and stuff some things into your socks.

He's then going to go to the kitchen and eat a piece of your cake and drink some of your brandy and head off.

Excuse me?

A strange man is coming?

We sometimes expect that kids are going to LOVE all the magic of Christmas.

But sometimes all that magic can get a little overwhelming and scary. Ever seen a kid crying on the knee of Santa Claus in a department store?

Yup.

Sometimes the holidays get a bit much for all of us.

Take the holidays at a pace that suits you and your kids, and if they are not thrilled about aspects of it, that's OK.

If the big holiday movie is too scary, they don't need to watch it. If the man in the Santa suit freaks them out, you can go to the cafe instead.

Have the holidays YOU want to have, that YOUR kids want to have, not the one everyone is telling you that you should have.



DAY 25:

PRESENCE

If you're celebrating Christmas, I hope you got some great presents.

Today I also wish for you, presence.

I hope:

- You notice the great moment, even if there are stressful ones around them.
- You see your child's joy, even in moments
- You look at the faces around you and appreciate all you can.
- You take some moments for yourself.

What does presence this holiday season look like for you?

What can you do to feel present today?

What one thing can you do for YOURSELF that will help you to enjoy the day more?

DAY 26:

PEACE

What would peace in your home look like?

You can tap into the feeling of what this would be like by completing what Life Coach, Martha Beck calls 'The Ideal Day Exercise.'

Write about a peaceful day in your home from morning to night, noticing each and every detail.

Don't be worried that your current life is nothing like this. Allowing yourself to imagine how things could be is an essential step towards the future that you desire.

Tap into that day using each of your senses.

What can you see?
What can you hear?
What can you smell?
What do you taste?
What can you touch?

Where do you start your day?

What sounds can you hear as you start your day?

How do you greet your children in the morning?

If you have a partner how do you greet your partner?

How well rested are you?
What do you eat for breakfast?

How does the school run go?

Take yourself through each and every aspect of how you would like your peaceful family home to be.

What does a peaceful bedtime look like?

How are you looking after yourself so that you are well-resourced?

You can write all of this down in the present tense, or you can visualize it. Either way is great.

You can repeat this exercise whenever you want to as you make progress towards the goal of a peaceful family home.

Then ask yourself, 'What is one tiny step that I can take toward making that peaceful family day my reality?'

Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither was a peaceful family home.



DAY 27:

CODE WORD LEMONS

This code-word isn't a James Bond spy's code!

When I'm about to blow my top, when the volcano of anger starts bubbling with lava, we now have a code-word.

Our code-word is LEMONS.

When any of us says 'lemons,' we are letting the others know that we've been triggered and we need some time to calm down and regroup.

Codeword lemons sometimes allows me to stop mid-sentence and walk right out of there before I say that thing that I'll really come to regret.

I regroup, I maybe wash my hands or get a drink of water. I calm down. I get back into my higher brain so I can deal with things once more.

What's your code word?



DAY 28:

WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING, YOU'RE MODELING

Sometimes when I look back, I need to chuckle about how I used to see things.

You see, when I first found out about conscious parenting, I thought that this 'model the behavior' thing was entirely new.

I thought 'I'm going home and test-drive this stuff. Look at me modeling a good way of behaving.' It's like I was testing out a new household appliance.

What makes me chuckle is what was lost on me back then.

I didn't realize that I had been modeling behavior all along, right from when Malcolm was a baby.

I had been modeling both good and bad behavior.

We are the ultimate mentor for our kids. We are the ultimate role models, and at any point, we can decide to mentor new stuff.

We can model acceptance and equality of all races, we can model kindness, we can model giving.

It's all up to us.

Now we're so far down this path that my kid models for me too.

He's not afraid to show his love to me. If we're open, we can allow our kids to model to us too. We have so much to learn from them. It's not a one-way street.

So if Oprah ever asks me to sit down on her Super Soul Sunday couch (Oprah, if you're reading this, I love you!), I'd be talking about how whatever we do we're modeling for our kids. We're shaping the good and the bad, and in a lot of ways we get to choose what we show them.

DAY 29:

HAVE YOU BEEN SETTING RESOLUTIONS?

Those ones where you promise yourself that you'll stop eating chocolate when the going gets tough and that you'll meditate twice a day and hit the yoga mat multiple times per week?

You even buy some mala beads because they're SURE to help.... Then they end up in the dressing-up box. :-)

Maybe you promise yourself that this year coming is the one where you're going to stop yelling at your kid.

You're going to be calm whatever they throw at you. (and sometimes they might throw things at you for real).

Mama/Dad, I love you for your warm heart and your hope that you can make things better.

But you see, there's a problem with resolutions....

As any gym member will know January is a hectic time at the gym and by February everything's back to normal.

All those people who had the best of intentions, who bought the work-out gear give up and go back to their old patterns. They feel pretty bad about themselves and that they didn't make the fundamental change that they promised to themselves.

When you set yourself up and say 'I'm never going to get triggered by my kid,' you're setting the bar too high for any human.

You're going to get triggered.

You just need to build new patterns to help you to act differently in challenging situations and circumstances.

This is what I help mamas do.

Together we figure out new ways for them to address old issues.

They don't have to morph into some perfect robot mom.

They get to be themselves, in challenging situations. They get to be a great mom even if they had a childhood that makes parenting much harder than it needs to be.

So what would be possible for you if instead of making parenting resolutions, you instead started a parenting REVOLUTION and changed the way that you parented from the ground up?

With help and support, you don't have to be the mama who feels like she's failing over and over.

You don't have to spend all your time comparing yourself to the moms who seem like they've got it all together.

You get to be the together mom, in your own way, an authentic true to you, one-of-a-kind kind of way that's just right for you and your kid or kids.

If you're ready for this revolution, you can sign up for the next round of the Peaceful Parenting Academy here.

I'm ready for change, Lisa. I'm in! >>
bit.ly/peacefulparentacademy



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DAY 30:

END OF YEAR MAMA/DAD JOURNALING PROMPTS

What happy moments did your kid have that YOU will remember?

What happy moments did your kid have that THEY will remember?

Think of any time where you grew in patience.

Think of any time you brought about more connection in your family.

Think of the various times you supported your child in their interests and the difference that made.

Think of your contribution to the family as a whole.

Think of your contribution to the family home as a whole.

Where did you put others first?

Where did you take the time to care for yourself (that's important too, even if it's hard to believe it)

Where did you save things or do-over after it all went wrong?

When did you forgive them?

When did you forgive yourself?

When did you seek out a new or different way of doing things when what you were doing wasn't working?

If you find it hard to think of yourself positively when you think of yourself as a mom, it's good to notice that this is part of what's going on. One way of dealing with this is to start a gentle practice of seeing what you ARE doing well.

You can get a special notebook and catch yourself when you're being a good parent and make a note in your book when that happens. You can use it every evening in the way some people use a gratitude journal.

Ask yourself:

What parenting moment was I proud of today?

What have I learned as a parent today?



DAY 31:

HOW'D IT GO?

I hope you've found this holiday guide a helpful resource. I'd love to hear your feedback on it and about how you found it useful.

You can email me at LS@thepeacefulparent.com

Let me know about any wins and any ways that you were kinder to yourself or your children.

Let me know about any ways that you chose to be a more peaceful parent with a more peaceful home.

Thank you!

IT'S 2019! DAY 1:

WHAT WE'RE GONNA DO....

Today's challenge is to write a family 'bucket-list' for the year ahead. What adventures are you going to go on?

If you'd like more help with your parenting and to work with me to create YOUR peaceful family home, you can find out more about The Peaceful Parenting Academy HERE --
> <http://bit.ly/peacefulparentacademy>

Wishing you a fantastic holiday season and a very happy 2019!

Happy New Year!

