

October 2018

teach | play | love

NANNY MAGAZINE



FINDING YOUR WHY

A GUIDE TO THE PERFECT NANNY SHARE

ADVANCING YOUR CAREER

THE LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY: A NANNY'S CANCER STORY

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Editor's Note

"I love those who can smile in trouble, who can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink, but they whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves their conduct, will pursue their principles unto death."

Leonardo da Vinci

2018 is coming to a close, even though as I write this we are in the middle of a heat spell here in Philadelphia. The funny thing about publishing a magazine is that you are always looking to the future. This issue covers the three-month span that will include fall and winter, the holidays, and the time we all set aside at the end of the year to think about what our goals are that lie ahead and reflect back on the challenges we've overcome. It's hard sometimes to not think about the things that brought us to where we are now.

This is the first themeless issue since NM started publishing in 2014, but if I had to choose a theme that can apply to a number of articles in this issue, it's this: resilience. Resilience is something we need as nannies for our careers and for life in general. The curveballs we are likely to experience are plenty: broken-down cars and near misses with life and death catastrophes, changes in careers, moves to new cities, the loss of important people and loved ones, and having to navigate the roadmap of life without the guiding stars we've once depended on. These are all things that happened to me in 2018, but still I know that I gathered strength from what I lived through. Resilience (and, okay, I can't lie, a few tearful days spent in bed to gain clarity and perspective) got me through it.

There's so much inspiration in this issue that I can't wait to share with you. We hear from a nanny who battled and beat cancer not once, but twice, drawing strength from her NannyFamily to see her through to healthy days. Talk about inner strength! Australian agency owner Louise Dunham shares what it takes to effectively nanny share, a task that most certainly requires a tremendous amount of discipline from all parties involved. Beth O'Keefe shares a deeply personal essay about how life experiences have shaped her and made her an amazing and seasoned nanny (don't you dare call her senior!). Kim Votruba-Matook of the Artful Educator asks nannies to think critically about what motivates them, or, as she calls it, "finding your 'why.'" We also get some advice from Stephanie Felzenberg about deciding whether to stay in this often-isolating and lonely line of work. To balance things out, Marie Chir brings us a lighthearted look at potty training, and Kimberly Lehman brings us tips on throwing a killer Halloween party (so good it's scary).

2018 was a fantastic year for NM. We hope it was a fantastic year for you as well. Follow our journey on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. We love hearing from you as always. As we look ahead, we wish you a wonderful and warm holiday season, and we'll see you in 2019!

Jennifer Kuhn
Publisher

Nannies Ask

Stephanie Felzenberg of Be the Best Nanny Newsletter tackles nanny isolation in this issue.

Dear Stephanie,

I feel really alone in my job. None of my friends or family understand what it's like to be a nanny. I love my job, but I hate feeling like nobody understands me. Coupled with not having any co-workers, I just don't know what to do. Should I look into another career field?

-Lone Nanny

Dear Lone Nanny

I am sorry you feel lonely and misunderstood. I think you need to make a concerted effort to meet local nannies, au pairs, and parents so you won't feel so lonely. While attending activities with your charges, such as storytime at the library, music and gym classes, or at school, ask other caregivers if they would like to meet you and your charges at the playground, zoo, children's museum, or for lunch. While the children play, you will also enjoy socializing with other caregivers.

If you found your job via a nanny placement agency, ask the agency staff for a list of contact information for other nannies they placed in your area. Also search online for nanny support groups in your city. There are dozens of nanny groups nationwide that meet for social outings and organize training opportunities. Once you make friends with local nannies and au pairs you can invite them out to socialize after work or on days off.

Attending nanny conferences such as Nannypalooza and the International Nanny Association meetings can be inspiring. Not only will you be able to attend workshops, you will meet dozens of other nannies who intimately understand the challenges of working as a nanny. Also consider joining nanny groups on Facebook to find support from others who understand the demands of working as a nanny. Always use caution when sharing personal information, and be sure to respect your employer's confidentiality, on social media.

Whether you meet other nannies in town, at local nanny support groups, at national conferences, or on social media, there are plenty of nannies who understand the unique challenges you experience working as an in-home childcare provider. Make the first step by putting yourself out there and you will find there are plenty of nannies willing and able to offer you both friendship and support.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Felzenberg



Photo via Pexels.

Divorce is difficult on everyone it touches, but research shows that it is especially hard on children, particularly with research emerging about adverse childhood events and the lingering affects well into adulthood.¹ We reached out to our Facebook followers to collect their wisdom about how nannies going through this difficult situation can cope, helping their charges to adjust and keeping family life as close to on-track as possible.

“Stay as neutral as possible. Respect both parents but always act in the best interest of the children. You are their constant!”

Lauren Farren (Wilmington, NC, 7 years as a nanny)

“Pretending like nothing is going on only confuses and hurts the child as they are very aware of the slightest change. When it comes to the parents, stay out of the divorce. You can listen when they vent but don't give your opinion as it can come back to harm you and the relationship between the parents and children.”

Vanessa Garcia (Costa Mesa, CA, 9 years as a nanny)
“My second NannyFamily went through a divorce.

The twins were three at the time. I basically was like another parent. My best advice is to be the constant with the kids. Let them know you are there and will be there for as long as they need you! It is tough but they need the support.”

Trish Wright-Kelly (Houston, TX, 22 years as a nanny)

“I was with a family going through a high-conflict divorce and the biggest advice I can give is to make sure to take care of yourself. As nannies, we want to fix things, but this is out of our control. I would often be burnt out at the end of the day being a nanny in such a high-conflict setting. Nanny burnout became real.”

Meghan Jackson (Dallas, TX, 7 years as a nanny)

“My best piece of advice is to state from the beginning that you don't want to know anything unless it involves the child. Their divorce is none of your business, so just don't get involved. The only people who really know what's going on in a marriage are the two people in the marriage. Your focus is being there for the child.”

Jessica Dooley (Los Angeles, CA, 6 years as a nanny)

Source: Chapman DP, Dube SR, Anda RF. Adverse Childhood Events as Risk Factors for Negative Mental Health Outcomes. *Psychiatric Annals*. 2007;37(5).

Advance Your Nanny Career with a Childcare Diploma and Certification

BY ELIZABETH MALSON

As a single mom, I have been blessed with wonderful nannies who went above and beyond to enhance my life and care for my son. That said, I remember one incident with a childcare worker that changed the course of my life and the way I look at the nanny profession. Several years ago, I hired an experienced live-in nanny, but on my first business trip after hiring her, I experienced every mother's worst nightmare. My son was missing.



Photo via Pexels.



When I called the daycare to check on my son, I learned he wasn't there. I couldn't reach my nanny, so I called the police. Thankfully, my son was found safe. The nanny decided to keep him home without telling me or the daycare. Her phone wasn't nearby, so she didn't hear my calls. After sharing this experience with other moms, I realized I wasn't alone in the struggle to trust someone with my most precious thing in life: my child. In my time as a educator and executive with the Amslee Institute, I have come across families with amazing stories about nannies who have helped them be better parents, but many of these same families have also struggled with in-home child care. In turn, I hope to share the lessons I have learned in hopes of strengthening the nanny's position as a top-ranked childcare option so that families and nannies alike can rest assured that the highest-quality care is delivered. The biggest takeaway, as both a parent and a business owner, is that when it comes to childcare, qualifications matter.



Clear Qualifications Benefit Nannies and Families

Nannies and babysitters are not government-regulated positions, so nannies aren't legally required to have licensing or training the way teachers and daycare workers are, for example. Advanced training and mastery of practical and communication skills qualifies nannies for premium jobs and higher wages. My company, Amslee Institute, offers nanny-specific childcare programs to help families understand the differences between babysitters, family assistants, and professional nannies, and provides clear qualifications and work experience requirements to ease the hiring process.

A first for a nanny training program, Amslee Institute is licensed by the Department of Education, Florida Commission of Independent Education, 5951.

A Free Newsletter for Nannies

In support of the childcare community, Amslee Institute publishes a weekly article educating childcare providers and families on tips and information to better care for children. Amslee also hosts Facebook Live seminars on childcare issues; anyone can watch and submit questions to our college faculty or agency partners.

Amslee Institute is also a 2018 sponsor for Nannypalooza, a two-day national conference with training and community events being held in Philadelphia. In addition to sponsoring the event, Amslee Institute is also teaching a course and workshop on stress management.



By Ashley Miller

Finding the Perfect NannyFamily

As a nanny, finding the perfect NannyFamily (sometimes referred to as the “unicorn family” on social media) can be daunting, especially if you aren’t sure what to look for. Your interview is the best opportunity during the hiring and negotiation process to look for clues as to how you may enjoy your job if hired. The family should sense your confidence and experience as you look for key attributes; after all, they are also being interviewed. That said, what are some key questions you can ask during the interview process to ensure you have found the perfect NannyFamily?

Here is a short list of questions to ask when searching for the right fit:

How are the children doing in school?

Allow the parents to talk about their child. How do they view their child and his or her performance at school? You want to look for an honest evaluation with a positive outlook. Parents who only say good things about their child will expect the same from you, causing the child to have an illusion of perfection. On the other hand, parents who only offer negative comments about their child will cause damage to the child's self-image. You want to look for a balance where honesty and positivity are both present.

How do you handle compensation?

Nanny pay and benefits are often overlooked in the initial stages of the interview process. If these details are not communicated, there will be confusion and possibly awkward conversations in the future. Being compensated on the record is important not

only to you but to the family as well. Nanny taxes must be discussed early on, and if the family is not willing to pay on the record, proceed with caution. In fact, most advice is to not proceed at all. Look for the type of family that handles your compensation with honesty and integrity.

What does the child like to do for fun?

Your goal in asking this type of question is to allow the parent and the child to not only interact with each other but also with you, the potential nanny. It may not seem important in the interview process, but this aspect is key in understanding the level of love and respect the parents have toward their child. Allowing the child to speak and fully process his or her thoughts is a good indication that the parents are patient and nurturing.

How do you handle any misbehavior?

Positive rewards for good behavior rather than punishment for bad behavior is shown in early childhood development

studies to be much more effective in gaining the child's attention. At the center of every misbehaving child is a heart, and the goal is to reach the heart of the child as you care for him or her daily. Look for parents who feel the same way.

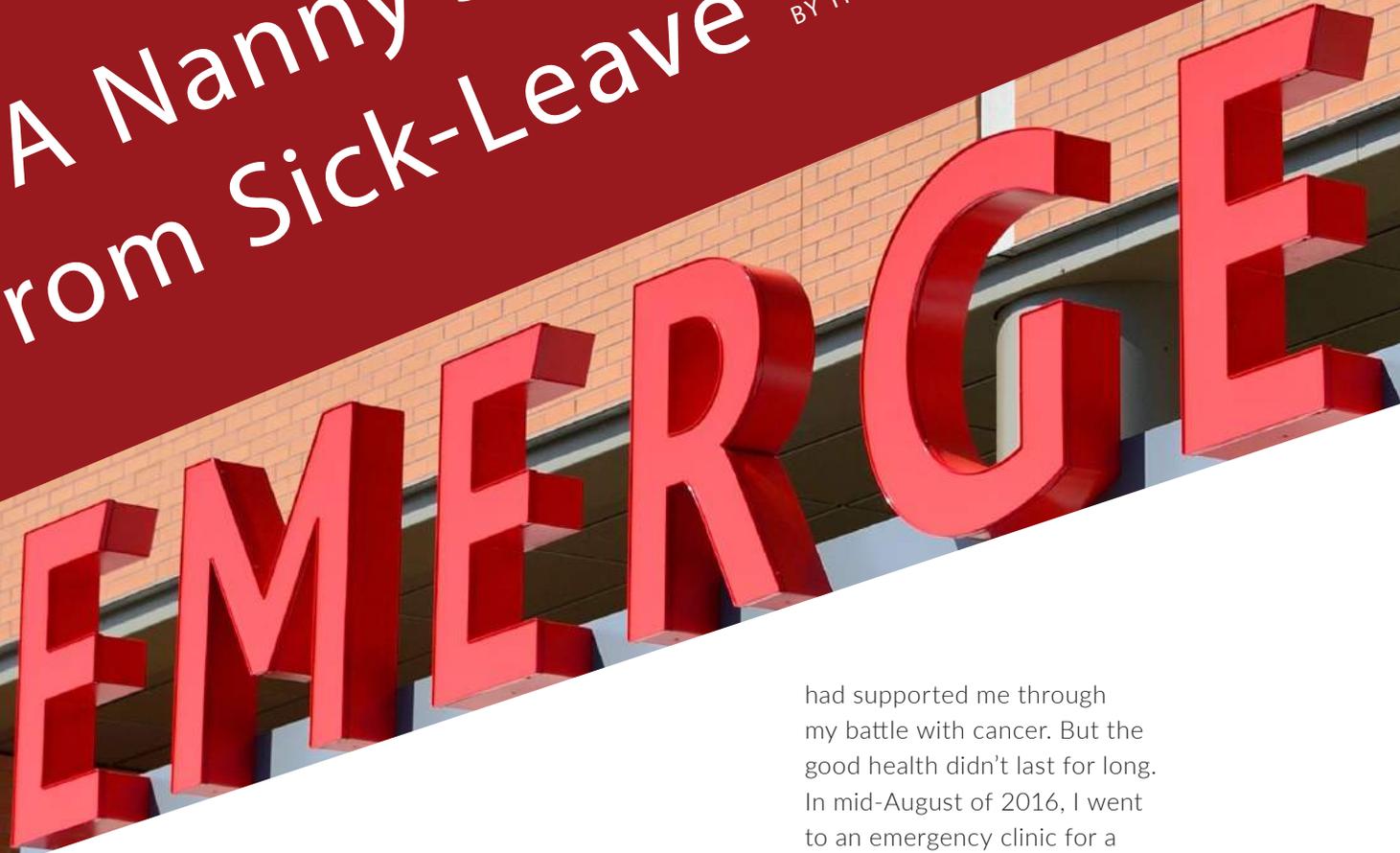
What do the child's teachers say about him or her?

Asking this type of question will allow the parent to talk about other authority figures in the child's life. Be suspicious if the parents only have negative remarks to make of the school or teachers and policies the school may have. Disgruntled parents who do not hold teachers in high regard will cause their children to also disrespect other authorities. If they don't respect others they may likewise be neglectful to respect you as their nanny.

Finding the perfect Nanny-Family is never an easy task as we all lack perfection, but with the right questions you will be on your way to finding the employer that is perfect for you!

A Nanny's Return from Sick-Leave

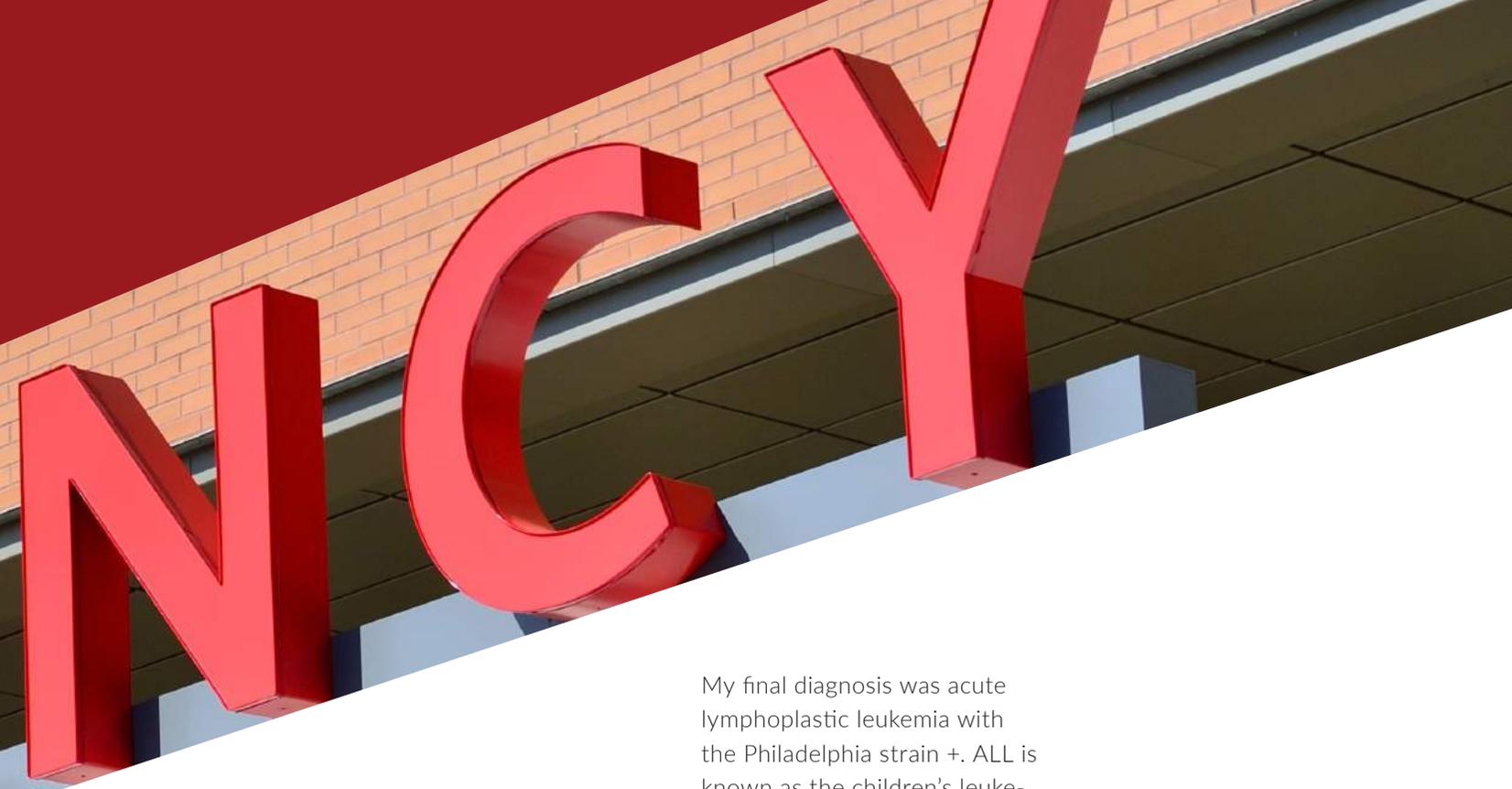
BY TRISH WRIGHT-KELLY



In August of 2010, I was diagnosed with papillary thyroid cancer. As an active nanny for three young children, this diagnosis changed my life. To manage the disease through surgery and radiation, I needed two weeks off. Throughout my disease, my NannyFamily was awesome. Before long I was declared cancer free.

Fast forward 6 years. Everything was going great both personally and professionally. I had gone back to work for the fantastic NannyFamily who

had supported me through my battle with cancer. But the good health didn't last for long. In mid-August of 2016, I went to an emergency clinic for a severe backache and was told to manage my pain with hot and cold compresses and pain medication. It seemed to work for a little while, but the backache returned with a vengeance a week later. At the emergency room that evening I could barely walk. Although my symptoms did not call for blood work, my doctor ordered the tests anyway; it turns out, these tests saved my life. My blood-work showed that I



had leukemia or lymphoma; the emergency room doctor told me she was sorry and transferred me to the main hospital's oncology department. I couldn't believe I was battling cancer for the second time in my life.

The first 24 hours after being admitted to the hospital were a blur. My husband called both of our families and broke the news. "Please, Lord, help me be strong," I prayed. I decided right then and there that I was going to beat cancer again. I had my three young charges looking up to me, after all.

My final diagnosis was acute lymphoblastic leukemia with the Philadelphia strain +. ALL is known as the children's leukemia, and the Philadelphia strain + affects only 2% of adults. Treatment would take me away from my charges and work for eight months, meaning I needed to take a leave of absence. I will never forget when my current boss and former boss came to visit me and spoke with my wonderful physician. My doctor explained everything to them and said, "Trish has taken care of your kids, and now it's your turn to take care of her." I was

ALL is known
as the children's
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so sad about not being able to be with my charges. Who would take care of them? Are they going to be afraid? We decided to tell the children that I was sick but I wanted to stress that I would get better soon. On top of being frightened over my health and well being, there are other practical matters to consider. When something like this happens, you worry about bills and expenses. Without working, how would I pay my expenses? I consider myself an incredibly lucky nanny; throughout this ordeal, my MomBosses were incredible, giving me a generous stipend to help cover my expenses. What a blessing!

My 8-month leave turned into 17 long months. My leukemia didn't go into remission right away and I had to have a stem cell treatment. Unfortunately, my wonderful sisters were not a match so I needed to find an unrelated donor. Thankfully, BE THE MATCH (an international program that brings donors and recipients together) found my donor in three weeks. He was from Germany! Yes, I had to go international! The program was able to have the stem cells

harvested from the donor, frozen, and shipped to where I was.

Everything is a blur in preparation for a transplant. I had to go to radiology oncology to have my body mapped with a permanent marker. Because of the procedure, I would be unable to see anyone for 130 days because they wiped out my immune system, so I made sure to visit my charges beforehand, knowing full well that I would miss them too much to wait for a visit until after the procedure. The transplant was a total success and I am happy to say I am in remission.

In November of 2017 my wonderful nurse practitioner, Gloria, said I would be able to return to work but asked me if I would consider changing careers. I told her no, without hesitation, and explained that when something is in your heart, you just can't stop doing it. January 8, 2018 was the best day in my career. I was able to return to work.
HAPPY

KIDS! HAPPY BOSSES! HAPPY NANNY!

I owe my health and happiness to too many people to thank and acknowledge, but I am especially grateful to Martha, my coworker (my NannyFamily's housekeeper) and partner in crime for stepping up and covering me. Hayley, my MomBosses' sister's nanny transported my charges and helped out when needed. Many people from my family, friends, and strangers also helped me through my journey. And lastly, for Jennifer and Leslie, who are the best MomBosses a nanny could ever ask for.

Cancer is no match for a nanny's love for the job and the children. I realize with every single smile how lucky I am to be here, enjoying life, and building precious memories with the people I love the most.

When
something
like this happens,
you worry about bills
and expenses.

Something precious

BETH COLEMAN O'KEEFE

In the past four years, I have moved four times, including once across the country from Massachusetts to California, and once back. This required leaving my home, jobs, friends, my church, and my boyfriend. It required packing. It required unpacking. More times, more stairs, more lifting than I ever want to do again. I have lost eight people that were precious to me, five of them to cancer. I spent an eight-month period virtually isolated. Still, I am one of those who tends to see life as an ongoing adventure. I won't lie to you: these last four years have been feeling less "adventurous" and more "ohmygoshareyoukiddingme?" Recently in a conversation with someone I am very close to who has shared some of these "adventures," I said, "You know, it's not the number of years that age you. It's LIFE."

LIFE is what also makes us good at our careers, and what enables us to say with an honest and easy grace to virtually every situation, "I understand; let me help." Moving, raising families, challenging jobs or unemployment, marriage, divorce, deaths, successes, and failures: life.

How many of you reading this article are connected to at least one nanny group on Facebook? I am willing to wager that most of you are. A show of hands now for those who are connected on more than one. . . For myself, I am a member of five different nanny groups online. Recently, I joined the newest one to pop up on my news feed, "Seasoned Nannies."

Earlier this year I turned 60. Five years ago, I fought joining AARP when their first ad slipped through my mail slot, because I was only 55 then and how dare they? I gave in this year, not because I acquiesced to

old age, but because of the discounts (okay, and the little gifts they send you. I got a Bluetooth speaker and a lunch bag. You?). My hair is shoulder-length, wavy, and still a natural honey-auburn, with one distinct white streak that I earned during a tornado visit that was a little too close to our home when I was 30 (and which you can only see if I am sporting a ponytail), and a few almost imperceptible random white hairs. I have great skin genes with virtually no wrinkles (but don't hate; I've got the beginnings of that turkey-neck thing going on). Most people ask me if the child in the stroller is my only child, or do I have others? I tell them, honestly and proudly, that I have five (they don't need to know that my own are full grown and some have kids of their own, am I right?). Any one of those five will enthusiastically reiterate that I will go into my declining years kicking and screaming (mostly because I think both kicking and screaming are kind of fun). So, I joined the Seasoned Nannies group because it was nice to connect with others who have also lived LIFE.

I do not resent the term "seasoned nannies" as I once did with AARP. "Seasoned" is more diplomatic than the politically correct "senior" as well as more eloquently descriptive. It speaks of not only experience, but also of tempering. It suggests something that we give into our work that is specific to that experience: seasoning. There's stuff that we know, from life that we have lived.

The Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary defines "seasoned" this way: "Having much experience and knowledge of a particular activity, and therefore knowing how to do it well."

It is not simply that we've taken care of kids for a long time, so we know all the verses to "The Wheels on the Bus" or how to change a diaper or which size Mickey Mouse bandage to apply. We are more than taxis, craft directors, human rocking chairs, or home librarians. Even younger, less-experienced nannies are more than this. We are Mom when she is not home. And in many, if not most cases, we are both Mom and Dad. But a seasoned nanny is the quintessential mom: she has seen it all, been through it all, done it all. She is the mom that the younger moms call up and ask what to do with a fever or a tantrum or her own sleep deprivation. She carries with her in her daily conversation and thoughts and busyness all the cumulative knowledge of her many years on the field and in the home—other people's homes, her home, your home. It is an office of responsibility and grace.

"Conduct yourself with wisdom in your interactions, make the most of each opportunity, treating it as something precious. Let your speech at all times be gracious and pleasant, seasoned..." Colossians 4:5-6 (The Amplified Bible).

I love this injunction in the way that it applies to the families we work with, because it reminds us that each opportunity is "something precious." Each family. Each child. We not only carry wisdom from a lifetime of seasoning but are challenged to behave in that wisdom and to intentionally conduct ourselves with that wisdom, to intentionally speak with grace and pleasantness. At all times.

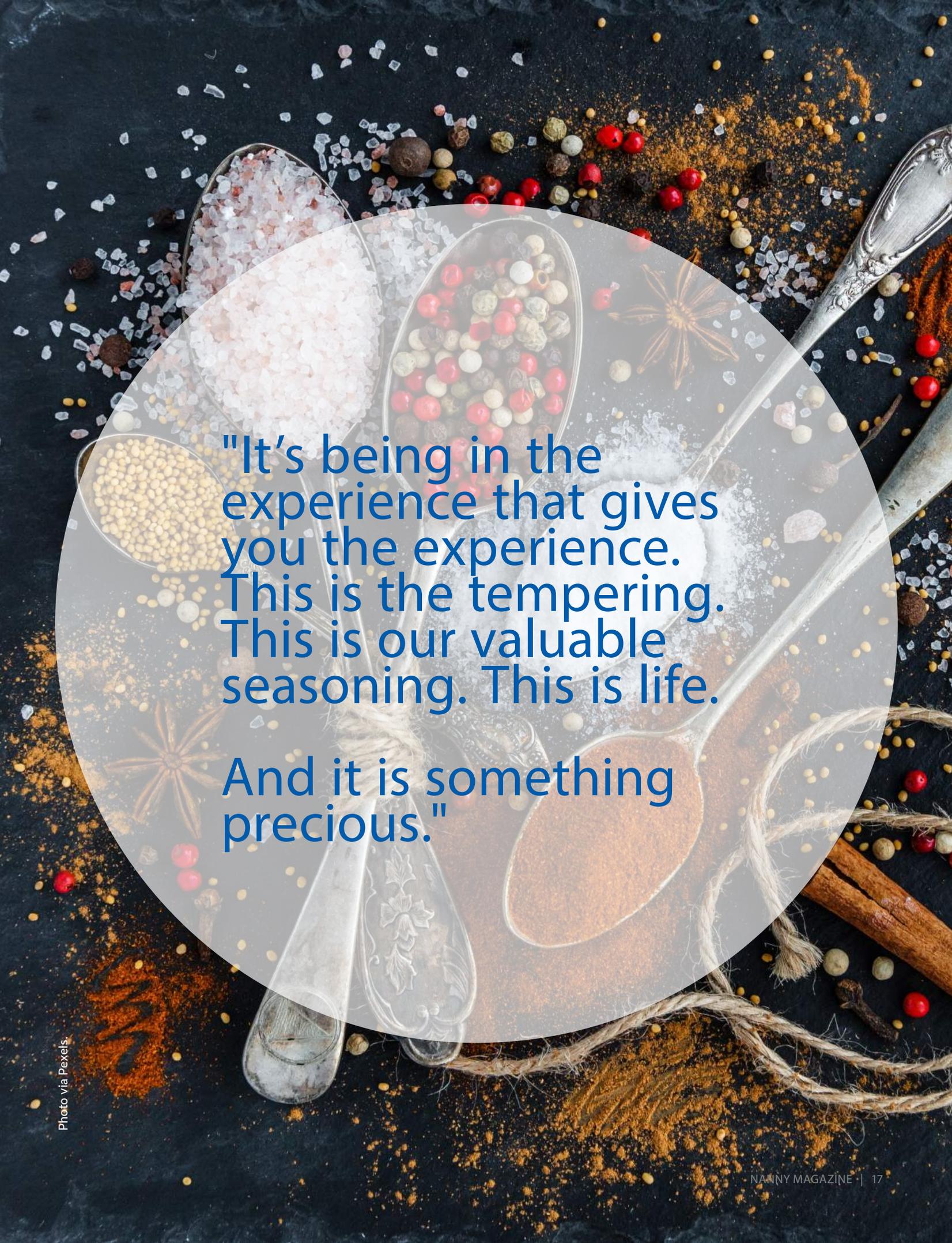
Some of our expertise comes from random experiences. In chatting with a fellow seasoned nanny over lunch today, she remarked how her MomBoss would never drive anywhere with her children alone out of worry that something might happen. Well, yeah. "Something" will happen eventually! This is how we find or make the resources that equip us to be resourceful. A few years ago, I was a nanny to a precious little boy who stole my heart for life. Some days, I brought him to my apartment for the day to play. At that time, I was living in a third-floor walk-up. He was not quite three and was almost fully potty-trained. I brought him there one day as some work was being done in his own house. His favorite game at that time was to vacuum and we brought his toy vacuum with us that day. The little man climbed up all those old

stairs with his Little Tykes vacuum to my apartment and immediately set to work superfluously polishing my long hallway from the living room to the kitchen, meticulously covering every square inch of floor in the guest and dining rooms and in between.

I stayed in the kitchen to make lunch, poking my head around the corner every so often to check on him. Suddenly, he dropped his vacuum and ran to me with a panicked look and said, "Beth, I missed!" and understanding him, I rushed him to the bathroom, but he had indeed "missed" in his preoccupation with cleaning my house. I assured him accidents happen but realized his diaper bag was down in the car, since we rarely needed it. He was soiled and uncomfortable and hauling him bare-butt down the three flights was no more of an option than leaving him there alone while I retrieved it. So, this "seasoned" nanny and mom did what my mother would have done: I thoroughly cleaned him (we made jokes about how I was using a "real bathtub cloth" instead of wipes, and why cornstarch was then a nice little comfort), dried him and then grabbed a clean, absorbent dishtowel and fashioned a makeshift diaper for him, inserting a sanitary mini-pad in the front. I washed out the soiled underwear, old-school style: first in the clean toilet bowl and then scrubbing them spotless with hot soapy water by hand, and then laying them in the warmed oven to dry while he ate his lunch. By naptime, his "toasty underwear" was ready to put back on, and he giggled that he was wearing "underwear toast."

That evening, when the story had been retold to the parents, they shook their heads laughing and the boy's mom said, "I never would have thought of that!" and offered me a big glass of wine. I think she would have thought of it, though. It's being in the experience that gives you the experience. This is the tempering. This is our valuable seasoning. This is life.

And it is something precious.



"It's being in the
experience that gives
you the experience.
This is the tempering.
This is our valuable
seasoning. This is life.

And it is something
precious."

NANNY SHARING:

IT'S GREAT FOR NANNIES, TOO!

BY LOUISE DUNHAM OF PLACEMENT IN AUSTRALIA SOLUTIONS



At our agency, we often talk to prospective clients about the benefits of nanny sharing, particularly when it comes to the perk of splitting the costs of in-home care. Nanny sharing, whereby one nanny cares for the children of two families at once, is a great way for parents to access the benefits of in-home care for a fraction of the cost. However, nanny sharing has plenty of benefits for nannies as well.

MARKET IMPACT

For a start, a nanny share expands the potential market for nannies, creating more positions. That may seem counter-intuitive when a single nanny is working for two families who could theoretically be employing two nannies between them. However, we come back to the cost issue: a nanny share makes in-home care much more affordable, which makes it more accessible to more families.

PERKS GALORE

We see a lot of other advantages for nannies as well. As a shared nanny is always working with a minimum of two children, and often up to four (our agency limits the total number to four), boredom is rarely an issue. Children participating in the nanny share are usually around the same age, so there are often more opportunities for activities and games. There are also extra lessons that can be taught, such as sharing with others. Nanny sharing is a great way for kids to learn socialization skills. We also find that nanny sharing encourages good practices in a nanny, which will hold him or her in good stead even for future "single family" work. For instance, the use of structured processes is imperative in a shared arrangement. A shared nanny is effectively working for a committee of parents rather than just one or two.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS

Communication needs to be formalized, rather than left to a quick word as a parent walks in or out the door. Our agency finds that regular weekly or at least biweekly scheduled meetings are most effective. Active risk assessment is also required, particularly in relation to caring for children in a home other than their own. A good agency will help you make all the necessary arrangements at the outset, not just leave you to sink or swim.

WHOSE HOUSE?

There are particular considerations of the shared-nanny scenario. One of the obvious ones is whose house will “host” all the children. In some cases, the same house is used all the time, whereas in others care may alternate between the children’s houses on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis.

Another thing that will need to be agreed upon between the shared nanny and the families involved is how to deal with situations in which one family temporarily doesn’t need care, such as when they are on holiday. Will the remaining family pay the full cost of care, or will both continue to share the cost on the basis that things will even out when the other family also has a break?

You and your potential “share parents” need to be sure that you are in agreement on matters of discipline, nutrition (e.g., sugar allowances), education (e.g., reading expectations), and screen time (TV, computers, and games and what can and cannot be watched or played on them). Nanny sharing simply won’t work if there is one set of rules for the children of one family and a vastly different set of rules for the other.

Because of these potential complexities, our recommendation is to keep nanny sharing arrange-

ments simple. It’s best to keep it limited to no more than two families and, as I mentioned, four children. Generally, our agency’s advice is that nannies shouldn’t be shared if children under 18 months are involved. Occasionally we have lowered this threshold to 12 months due to a shortage of care options for parents with younger children.

Overall, our experience is that putting in the effort to make nanny sharing work is well worth the effort, with benefits for the nanny, the parents, and the children being cared for.



SHORT STORY

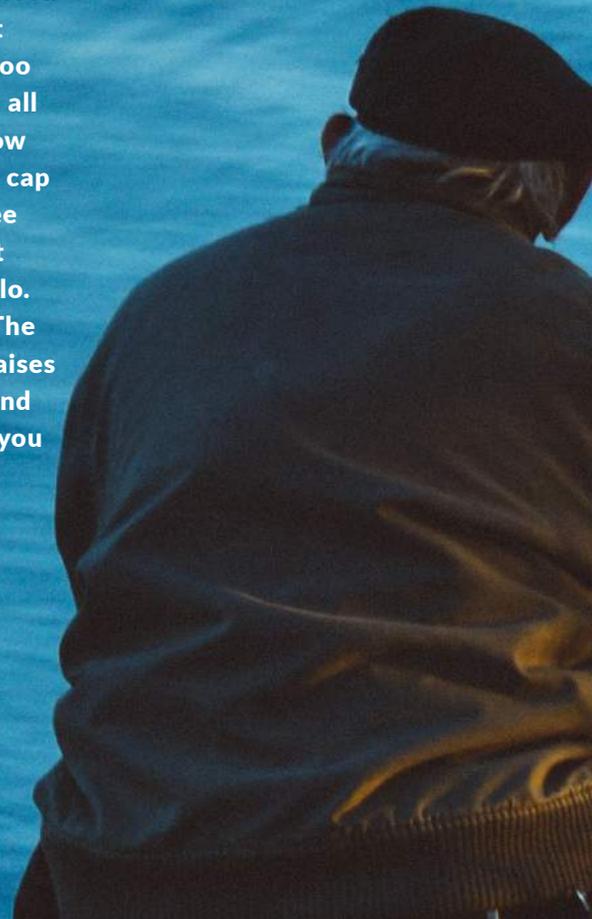
A GENTLEMAN

BY KEN KNAPP

Victoria guides the bicycle with its training wheels along the path running parallel to the shoreline. An older man is at the edge of the lake walking along, pausing occasionally to look out at the small ripples. He is there most nice days when Victoria takes her six-year-old charge to the lake to play or simply ride his bike up and down the path. The weather is pleasant and when the boy asks if he can run down to the water and see what the man is doing, she agrees, admonishing him to keep his sneakers dry. "I'll be up here where you can see me."

It's too far for her to hear what is being said but she sees the man point out onto the lake, but what he is saying is this:

"To really appreciate waves, you need to be at the shore of a lake, one not too large or too small. Oceans are too big, too old. There the waves roll in all the time, one row after another. Now here, if the wind is right, little ones cap here and there. It's as if they can see you're looking and they want to get up and give you a friendly wave hello. Here's one now. Let's wave back." The man moves a bag to his left hand, raises his right arm high above his head, and makes a wide arc. "Now why don't you do that?"



The boy tentatively raises his hand, waves it back and forth in front of his face.

“Oh, look! There’s one out there on the right. There’s a small wave coming in.”

It unfurls after a few feet. Bubbles continue until they too disappear in a gentle swell.

The boy is six years old and is wearing a light jacket already one size too small. A bright orange woolen hat sticks out of the left pocket. He squeezes it until his knuckles are white.

“You shouldn’t be disappointed. It’s too cold to swim or even go wading. That wave didn’t want to tempt you in. It was only saying, ‘wait a few months until summer and then come back and we can play.’ You should ask your nanny.”

“Oh. All right.” He waves again, this time reaching up and making a wide arc like the man.

“Ah, now see, that one on the left, farther out. And there, that wave! Looks like it’s going home, just saying ‘goodbye.’”

“Well, what about those waves?”

“They’re probably for other people. Not everyone can come and walk along the beach but the waves are true friends. They say ‘hi’ anyhow, just in case someone is hiding behind a tree, playing peek-a-boo.”

The boy notices the bag in the man’s left hand. “Say, what’s in the bag?”

The man laughs. “Just garbage. I like to keep the beach clean so I can play here with my wave-friends. I worry that they wouldn’t want to come back if the beach is dirty. I mean, who wants to play on a dirty beach?”

“Oh, yeah. My nanny and mom are always saying, ‘dirty is ugly,’ and ‘always make things better.’ But you didn’t make this dirty, did you?”

“No, but if I left the papers and bottles lying around they would still be there the next time I came to play. And it would still be ugly. This way it’s only ugly once; it’s a valuable lesson to learn. And it does make things better.” He turns and looks up at the nanny.

“We don’t learn that in school. And nothing about waves.”

“It’s never too late to start, you know, learning about nature and how you can help.”

The boy stops, looks at the man, and turns to the lake. His right hand is at his side. He bends it at the elbow and makes a small fluttering gesture. They continue walking until the man steps to his right to retrieve a ripped wrapper from a candy bar and puts it into his bag. The boy smiles. “That’s so the waves will be here tomorrow?”

“Yes, this will help.”

The boy stops and laughs. “I know! I’ll get my nanny to bring a bag for me tomorrow. I can help too and maybe we’ll get bigger waves.”

“That would be nice.”

They both look up the beach and see the boy’s nanny gesturing for him to come back.

“That’s my nanny, Victoria. I have to go. Who should I say told me about those waves?”

“A gentleman, just a gentleman.”

The boy runs up the sand to the path, stopping twice to pick up scraps of newsprint.

Spook-tacular Halloween Fun!

BY KIMBERLY LEHMAN

Owner of Love, Laughter & Elegance:
Wedding & Event Planning



Photo via Pexels.



FINDING YOUR

“Why:”

FOCUS & PURPOSE FOR
YOU & YOUR CHARGES

*By Kim Votruba-Matook
of The Artful Educator*

I have an intellectual crush on Simon Sinek. Recently, I needed to watch his TEDx Talk on how great leaders inspire action, reflect on the video, and apply its lessons to my business. The talk focuses on the “golden circle,” made up of three concentric rings, like an archer’s bull’s-eye. The innermost circle, the true target, is the “why,” the second-largest circle is the “how,” and the outermost and largest circle is the “what.”

Not to give too much away, but the running thread of the video is “people don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.” It’s about finding your “why” and connecting with people who believe what you believe. It is hard work to focus that fuzziness, but when you can, you find clarity, understanding, connection, and joy in everything you do. Your “why” can reveal the intention behind it all. It will also help you find likeminded people to support you along your way. At least it did for me.

While thankful for the professional exercise, I was left wondering how to apply the “golden circle” to being a parent and how that extends to those who take care of children professionally, namely nannies. What drives you as a nanny to care so deeply for someone else’s children? How can you, as a professional caregiver, share what you believe with those in your world in such a way that they are inspired to also care deeply for your charges? Also, how can you teach this process of finding and exemplifying purpose to the children in your care?

FINDING YOUR "WHY"

This is the crux of it all. While this is the hardest to think through, it is the foundation of everything else discussed here. What does your “why” look and feel like? You can call it an origin story, a creed, a value statement, a self-discovery session, whatever you’d like, but take the time to think about this and write it all down. Our “why” is what we believe. It is the core of our being and what motivates us every day to get up and do good in the world. This is the inner narrative we create and repeat in order to care for others oftentimes more than ourselves. This is the essence of leadership and how we strive to make sure others are well served before we can rest and feel satisfied with our work.

FINDING YOUR "HOW"

Now that you know “why” you do what you do, how do you choose to make it real? How do you make a difference in the world? How do you go above and beyond as a nanny? Do you create lesson plans for the kids to enjoy on car rides and in restaurants? Do you sing all the time? Do you find unique educational games? Do you tell captivating stories? Whatever you do to channel your “why” into the world, write it down here, too.

FINDING YOUR "WHAT"

This is the easiest to define. These are your products and outputs. It’s the tangible things (meals, walks, games, songs, hugs, etc.) that you do to care so deeply, physically, mentally, and emotionally. In terms of this framework, the “what” is a proof and result of your “why.” That which lives in this circle further showcases your beliefs to the world. Write them all down here!





TEACHING YOUR CHARGES

Going through this process with yourself is an undertaking; now imagine helping a child come to this level of self-awareness. While this may feel like it falls in line with teaching children resiliency as an elusive soft skill, it doesn't. Once your "why," "how," and "what" are clearly defined, you can lead by example. Kids are perceptive and curious; when they ask why you're doing something, share your reasons. The beliefs you have will resonate more than the shallow reasons we all resort to sometimes. "Because I said so," or "We just need to do this now" don't reveal deeper thought. Showing there is a bigger reason for a task brings a new light to it and helps a child understand that they can be capable of that focus as well. Repeated occurrences can develop into habits, and habits build behavior.

PROFESSIONAL ADVANTAGE

Defining your golden circle can help you in your career. If you are searching for a new job, being able to articulate your passion to potential employers will benefit both parties. You can immediately gauge whether or not you have the same understanding and belief systems. This can be critical to your happiness in a relationship with a new NannyFamily.

All in all, digging deep to find and clearly define your inner drive is an incredible and challenging journey. Watch the video. Be inspired. Then find your "why." You'll come out on the other side as a stronger person and a better nanny. Now grab your pen and notepad or laptop and start to find your "why." Good luck!

family wedding lifestyle



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Data Blitz

We've scoured the Web for some fun facts for nannies and kids. Learn something new and exciting this issue!

Black Friday (the day after Thanksgiving in the United States) is the busiest workday of the year for plumbers. *SOURCE: CNN.COM*

Nearly a quarter of Americans don't routinely stay up to ring in the new year, preferring instead to catch more ZZZs. *SOURCE: THRILLIST*

Poinsettias, a popular flowering holiday plant, are native to southern Mexico. *SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT EXTENSION*

Julie Andrews (that's right, Mary Poppins!) was born on October 1, 1935. *SOURCE: HOLIDAYINSIGHTS.COM*

24% of mothers in the United States are raising their children on their own. *SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH CENTER*

In the 1950s, teenage babysitters around the neighborhood referred to their side sitting jobs as "bratting." *SOURCE: BABYSITTERS.NET*

Before marrying into the British royal family, Princess Diana worked as a nanny. *SOURCE: INSIDE EDITION*

Childcare work as an industry is expected to grow by 7% through 2026. *SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS*

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NANNY MAGAZINE



A DAY IN THE LIFE

Potty Training Diaries

BY MARIE CHIR

Marie is a nanny with a sense of humor we think you'll relate to. Crawl into her world and be amused by just another day in the life, #NannyLife style.



Photo via Pexels.

I look at potty training like it's training for the Superbowl. We prepare for months, then it's finally GAME TIME! Potty training is different for every child. However, the goal is simple for all children: poop and pee in the potty, not in the pants. With this simple objective comes major obstacles, such as dealing with a two-year-old finding it funny to go into the playroom, grunt, and squat in front of her Barbie dream house, then explode into her pull-up. That poor, poor Minnie Mouse pull-up didn't stand a chance...

The trick with potty training is learning the poo schedule like it's mass transit. You plan accordingly so you make it to the terminal on time for the 9:15

train. The same goes for potty training. Most kids have a poo schedule, so you should study carefully so you know when it's time. My charge always says she wants to play by herself. That's code for "I GOTTA POOP!" When this happens, I pull out all the stops to get her to stay on the toilet. Here are some of the tactics I keep in my nanny bag of tricks:

I'll offer her a gummy if she poops on the potty. I use my phone to play any and all Disney princess videos. If she needs to watch "Be Our Guest" to poop, then that's what she gets!

I'm not above bribing with candy, extra TV shows, or toys,

and will stay in the bathroom for an hour if necessary. It's my job to get that kid out of diapers. I will read 20 books if that means I'll eventually hear the plop in the toilet. What a glorious sound that is!

Oh my! I would set off fireworks if I could! I do make a point to put on disco music and dance around like a fool to celebrate the fact that I don't have to change a diaper. It's one of the greatest accomplishments of #NannyLife when your charge can say goodbye to diapers. Next, though, you have to remember to leave the plunger ready because they want to stuff the toilet with toilet paper. Oh well. It's all about picking your battles.

RECIPE

Thankful for Potatoes: Sweet Potato Soufflé

BY CAROL SLAGER

Potatoes often get a bad rap these days. As someone who promotes eating delicious foods that contribute to good health, I am a potato fan. All colors of potatoes are tasty, provide nutrients and fiber, are satisfying, and add variety to your carbohydrate intake.

Some of the ways in which potatoes are prepared are not so healthy. For example, roasting them in olive oil is preferable over fried. It is good to include one to two cupped handfuls of a carbohydrate-rich food with each meal, based on your size, activity level, and individual preference. Potatoes are not a "bad" food!

In celebration of the potato family, here is a favorite dish that graces our table every holiday season. It adds nice color to the plate and complements the famous cranberry jelly that also shows up each year. Yes, I make real cranberries, however my husband, also known as Mr. Noncompliant, will only eat the canned jelly. If any of you have figured out a way to disguise the indentations from the can while slicing, please let me know.

Sweet Potato Soufflé

1 (40 oz.) can sweet potatoes
or yams, drained
1 egg, beaten
1/4 to 1/3 cup milk
½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons melted butter
Cinnamon to taste
Miniature marshmallows

Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter a baking dish and set aside. Combine all ingredients in a mixing bowl, except marshmallows, and beat until fluffy.

If the consistency is rather thick, add a bit more milk. Pour into prepared dish and bake about 30 minutes, until bubbly. Cover the top with the marshmallows once the soufflé is heated through. Allow the marshmallows to get slightly brown and serve.

Note: It is now possible to find healthier versions of marshmallows. If there is an allergy to dairy, you can substitute with liquid from the canned sweet potatoes.

Photo via Pexels.

Feed Your Brain

12 SUPERFOODS TO ENHANCE MEMORY



1

Raisins

Raisins are an excellent source of boron, which is responsible for improving your memory and concentration. According to a study by the USDA, subjects who took 3.2 mg of boron a day performed 10% better than others in concentration and memory tests. Furthermore, it helps in keeping your blood pressure down.

2

Oatmeal

Oatmeal is usually one of the top recommendations by fitness and health for boosting your brain. Oatmeal is a rich source of carbohydrates. Eating carbohydrates is like getting a shot of glucose (blood sugar) in your brain. Your brain will have better memory and concentration when the amount of glucose is high in your blood.

About the Author:

Jessica Smith is a registered dietitian and wellness guru who loves to read, research, and write. She is a self-professed fitness freak who believes in healthy living and doesn't like to miss her yoga. When not reading, she can be found relishing her favorite foods. Follow her at www.optinghealth.com



3
—

Broccoli

Broccoli contains high levels of choline and vitamin C and lutein (a plant protein), both of which can help to sharpen memory.

4
—

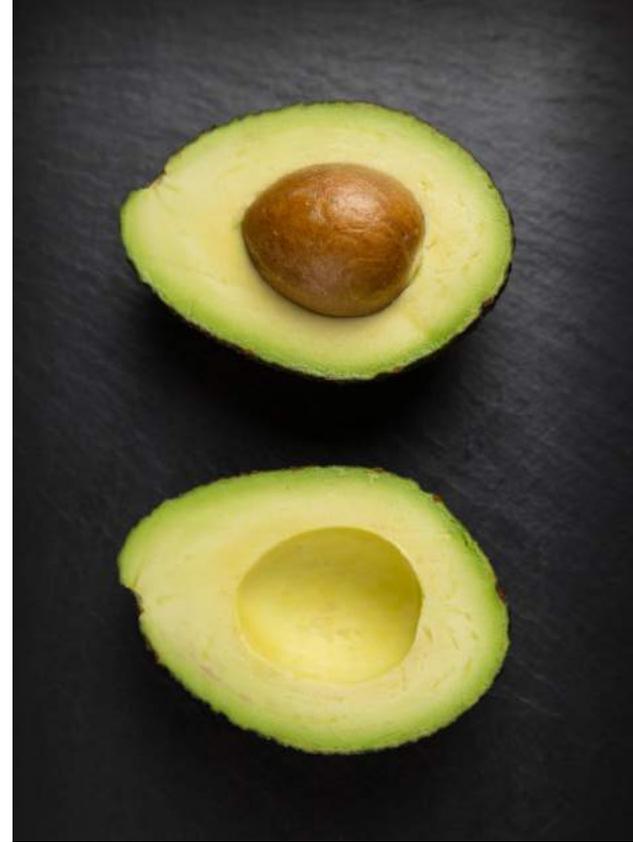
Lentils

Lentils are not only packed with protein, but they also have a considerable amount of folate. It is incredibly important for keeping your brain sharp as you age. Lentils inject a steady stream of glucose into your brain. Glucose and sugar are the basic fuels that your brain needs daily to keep it in an optimal shape.

5
—

Beets

Beet and beetroots contain high nitrate concentrations. When consumed, the nitrates get converted into nitric oxide, which increases the blood flow to the brain. The higher the blood flow to the brain, the better the cognitive function, motor control, and other brain functions.



6
—

Avocados

A quarter of an avocado a day can give you considerable benefits. Avocados are not only delicious, but they pack excellent nutrient benefits, including folate and vitamin K, which help to prevent blood clots in the brain. Eating avocado also improves cognitive functions like concentration and memory.

7
—

Beef

Beef is a great source of vitamin B12. Poor memory, fatigue, and depression are some symptoms of deficiency of vitamin B12. Our muscles require energy to work, the same way our brain also requires energy to perform various operations like thinking, performing logical operations, etc. Creatine, found in beef, provides this energy to our brain.



Photos via Pexels.

8

Blackberries

Blackberries are high in antioxidants that improve motor skills and brain performance. Extracted compounds in blackberries prevent degeneration of brain cells. Some studies have shown that high intake of blackberries improves short-term memory drastically.

9

Celery

At first, you may think celery don't have much of a big impact on your brain. Well, you are underestimating its power. Celery contains a flavonoid called luteolin. Luteolin lowers the risk of heart disease and cancer. It fights the aging process in the brain by reducing inflammation.

10

Kale

Kale is one of the best of all leafy greens. It has more minerals, vitamins, and other nutrients than any other food. It also has been linked to staving off ALS, Alzheimer's disease, and brain cancer.

11

Almonds

When it comes to boosting your brain power, almonds may be among the first foods that come to mind. Almonds are packed with a variety of minerals and vitamins. Vitamin E in almonds boosts cognitive functions, alertness, and memory..

12

Peanuts

Peanuts are known for being a great source of protein. They are loaded with various minerals, vitamins, and protein. Protein is responsible for manufacturing two important neurotransmitters in the brain (norepinephrine and dopamine). These two are responsible for providing energy and improving alertness.

Finally, your mind is loaded with the plentiful dose of essential superfoods for the brain. These superfoods not only take care of your brain but also reduce age-related body aches, such as lower back pains and muscle pains.

Stay on Track over Thanksgiving

By Robert Jackson

Thanksgiving is often a time of overindulgence and excess. Holiday meals, drinks, and high calorie-treats can throw you off track with your health goals. Combine that with a busy schedule that leaves little time for exercise and lots of sitting and you've got a recipe for disaster.

Even with those hurdles to tackle, you can minimize the damage with these top tips:

Photo via Unsplash.

SUGGEST A WALK

With lots of time to relax and socialize, people are not in such a rush. A good way to get active is to suggest a walk with family and friends. This will help to increase the amount of exercise you get without it feeling like a workout. Even a 30-minute walk can help. It keeps the body moving and uses fat as the main source of fuel. Pick a place that you know is a pleasant walk and get everyone out and about, maximizing togetherness while making time to get the heart pumping.

Top Tip: *You can easily disguise a walk. If you think someone will be unwilling to go for a walk without a compelling reason, ask them if they can go with you to the shops to get some last-minute supplies and insist you walk because you've had a glass of wine.*

ALLOW TREATS

The thinking is this: If you are too hard and strict with what you eat, you will probably find yourself overindulging at some point later on. Instead, allow yourself a treat here and there in moderation.

Top Tip: *Fill yourself up on healthier foods first, then have a small treat. The idea is that by being full you will not overeat the treats.*

JUST ADD WATER

Those of you over 21 and trying to reduce alcohol intake or its empty calories, swap beer and wine for a spirit and mix it with water or club soda. Not only will this reduce the amount of alcohol you consume, it also adds more water, which helps keep you hydrated and prevents hangovers.

Avoid drinking alcohol in social situations with your employers or charges, though.

Top Tip: *If your friends make comments when they see you with a nonalcoholic drink, a vodka, soda, lime is an ideal drink to have. You can easily have a soda and lime without any alcohol and it looks like an alcoholic drink so no one will know it's just water. Also, never feel pressure to consume alcohol if you don't want to.*

SLOW IT DOWN

We're all guilty of scoffing down our food too quickly from time to time. This is especially true when your plate is full of gorgeous foods. Slowing down how quickly you eat allows your body time to realize how full you actually are. It takes time for the body to signal that it's getting full, which means faster eaters often overeat and feel bloated. An easy way to do this is to chew your food more thoroughly. To start with, count to 20 chews for each mouthful you take. Not only will this

make you fuller sooner, it will also help digestion. Digestion starts in the mouth with saliva containing the enzyme amylase, which breaks down starch (carbohydrates). If you swallow without much chewing, your digestive system will have to work harder and you are likely to not get as many nutrients from your food.

Top Tip: *Eat with other people around. Talking over a meal means you will take more time to eat it, which leads to eating less.*

OFFER TO HELP

Cleanup duties do more than just straighten up the house; they also help with calorie burning. Washing, cleaning, and tidying all require a bit of physical effort. Not only will this help you burn some extra calories, it will also get you massive brownie points with the host. Win-win!

Top Tip: *Always ask if chairs need putting away or tables need moving. Heavier lifting is a surefire way to burn extra calories.*

Keep these tips handy during the holiday season when overindulgence is likely to tempt you, but remember to enjoy the holidays and the spirit of togetherness they bring. Be safe, have fun, and stay healthy.

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