



to

Becoming a Happy Mom



Arlene Pellicane



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Verses marked NKJV are from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Verses marked MSG are from The Message. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Verses marked HCSB are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Holman Christian Standard Bible®, Holman CSB®, and HCSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Cover by Left Coast Design, Portland, Oregon

Cover photo © Warren Goldswain / Shutterstock

31 DAYS TO BECOMING A HAPPY MOM

Copyright © 2015 by Arlene Pellicane
Published by Harvest House Publishers
Eugene, Oregon 97402
www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Pellicane, Arlene, 1971-
31 days to becoming a happy mom / Arlene Pellicane.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-7369-6350-3 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-7369-6351-0 (eBook)

1. Motherhood--Religious aspects--Christianity. 2. Mothers--Prayers and devotions. I. Title. II.

Title: Thirty-one days to becoming a happy mom.

BV4529.18.P45 2015

248.8'431--dc23

2015008347

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means: electronic, mechanical, digital, photocopy, recording, or any other: except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 / BP-KBD / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To my mom

*I don't know anyone who is a happier mom than you.
Thank you for putting the happy in my childhood and bringing
me joy each day.*

Contents

Introduction: Ditch the Crowd	9
Mommy Quiz: Are You a Happy Mom?	15

Key 1: Becoming Healthy

Day 1: Big Rocks First	18
Day 2: That Might Not Be Food	24
Day 3: Don't Stop Moving	30
Day 4: Mommy Needs Her Beauty Rest	35
Day 5: More Vitamin G	41
Day 6: Fear, Anger, Stress, Oh My!	46
Day 7: Light the Match, Baby	51

Key 2: Becoming Action-Oriented

Day 8: Don't Make Me Count to 100	58
Day 9: Prepare for the Next MOMent	64
Day 10: Whoa, She Really Did Mean It!	70
Day 11: Stop Engineering Your Own Prayer Requests	75
Day 12: Use Your Mommy Guilt for Good	81
Day 13: Your Game Plan for Screen Time	86
Day 14: Hit Reset	91

Key 3: Becoming Prayerful

Day 15: God, Not Google	98
Day 16: Help, I Want to Be a Praying Mom!	103
Day 17: Praying When Your Kids Are Going Haywire	107
Day 18: Making the Most of Popcorn Prayers	113
Day 19: To Infinity and Beyond	118

Key 4: Becoming Perseverant

Day 20: Leave Me Alone, I'm Hiding in the Bathroom 124
Day 21: Facing Goliath 129
Day 22: Thick Skin Required 133
Day 23: That's Entertainment 139
Day 24: Finding Someone to Follow 144
Day 25: You're Not Raising Kids 150

Key 5: Becoming Yes-Filled

Day 26: Yes to Mommy Liberation 156
Day 27: Yes to Ignoring the Joneses 161
Day 28: Yes to Being the Fun House 166
Day 29: Yes to Service. 171
Day 30: Yes to Mission Impossible 176
Day 31: Yes to the Empty Nest. 181

Conclusion: Be a Smiley 186
Notes 191
Bible Verses for the Happy Mom 197
The Happy Mom Discussion Guide 200
Acknowledgments. 206

Introduction

Ditch the Crowd

When my son Ethan was in first grade, we had this little talk after he received an academic award.

“I’m so proud that you are well behaved at school,” I said beaming.

“Oh yes,” Ethan replied. “I’m very well behaved at school. I’m much worse at home because I fight with Noelle!”

Isn’t it true we can be well behaved and pleasant with others, but we have a much harder time acting happy and agreeable with family members? As a mom, you’ve picked up this book because you know how it feels to start the day like Mary Poppins and go to bed as Cruella De Vil. Why are moms today stressed out, pooped out, and overwhelmed much of the time? Part of the answer lies in this quote from Erma Bombeck:

Do you know what you call those who use towels and never wash them, eat meals and never do the dishes, sit in rooms they never clean, and are entertained till they drop? If you have just answered, “A house guest,” you’re wrong because I have just described my kids.¹

If that scenario sounds familiar, get ready for a change! You are not running a hotel; you are managing a home. You don’t have guests to cater to; you have children to raise. We can easily get caught up in the mommy culture around us where the roles have been hijacked. Kids are calling the shots and moms are taking the orders. When that happens, unhappiness reigns supreme, not just for moms, but for kids too.

According to a Barna study, 8 in 10 moms feel overwhelmed by stress and 7 out of 10 say they do not get enough rest. Only 19 percent of moms report being extremely satisfied as a mom.² It's my goal to move you into this 19 percent by the time you're done reading this book.

It's time to ditch the mommy crowd, epitomized by a woman I met at a thrift store. (This isn't a slam against thrift stores; I was there too!) This mom had three children clinging to her as she tried to move up and down the aisles (operative word: *tried*). They cried, whined, and bellyached for all to hear. Then one of them punched me in the leg. The mom apologized profusely. As I stood in the checkout line, I watched this mom dragging her five-year-old like a rag doll under her arm as that child cried so hysterically it sounded like cackling. Who in that situation could be a happy mom?

It's time for a revival of good old common sense in motherhood today. We can mine wisdom from trusted guides. That's why I've asked my author friends to chime in. My children Ethan, Noelle, and Lucy are ten, eight, and five, so I interviewed moms who are farther down the road than I am. You'll hear from proud grandmas, mothers of teens, and even a State Mother of the Year. You'll read insights from single moms and stepmoms. As you read with an open heart in the safe environment of these pages, you'll not only find friends and cheerleaders along the way. You'll find mentors worthy of learning from.

Circle the Important Stuff

I thought my husband, James, was crazy. He wanted our fifth grader and our third grader to read a business book with us, *The Compound Effect* by Darren Hardy.³ This seemed a little advanced for our elementary school entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Despite my doubts, Ethan took off, reading easily and grasping the material. Noelle, our third grader, needed more help. After all, chapter 1 had words like *sensibilities*, *commercialism*, and *deprivation*. Compound interest isn't exactly on a third grader's radar screen. We knew she couldn't read the book on her own. It would be too overwhelming and she would quit. So she and I sat side by side. She would read a few paragraphs and then I would read a few paragraphs. When we got to a word she didn't recognize, she circled it. I explained what the word meant until

she understood. She focused her attention on the words she circled. Not only was she getting a vocabulary lesson, she was spending quality time with Mom and learning valuable life lessons at the same time.

Like Noelle reading her book with pen in hand, I want you to picture motherhood as a book that can be marked up. Put a big circle around the important stuff. Mistakes can be crossed out in red with “Note to self: Don’t do this again” scrawled in the margin. Yet we tend to emphasize the words and activities that are secondary: make cupcakes, drive to soccer, buy costumes, browse Pinterest for decorating ideas. There’s nothing wrong with any of these pursuits unless, of course, there is nothing else circled in our mom life. Mother of five, Rhonda Rhea, says it this way,

If there’s fuzz all over the family room carpet, ten years down the road no one is going to care. If the girls go to church with really bad hair, and even if everyone there thinks you’re a terrible mother because of it, that doesn’t really matter. Don’t focus on being the perfect mother, focus on raising godly children. Instead of thinking *What does my home look like?* or *What do I look like?* think *What is in the hearts of my kids?*⁴

Known as the positive mom, author Karol Ladd agrees that circling the small stuff can skew our perspective. Getting to the movies late one day, her family had no other choice than to sit in the front row of the theater. The battle scenes were too close, the images too intense, and the whole experience was painful. They went to see the movie again another day and sat in the middle of the theater so they could get the full perspective of the movie as it was meant to be seen. Karol says,

In the same way, the happy mom has to step back, not only to be flexible but also to think of the big picture. In ten years, will this really matter? What can I teach my child from this? In view of eternity, will this make any difference? Often what is happening in the moment seems so big, whether it’s something at school or something that our kids did, and it seems so much larger than life. But if we as moms can step back and think of what God wants to teach us through it, it looks different. I wish someone would have told me to keep the bigger picture in mind.⁵

The Five Keys to Happiness for Moms

For the next thirty-one days, you're going to draw a big circle around becoming a happier mom. Why is this important anyway? Maybe to you it sounds downright selfish. Well, consider the alternative. If you are an unhappy mom, griping about life, snapping at your kids, breathing empty threats, and living in perpetual gray, how does that serve your family? How does that make your relationship with God attractive? Believe me, living with joy is hardly selfish. Being a happy mom may be the greatest way to serve your kids at this age and stage.

But maybe you don't *feel* like smiling. Don't worry. As you focus on these five keys to happiness, using the acronym HAPPY, I promise you will find it easier to smile again and often. You are going to become more...

H = Healthy

A = Action-Oriented

P = Prayerful

P = Perseverant

Y = Yes-Filled

Being *healthy* isn't just for gym rats and nutritionists. The mom who cares for others must first tend to herself by exercising, eating well, and resting. You need spiritual and emotional reserves to lead your children well. You can't impart overall health to your kids if you don't possess it yourself.

When a mom is *action-oriented*, she doesn't discipline with a harsh tone, yelling, or empty threats. She doesn't get ugly; she doesn't give long lectures. She acts as a leader. She makes changes when necessary and enforces consequences with consistency. You're going to learn how to eliminate the mom mantra, "How many times do I have to tell you to...?"

You should be more *prayerful*, but how do you find the time? Does prayer really make a difference? Is there something else to pray besides "Help!" and "Bless my children"? You'll learn that becoming a praying mama gives you an edge like nothing else.

Persevering is tough. Motherhood isn't a sprint; it's a marathon. Too many moms give up too easily when something doesn't work the first couple of times. Tenacity, grit, resolve—these are the characteristics the modern mom desperately needs. You are in it to win it.

Being *yes-filled* means you look at motherhood as a huge positive in your life, not a negative. Instead of feeling like “my life is over now that I’m a mom,” you see the future and it’s bright. There’s nothing wrong at times with saying no (you and your kids need that), but this key will help you embrace the yeses in motherhood.

How to Get the Most Out of This Book

I’ve noticed two kinds of people in life. There are “Tell me more” people and “I already know that” people. The “Tell me more” person picks up a book like my *31 Days to a Happy Husband* and says, “I’ve been happily married for forty years, but I’m sure there’s something else I could learn.” The “I already know that” person picks up the same book and says, “If I don’t have it figured out by now, it’s never gonna happen.”

My middle child, Noelle, has often said “I already know that” in response to her older brother’s unsolicited advice. That’s funny when you’re eight, defending yourself against your know-it-all sibling. But for us moms, the “I already know that” attitude is toxic. It shores up our defenses and keeps our hearts closed off from true transformation.

As you encounter concepts in this book, I urge you not to default to “I already know that.” Instead, think “Tell me more.” You’ll see old ideas with new eyes. This way of reading makes all the difference between a changed life and a life that remains static and stale.

You can read one chapter each day for thirty-one consecutive days, or you may read several chapters in one sitting. Or read just one chapter each week (guilt-free) because you are a busy mom. Tailor your reading experience to what will work for your mom life. To keep on track, you can:

Start a Happy Moms Discussion Group. You can read the book together with a group of moms, or even just one other mom who also wants to become a happier mom. Use the discussion guide on pages 200-205. It’s ideal to meet weekly for six weeks to talk about what you’re learning and to set up a doable start and stop date.

Take the boost. At the end of each day’s reading, you’ll find an action step and prayer: your daily energy boost. It won’t take much time, but if you take the boosts consistently, your family will see a difference. Keep in mind your children can’t see the good intentions in your heart. What they notice is your behavior, what you say and do, for better or worse. This month, make it for the better.

Think on God's Word. You'll find a list of Bible verses to encourage you to become a more joy-filled mom on pages 197-199. You can read these aloud or think about them throughout your day. Put verses on your bathroom mirror, over the kitchen sink, anywhere to remind you of God's goodness and the high calling you enjoy as a mother.

Remember the business book Noelle and I were reading, *The Compound Effect*? It's so fitting for us here because that book is all about doing small, seemingly inconsequential things over time. The payoff takes a while to see, but when it comes, it's huge. That's the same potential you have right now as a mother. You will be making small, positive changes that may seem very insignificant at the time. But as the years roll by, the minor adjustments you make now may be the difference between a close relationship with your children or a distant one.

A few nights ago, I went to the bathroom in the middle of the night. Then I shuffled to the girls' room to check if they had their blankets on. Lucy had her neck bent so dramatically that her body looked like a candy cane. I thought if I slept like that, I'd have a crick in my neck for days. I straightened her body out. Her blanket was crumpled at the foot of the bed, so I spread it over her body on that cold night. I tried to move quietly, but she woke up.

"I'm just putting the blanket on you," I whispered.

"Goodnight, Mom," she said, unaware of the chiropractic treatment that had been averted.

As I walked back into my room, a sense of joy filled my heart. *I get to be that little angelic creature's mom* (remember, she was sleeping). *I'm needed. I am blessed.* Some days, that appreciation for being a mom overwhelms us like the tide. But most days, we don't see the joy in putting blankets over little candy canes. We interpret it as work—lots of endless work.

It's time to put a little more fun into our work. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, you're going to be transported to a much happier, more appreciative place as a mother.

Get ready. Help is on the way!

Mommy Quiz

Are You a Happy Mom?

Before you begin reading Day 1, take this self-assessment to gauge how happy you are as a mom right now. There are no correct answers, no other moms peering over your shoulder to compare themselves against you. Read each statement and circle if you mostly agree or disagree.

1. I am not overwhelmed or stressed by motherhood on most days.

Agree Disagree

2. My children are respectful and well behaved.

Agree Disagree

3. I don't yell at my kids.

Agree Disagree

4. My kids do what I tell them, not the other way around.

Agree Disagree

5. I get enough rest each day.

Agree Disagree

6. I make time to pursue my own interests outside of my children.

Agree Disagree

7. I do not make it a habit to compare myself favorably or unfavorably to other moms.

Agree Disagree

8. I am pleased with how my kids use screen time (and how I use it too).

Agree Disagree

9. I have another mom friend or group I meet with regularly for encouragement and accountability.

Agree Disagree

10. I pray for my children every day or most days.

Agree Disagree

11. I have at least one fun moment and laugh every day.

Agree Disagree

12. I understand my goal is to launch adults, not to raise children who are dependent on me.

Agree Disagree

Total the number of statements you agree with:

1-4: You are feeling at the end of your rope most days. The scoreboard reads *Kids 18, Mom 2*. To be a happy mom, you will need to start with a few important tweaks, such as seeing yourself as a leader and acting like one. You've picked up this book just in time! You can do this, Mom.

5-8: You are experiencing moderate job satisfaction as a mom. You long to stress less and laugh more. You second guess yourself at times. You are open to new ideas and motivated to be a better mom. Use the concepts in the book to take your mothering to the next level.

9-12: You are doing great! You're building on a strong foundation. There's no ceiling on joy, so you'll be refining your mommy skills and growing in happiness. As you learn what works in your mom life, pass it on to other moms. In giving and serving others, you'll receive even more.

Key 1

Becoming HEALTHY

A

P

P

Y

Day 1

Big Rocks First

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

ROMANS 12:2

My youngest child, Lucy, was born with some serious hair. By the time she was four months old, it looked like she had stuck her finger in the light socket. Think scared porcupine, replacing the quills with thick black hair. Kramer from *Seinfeld* had nothing on her.

One winter day, I was Christmas shopping through a store's toy section with my little-miss-big-hair riding in the shopping cart. A mom walked past me with her two older kids following her. She glanced at my adorable baby porcupine and then, loud enough for her own kids to hear, said, "It only goes downhill from there."

I wasn't quick enough to shoot back, "Actually, I have two older kids, and I find it gets better every year. Merry Christmas!" She probably wouldn't have appreciated that anyway. In that moment, I learned something important from that Grumpy Mom. I didn't want to become like her. I don't want to have a negative mindset about motherhood that goes something like this:

Just wait until you get married...all the romance will evaporate.

Just wait until you have kids...say goodbye to your life.

Just wait until your kids are in elementary school...hope you like being a taxi driver.

Just wait until your kids are in junior high...they'll turn into aliens.

Just wait until your kids are in high school...they'll hate you!

Just wait until your kids are in college...they'll suck up every last penny.

Just wait until your kids are young adults...they'll come back to live with you.

The Grumpy Mom anticipates disaster around every corner. For her, saying “It only goes downhill from there” wasn’t rude. It was a passing comment that flowed out of the reality of her life. When you have a negative mindset, it not only darkens your outlook, it poisons those around you. Remember the Grumpy Mom made her sour prediction with her own children listening to her every word.

Feed a Healthy Mindset

A few days a year, my kids bemoan the rainy-day schedule at school. Instead of going outside for recess, the kids are herded into the multi-purpose room for the torture of what Noelle calls “boring-day schedule.” When they hear the forecast of rain, their young faces fall.

Motherhood can feel a lot like rain. Sometimes you’re pounded by storms. Other days you’re dragging your feet, a slow death by dreary skies of repetition. Being locked up with whiny kids, laundry piles, dishes, and to-dos can seem like “boring-day schedule” over and over again. Yet in the monotony, do you know you can choose to feed a positive mom mindset?

As you fold your laundry, you can say a prayer of thanks that you are not separated from your loved ones.

As you’re running errands, you can listen to positive podcasts in the car.

As you’re planning your schedule, you can invite the happiest mom you know to coffee.

It doesn’t take much to infuse life into the “boring-day schedule” of being a mom. It begins with having the right mindset. In her groundbreaking book *Mindset*, Carol Dweck contrasts a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.¹ Applying her concept to motherhood, if you have a *fixed mindset*, you believe you’re wired with certain talents and abilities as a mom. There’s not much you can do to change the hand you’ve been dealt. If you have a *growth mindset*, you believe abilities can be developed

through dedication and hard work. This view emboldens you to learn new things and constantly improve as a mom.

Which mindset sounds healthier for you and your children? You bet—the growth mindset. The days ahead are not carved in stone, careening downhill to the grave like the Grumpy Mom would like us to believe. No, according to Daniel 12:3, “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” Now that sounds much better and brighter, doesn’t it?

Puzzles and Priorities

My husband, James, does an object lesson for kids we moms can learn from. He arranges ingredients on a table: sugar, sand, marbles, ping-pong balls, a few big rocks, and an empty peanut butter jar. He asks the kids, “Do you think I can fit all these items into the peanut butter jar?” He begins with the sugar, sand, and marbles. By the time the ping-pong balls are added, there is no room in the jar for the rocks.

So he pours everything out, and this time he begins with the big rocks first, followed by the ping-pong balls. Then he pours in the marbles, sugar, and sand. Now it all fits! He explains to the kids when you put the big rocks in first—things like praying, reading the Bible, doing chores, finishing homework—then you have time for the extras in life like riding bikes or watching movies.

As moms, we need to put the big rocks in first. We can put out fires and respond to texts, which seem urgent at the time, while ignoring what’s truly important. Slowly, we grow complacent toward Bible reading. We place our children ahead of our spouses. We let our health slip.

What does every flight attendant instruct us to do? Put on your oxygen mask before assisting others. Mom, don’t ignore that oxygen mask dangling in front of you. Take care of yourself so you can care for your family. Making healthy choices isn’t selfish.

Notice the motivation. You don’t take care of yourself to escape or look gorgeous for your selfie. You do it to serve others. Putting the big rocks in first involves determining what’s really important as a mom. Legendary basketball coach John Wooden says,

Take a moment and draw a circle around the following personal characteristics that you possess: confidence, poise, imagination,

initiative, tolerance, humility, love, cheerfulness, faith, enthusiasm, courage, honesty, serenity.

I hope you circled them all because all are within each of us. It is simply up to us to bring them out.²

Go ahead. Circle the characteristics you possess and underline the ones you want to increase in your mom life. These virtuous characteristics aren't handed out at birth. They are mined by use and effort, the hard work of personal development that the growth mindset encourages. For example, if you'd like to become more confident, you can place yourself in situations that boost your confidence, whether that's singing a solo or joining a moms group.

Adopting new positive attitudes and changing behaviors can be overwhelming. Like working on a one-thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle, you may feel utterly lost and think your efforts are pointless. But how do you put a puzzle together? One piece at a time, starting with the easiest first. Don't try to become more patient, scream less, cook more, finish projects you start, and start a neighborhood Bible study all in one morning. Start with one improvement at a time and then build on your success.

Someday, You'll Be Number Five

If your name is Mom, you're probably the most popular person in the house—or in the world. One child asks, "Mom, where is my homework?" while another says, "I need you to sign this," and yet another screams from the toilet, "M-o-m-m-y!" James likes to say Mommy is more popular than Santa Claus.

Because of this instant fame, we can get our priorities all mixed up. Instead of investing in our marriage or relationship with God, we pour everything we have into the most vocal part of our lives: our children. That's why it's really wise to realize that someday you'll be number five. Allow me to explain from my friend, author, mother and grandmother, Kendra Smiley.

When Kendra's brother-in-law was living his last days on earth because of a brain tumor, it made her take a serious look at her priorities. She knew the right order was God first, then her husband, followed by her kids, work, and other good things like volunteer work. She wrote her priorities on a piece of paper and placed it on her desk. There they sat, but it

seemed to make no difference. She remembers cleaning the bathtub, crying out to God, “Please help me understand my priorities because they don’t do me any good if I can’t implement them.” Then God gave her this picture in her mind:

I was doing a watercolor painting, and the paper was in the upright position on the easel. I thought, *You can’t paint this way. Everything is going to drip. You have to have everything flat.* But still I painted on that upright paper with the Lord at the top, and sure enough, He dripped down. Then I painted my husband John and the kids, my work, and my service. I realized that God wanted the things at the bottom to be influenced by everything higher on the list.

Often when we think of priorities, we think of time allotment. So does that mean I should spend eight hours with God and six hours with John? No, that’s not how life works. It’s about letting God drip down into everything you do.³

Here’s an example of how Kendra worked out this canvas of priorities in her mom life. She was asked by a prominent ministry eighteen months in advance to keynote a large event. She realized that might mean missing one of her son’s football games during his senior year in high school. She called the planner back and asked if she could speak on Thursday instead of the better attended Friday or Saturday. She ended up speaking on Thursday and sitting on the bleachers that weekend at her son’s football game. That was playing out what God told her to do while scrubbing the tub months prior. Let the things on the bottom of the list be influenced by everything higher on the list, not the other way around.

Kendra has modeled and taught these priorities to her three grown sons. That’s why she’s number five now on their priority lists. To her sons, Jesus is first, their wives come second, kids come third, work comes fourth, and finally Mom makes the cut at number five. Kendra laughs and says that’s hard because her adult kids are still third on her list, but she’s number five on theirs! But she’s quick to be grateful for the number five spot. She says mothers who insist on being higher in the pecking order usually don’t end up even in the top ten.

So remember when you’re trudging through a “boring-day schedule” or your ears hurt because of the constant screeching of M-O-M-M-Y, better days are in front of you. After all, it doesn’t all go downhill from here.

A Word for Stepmoms from Laura Petherbridge

The healthy family is God first, spouse second, child third. But when a death or divorce occurs, the child moves up a notch on that ladder. If you remarry, the children have to go back to third place. That's a hard transition and many single parents aren't ready to move their child into that position. I advise single parents not to remarry unless they are ready to put the new spouse in the number two spot. That doesn't mean you don't stick up for your children if your new spouse is treating them poorly. It means you have to be prepared for your marriage to take precedence. That's extremely difficult for a mom to do when the children have been in that number two spot for any length of time.

In a first time marriage, children view affection between mom and dad as security. But in a second marriage, it stirs up insecurity because that parent is being taken away. Here's a tip that most parents don't think about: spend time alone with your biological children after you remarry. This will go a long way in assuring them that you have not thrown them under the bus to take on a new spouse. Be as consistent as possible. It could be breakfast on Saturday mornings or Friday night pizza. This way your child knows he or she gets your full attention for one hour at coffee or whatever works for your family. Tell your child, "I love you. Just because I married Joe doesn't mean I have any less compassion for you. I'm still your mom and that will never change. I will always be here for you."

Today's Energy Boost

Can you identify with the Grumpy Mom who isn't exactly enjoying motherhood? Every time a negative thought pops into your head today, think of two positive thoughts to combat it. Spin doctors usually have a negative connotation, but in this case, spin is good.

Today's Prayer

Lord, thank You for speaking to me today. Help me to adopt a growth mindset. I want to learn how to be a happier and more fulfilled mom. Teach me to be more loving to my family members. Show me what my priorities ought to be and how to put the big rocks in first so You will be glorified.