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May 2025

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**Motherhood myths
we need to let go of**

**Herps Alive
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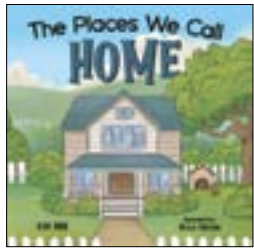
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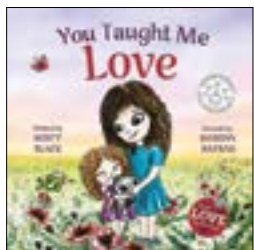
Today's Family BOOK CLUB

Fill your bookshelf this May with great reads filled with themes of love, the power of light, and the warmth of home.



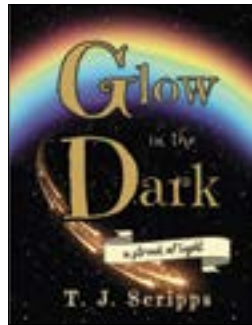
The Places We Call Home
by Kim Ann

Discover the delightful world of homes in “The Places We Call Home,” a captivating rhyming book perfect for children from age 1–6. This charming story takes young readers on a journey to explore the many unique places where people and animals live. From bustling cities to quiet countrysides, from treetop nests to oceanic depths, every home is celebrated for its special qualities and the love it holds within. Whether high in the attic or deep in the ocean, with family or alone, “The Places We Call Home” reminds us that home is where all love begins.



You Taught Me Love
by Misty Black

Join a mother, daughter, and a silly little frog on a heartwarming tale showing love through the eyes of a child! There’s nothing quite like the love a mother and child share. “You Taught Me Love” is a tender rhyming tale that captures the magic of childhood love through the playful bond between a mother and her daughter. With vibrant watercolor illustrations and joyful rhymes, this story will tug on your heartstrings and leave you smiling. What words might a child use to describe her love? And can a child’s love ever compare to the limitless love of her mother? Find out in this snuggle-time story that might have you reaching for tissues.



**Glow in the Dark:
A Streak of Light**
by Tami Scripps

“Glow in the Dark: A Streak of Light” is an enchanting new sci-fi/fantasy series about a brave girl named Ruby who goes on a magical quest to Starland to save the world’s light from evil forces. During these missions, Ruby must maintain her disguise, uncover secrets, and stop the dark forces before it’s lights out forever! Perfect for middle-grade readers who love magical adventures, space mysteries, and brave heroes. And readers will love how Ruby discovers the true power of her glowing aura along the way.



The Live Big Series
by Kat Kronenberg

Learn the trilogy’s three secrets—SHHH—that the animals discovered! Light the stars in your heart & live big too!

The “Live Big” books show how each animal goes on their own heroic quest to achieve their dream and live life full of love and happiness. Readers can watch for CATCH-M (their big, marvelous, miraculous smile) too with the stardust above you, around you, and within you! And let’s start living our best life together.

All books available on Amazon.com.

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TODAY'S family

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Enjoy family fun and fresh air at Adventure Zone

Merry-go-round, mini golf, climbing walls, arcade, zip line, escape rooms, bumper boats and more!



With the warmer weather, parents are looking for outdoor activities they can participate in with their kids. Adventure Zone Family Fun Center in Geneva-on-the-Lake makes being active outdoors affordable and safe for families around the area.

“This is a positive family experience,” says Donniella Winchell, co-owner. “It’s an affordable atmosphere where families will feel comfortable and safe.”

A short drive for all of Lake, Geauga, Ashtabula, and Eastern Cuyahoga counties, Adventure Zone lives up to its promise of being a positive family experience. On-site, you’ll find a giant arcade, merry-go-round, Adventure Krawl, a kid’s play area, go-karts, miniature golf, batting cages, bungee trampoline, climbing and repelling walls, snack shop and zip line, two escape rooms and the Hammer Slammer tower ride.

The facility also features golf cart rentals and a pavilion that can seat up to 150 for family reunions and company outings or can be divided in smaller sections for birthday parties.

“We have a great property with a view of the lake and we wanted to use it,” says Winchell. “The state park’s bike path goes along the shoreline and in the evening, you can see a beautiful sunset.”

In addition to these activities, Adventure Zone hosts birthday parties and group outings.

Winchell, her husband Larry, and their partner Don Woodward have owned the business for 28 years and it’s a family affair.

“Our daughter and son-in-law are integrally involved and our grandkids work here during the summer months,” says Winchell. “We also hire about 90 seasonal employees each year. This business is owned by a family that cares about families.”

Adventure Zone opens for the 2025 season weekends on Saturday, May 3 and begins seven days a week Memorial Day weekend. For hours and pricing, call 440-466-3555, text 216-469-5903 or visit www.adventurezonefun.com. They are located at 5600 Lake Road E in Geneva-on-the-Lake.



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- Hammer Slammer



440-466-3555
www.AdventureZoneFun.com

Saving the world, one reptile at a time

Local foundation is dedicated to saving, rehabilitating and caring for unwanted, neglected and abused reptiles and amphibians

One might expect to find alligators and giant pythons in Florida swamps, but would be surprised to learn that these scaly, prehistoric creatures are also residing in South Euclid. The Herps Alive Foundation is a nonprofit sanctuary dedicated to rescuing exotic reptiles and amphibians through adoption and education initiatives. Keith Gisser, the organization's founder, is on a mission to change the world's negative perception of reptiles and find homes for unwanted animals throughout Ohio.

The Herps Alive Foundation was founded in 2013 as an offshoot of Gisser's business, where he would travel with a menagerie of ambassador animals and teach educational reptile programs.

"I would always do rescue on my own," says Gisser, who explained that he started taking in unwanted animals from people he knew and keeping them at his home before his operation became an official nonprofit. "We saw a need and tried to fill that as best as we could."

Gisser realized that while there are many existing Ohio animal shelters, few are equipped with the knowledge or resources to properly care for reptiles. He explains that while a chihuahua and a Great Dane have different needs, their basic care is essentially the same because they are the same species. With reptiles, this is not the case because, according to Gisser, "you can have six boa constrictors in cages on the shelf and each one needs different care depending on its natural environment." This is why rescues that specialize in exotic animal species and understand their individual needs are so important.

The Herps Alive Foundation is open to visitors who would like to tour the facility and meet some unique animals up close. "We are open to the public and we encourage people to come in and visit even if they don't plan on adopting," says Gisser. There are many opportunities for animal interaction, including turtle feeding stations throughout the building. The rescue offers birthday parties off-site or at the rescue and also hosts educational programs at schools and libraries throughout the year. Homeschool and 4-H groups are frequent Herps Alive visitors, with many families stopping in simply to expose their children to diverse species or to teach them about wildlife conservation.



Keith Gisser introduces an albino Burmese python to a young boy at a birthday party.

The Herps Alive Foundation has taken in hundreds of different species, including alligators, cobras, anacondas, and Gila monsters (a venomous species of lizard native to the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico). Staple species include ball pythons, bearded dragons, leopard geckos, and corn snakes- all of which are highly adoptable. Gisser states that people should care about reptiles "for the same reason they should care about dogs and cats. They may not be fuzzy and furry, but they have a special place in the environment." Reptiles surprisingly make wonderful family pets, as they are hypoallergenic, can live in small spaces, and do not have an unpleasant odor as long as their habitat is kept clean. The largest goal of the Herps Alive Foundation is to adopt out as many animals as possible to responsible, forever families. There is a



false belief that many of the rescued animals should be released back into the wild. Gisser explains, however, that this would be a death sentence for animals who have been born and raised in captivity. "It's all they know," says Gisser, who understands the reliance captive-bred animals have on human caretakers.

People can support the rescue's cause in a variety of ways. Monetary donations are greatly appreciated and desperately needed. Donors can also give food items to the rescue, as many lizard and tortoise species rely on a daily supply of fresh vegetables and leafy greens. The "Grow a Row" campaign encourages people to plant an extra row of leafy greens in their home gardens for the rescue. Gisser stresses that one of the most important resources community members can give is their time. Volunteer opportunities are plentiful at the Herps Alive Foundation, which allows volunteers 15 years and older to assist with animal care and education. There is also a Parent Child Volunteer Program for younger reptile-enthusiasts who want to get involved. This program allows children hands-on opportunities to help out around the rescue under the supervision of a parent or guardian. The next time you are thinking about adding a new pet to the family, consider scales instead of fur.

The Herps Alive Foundation is located at 1489 Garden Dr. in South Euclid. For more information, visit www.herpsalive.org or the Herps Alive Facebook page. To contact Keith Gisser or his team, please call (216) 374-1392 or email herpsalive@earthlink.net.

~Article by Sophia Filipiak
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Adrenaline Monkey offers adventures for every family member

If your family enjoys watching American Ninja Warrior, it's time to get them off the couch and on to an obstacle course. No thanks, you say? Your 5-year-old couldn't possibly do that and you haven't done even a single squat since before she was born?

It's time to get moving. Adrenaline Monkey is an indoor family adventure park featuring a variety of adventures at different levels. Toddlers scrambling up a mini warped wall, parents or grandparents navigating the aerial ropes course, and customers at every age in between will all feel at home here.

"It was thoughtfully designed to be approachable and exhilarating for all different ages and abilities," explains owner Denise Carkhuff.

After checking in and signing a waiver, guests are met with a soft-play obstacle course to their right. It's meant for toddlers, but Carkhuff says older kids enjoy it, too.

Carkhuff explains, "There's an obstacle course with a soft mini warped wall. There are little walls to jump over that are made of soft materials, so young children can navigate them and not get hurt. We added some approachable overhead rings as well and a pint-sized climbing feature called the 'devil steps.'"

Four ninja warrior-style obstacle courses, ranging from easy to hard, are a big draw. Depending on the level, the course may contain a spider climb, warped walls, overhead rings, salmon ladders or unstable bridges. There are also beginner and advanced parkour-inspired courses.

Most of the climbing walls are set up so participants can compete against each other, if they would like, except for one glow-in-the-dark wall, which Carkhuff calls "fanciful." Most of the climbing walls require belays, or anchored safety ropes. Once participants are hooked in, they climb the wall as high or as quickly as they are comfortable and then are slowly lowered. However, one nonbelayed boulder climbing wall is situated above what is, essentially, a huge air mat.

"You can fall Nestea plunge style," Carkhuff says. "It's a thrill and anybody can do it."

Nondirectional aerial ropes feature 26 elements all 16 feet in the air directly above the ninja courses. There's also a basketball court.

Additionally, Adrenaline Monkey offers an arcade for the gamers in the family.

"If there's a big party, not everybody does everything, so it's good to have options," Carkhuff says. "We hope to convince some of the gamers to get more active."



A bar with a recharging station allows parents to work on their computers and supervise children, who may be taking a class or attending a party. A 4,200 square-foot mezzanine is home to an event space and the Monkey Bar, which offers food and beverages ranging from avocado toast to cocktails. It's an ideal spot for hosting birthday parties, bar and bat mitzvahs, bachelor parties, corporate team building events, and other occasions.

Ninja warrior training classes, after-school programs, school and sports team field trips, and summer and school vacation camps are also part of the mix.

For general info, visit them online at www.adrenalinemonkeyfun.com or call 216-282-3100. Adrenaline Monkey is located on the east side at 26800 Renaissance Parkway, north of I-480.

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Dragons spotted arriving at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo!

Nearly two dozen dragons have been spotted arriving at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo's Waterfowl Lake ahead of summer! Beginning on May 2, guests can experience the all-new Dragons Landing with more than 20 animatronic mythical creatures along the zoo's Waterfowl Lake. Guests can get up close to giant dragons that span up to 30 feet long and 15 feet tall, watching as they roar and breathe smoke during this limited-time adventure.

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is also excited to welcome back Swan Voyage this summer, offering guests the opportunity to paddle on the

picturesque Waterfowl Lake aboard Trumpeter Swan paddle boats. Perfect for families and groups, these five-passenger boats provide a peaceful way to experience the heart of the Zoo.

Both Dragons Landing and Swan Voyage are add-on experiences at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and tickets may be purchased at several locations throughout the Zoo including at the Guest Resource Center and three other attraction ticket stations.

Admission to Dragons Landing is \$3 for members, \$4 for nonmembers per experience. General Zoo admission is also required.



Horsefest returns to Lake Metroparks Farmpark

May 17 & 18, 2025 • 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Discover why horses are vital to transportation, entertainment, working livestock, power on the farm and loyal companions to their human partners. Riders of all ages will demonstrate the skill and trust between horse and rider. A variety of breeds will be on display as well as the popular mare and foal moments. With all the different entertaining demonstrations, breeds and sizes of

horses, it may take both days to experience it all! The event will include pony rides (\$6), children's activities and much more!

Admission: \$9 ages 12 through 59, \$8 ages 60 and older, \$7 ages 2–11, children younger than 2 are free.

Lake Metroparks Farmpark is located at 8800 Euclid Chardon Rd. (Rt. 6) in Kirtland. Visit www.lakemetroparks.com for more info.

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Motherhood myths we need to let go of this Mother's Day

Motherhood is full of beautiful, messy, unforgettable moments. But along the way, many moms pick up beliefs—myths, really—that make their journey harder than it needs to be. This Mother's Day, let's release these unhelpful expectations and replace them with truths that bring freedom, grace, and joy.

Myth #1

Good moms don't need breaks

Why we need to let it go: There's a cultural expectation that moms should be available 24/7, putting everyone else's needs ahead of their own. But running on empty helps no one. Burnout isn't a badge of honor; it's a warning sign.

Truth to hold onto: Rest isn't a luxury—it's a necessity. Taking time for yourself doesn't make you less of a mother; it makes you a healthier, more present one. Whether it's five minutes with a cup of tea or a week-end away, you deserve to recharge, not only for yourself but to be the mom you long to be.

Myth #2

Motherhood should come naturally

Why we need to let it go: No one is born knowing exactly how to parent. It's learned through experience, trial and error, and a lot of love. The idea that good moms just instinctively know what to do leaves many feeling like they're failing when things feel hard.

Truth to hold onto: It's okay to ask questions, make mistakes, and learn as you go. Parenting is a skill that develops over time. You don't have to have all the answers—you just have to show up with love and a willingness to grow. Just like your kids are learning and growing, so are you!

Myth #3

A messy house means I'm failing

Why we need to let it go: Somewhere along the way, a spotless home became a measure of good parenting. But real life with kids is full of crumbs, laundry piles, and sticky fingerprints. Trying to keep everything perfect all the time is exhausting and unrealistic.

Truth to hold onto: A messy home is a lived-in home. Your worth isn't measured by how tidy your house is. Prioritize connection over perfection—your kids will remember the love, not the clutter. And the responsibility of the home doesn't fall only on you. Every member of your household is part of creating the home you want.

Myth #4

I should cherish every moment

Why we need to let it go: Motherhood is beautiful, but it's also exhausting, overwhelming, and sometimes frustrating. The pressure to treasure every moment can leave moms feeling guilty when they don't enjoy the tough days.

Truth to hold onto: It's okay to love your kids but not love every part of parenting. The hard moments don't erase the good ones, and you don't have to enjoy everything to be a great mom.

Myth #5

Moms should always bake (or be crafty, or love every school event)

Why we need to let it go: Not every mom enjoys baking, crafting, or attending PTA meetings—and that's okay! The idea that all moms should excel in certain "mom things" is outdated and unnecessary.

Truth to hold onto: You don't have to fit a mold to be a great mom. Your strengths and interests are enough. If you'd rather read a book with your kids than make homemade cupcakes, that's wonderful. Lean into the things you love, and your kids will, too.

Myth #6

Asking for help is a sign of weakness

Why we need to let it go: So many moms carry the weight of motherhood alone, believing they should be able to handle everything themselves. But no one was meant to parent in isolation.

Truth to hold onto: Asking for help isn't a weakness—it's wisdom. Whether it's calling a friend, delegating chores, or seeking professional support, reaching out makes you a stronger, healthier mom.



Myth #7

My kids' happiness depends on me

Why we need to let it go: Moms often feel responsible for making sure their kids are always happy. But trying to shield them from every

disappointment or struggle isn't realistic—or helpful.

Truth to hold onto: Your job isn't to make your kids happy all the time; it's to love them, guide them, and equip them to handle life's ups

Continued on page 14



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Mother's Day can take on many faces

With all the gorgeous cards filled with heart-felt sentiment and the booming floral deliveries, Mother's Day can be a great way to share your love for someone who has stood by you through even your toughest seasons. Cards full of flowery sentiments fill stores, addressed to loving mothers, mothers-in-law, and those who have been like mothers. But those categories don't cover the complex circumstances in some of our actual situations and relationships with our moms. For some, Mother's Day can be a strange or difficult day to acknowledge.

Some of us had those greeting-card-worthy moms, the kind that were our biggest cheerleaders; ones we trusted for their guidance and advice. But due to illness or accident, she's no longer with us, casting a long shadow over Mother's Day. Certainly, we remember the good times. And we wish with all our hearts she was still around to see what we've been up to, or how our little ones make that face or do that thing that reminds us of her. If we happen to find a card for that, we're not really sure where to send it.

Others of us have always longed to be moms, but the opportunity never happened for us, due to life circumstances or medical issues. So, we celebrate the mothers we love and delight in the children around us, whether they're related to us or not.



But there isn't really a card for us either.

Some of us are single moms with littles too young to buy or even make us a card. For us,

Mother's Day may be just another day to power through, grateful for the simple things that help support our little family as our sweet babies grow. There are plenty of cards about the love and sacrifices we make, but we won't likely receive them until our kids are much older.

Still others of us have strained or negligible relationships with the woman who gave birth to us. For reasons known or unknown to us, they aren't involved in our lives or the lives of our children. If we want to send them a card, there really isn't one that simply says "Happy Mother's Day" without adding sentiments that simply don't apply.

There's an ancient Chinese quote that says, "Women hold up half the sky." Mother's Day gives us the opportunity to celebrate all those women who have helped shape us. It's also an opportunity to celebrate and encourage those who are side by side with us, muddling through the messy middle. Whether they helped build us up when we were small or are now helping hold us up while we raise our own kids in community, women are superheroes and deserve to be honored, even if there isn't a perfect card for it. Happy Mother's Day, sweet mommas, no matter where you are on this journey.

~Article by Stacy Turner

~Photo credit: Adobe Stock/ by Studio Romantic

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The “always on” commitment of motherhood

I was running in my neighborhood one day when I heard a siren in the distance. It got louder and continued for a few minutes, shattering the quiet of the morning. My heart raced a little faster as a dozen what-ifs suddenly barreled through my brain. I was only a few blocks from my daughter's school. Was the emergency there?

For a moment, I stood frozen in the road, wondering if I needed to do something. Run to the school perhaps? The logical part of my brain effectively nixed this idea, so I checked my cell phone instead. It is my lifeline, a way to connect with my kids—the pieces of my heart that now float untethered in the world for longer and longer stretches of time.

Before long, the siren's wails got quieter and faded away. I checked my phone again; no one had called me. I finally exhaled, but I couldn't relax.

Admittedly, I tend to live on the anxious side of the personality curve. But it's not surprising that becoming a parent bolsters our sense of vigilance. Wrapped up in the core of motherhood is a perpetual commitment to be “always on,” ready to protect and nurture our kids starting from the moment they are a tiny blip on a screen, for as long as we exist in this world. It is an awesome responsibility and a sacred commitment, the reason we often feel important and powerful yet terrified and full of doubt in the same breath.

I've noticed a particular amount of angst that arises with this role, a feeling we begin to carry with us once we learn we are mothers. I remember my first prenatal yoga class, how the instructor gently placed her hands on

my shoulders and said, “You're holding on to a lot of stuff here.” Growing up, I wondered why my own mother seemed stressed at times. “I'm not tense,” she'd say through gritted teeth, an almost comical denial.

Now I understand. The luxury of worrying only about myself is long gone. Driving my kids around, I sometimes become aware that my hands are clenching the steering wheel tightly; the knowledge that I have precious cargo in my backseat is always at the forefront of my mind. I'm late, always late, trying to get everyone where they need to go while staying one step ahead of sibling conflicts. Most mornings I feel like a referee in some bizarre game, calling out instructions, administering penalties. Where are your shoes? Go brush your teeth; the bus will be here in ten minutes. Stop taunting your sister, or you'll lose another toy! And for Pete's sake quit climbing the counter!

Only after becoming a mother did I truly understand what it meant to be tired. Not simply physically exhausted, but mentally drained. A mom's brain is always spinning. Turning, turning, turning, like a hamster on a wheel that never stops. Sleep is never quite as restful as it was before children. My kids could snooze through a fire alarm or a Guns N' Roses concert in our hallway, but motherhood has blessed me with an apparently bionic ear. A soft whimper, a tiny creak of a bedroom door, and I sit up in bed, eyes searching the dark to see who needs me.

Like so many high-pressure roles, motherhood has a natural cadence that's not exactly conducive to relaxation. To be a mom is to travel steadily through an endless series of



peaks and valleys, as we face challenges and then almost immediately prepare for the next ones. We survive pregnancy and the seemingly infinite stretch of sleepless nights with a newborn, only to move on to our children's first day of kindergarten, their first painful breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend, and the heart attack-inducing experience of watching them learn to drive. And sprinkled throughout our days are the random events that prompt us to worry about our children's immediate safety and well-being: a cough that lingers just a

bit too long, a phone call from school or a disaster somewhere near or far. There is always something. There will always be something.

My kids are well past the baby and toddler stages now, and I've realized that I won't ever be the type of mom who exudes serenity and calm. I think I'm finally okay with that. Someday, my kids will likely remember that I was tense sometimes. But I hope they'll also remember how very much they were loved.

~Article by Gina Rich

~Photo credit: Roman Samborskiy

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PHOTO BY ANDREA DAVIS

When self-doubt runs the show

How I went from second-guessing to trusting myself

By Rebecca Fellenbaum

“I was snapping at the people I loved the most, not because of what they said, but because of what I believed about myself.”

Self-doubt used to run the show.

I had an inner dialogue that questioned everything I did, especially my parenting. Was I doing bedtime right? Did I allow too much screen time or feed the right foods, and on and on? Little did I know that the questioning stemmed from a lack of confidence and belief that I wasn't good enough.

The worst part was that the self-doubt didn't just stay in my head. Because I was second-guessing myself and putting myself down, even innocent questions from my husband or extended family, like someone asking me, “Where does this go?” felt like an attack. I'd feel shame and anger, not because they were questioning me directly but because I was already carrying so much self-doubt. This caused me to snap or stew in anger.

The pressure and relentless inner dialogue were exhausting.

Signs self-doubt might be running the show

You've likely felt some doubt too—that whisper (or shout) in your mind that says, “You're doing it wrong.” Here's how it might show up:

- Feeling like you're failing
- Overthinking simple decisions
- Ruminating over past conversations or choices
- Comparing yourself to others
- Obsessing over routine tasks
- Getting defensive or irritable

For some, self-doubt is specific to parenting. For others, it's a background hum in daily life. Wherever and however it shows up, here's the good news: It doesn't have to stay this way.

Why self-doubt happens

Self-doubt is emotional, not logical. It arises when we feel something uncomfortable like shame, fear, or sadness but don't give ourselves space to feel and process these emotions.

Instead of helping us process our feelings, our ego steps in and starts trying to protect us from them.

The egoic part of our mind lives in the past and future. It's constantly scanning for danger and working off of our limiting beliefs. It tells us stories like “You're not good enough” or “You're going to fail.” It means well, but in trying to protect us from our feelings, it prevents us from being whole.

This all happens unconsciously, and yet it manifests as tension and unwanted thoughts, even when we're just trying to pack our kid's lunch!

The turning point: Slowing down

Slowing down helped me realize my thoughts and behaviors stemmed from self-doubt.

That sounds simple, but it was eye-opening. I stopped rushing through the motions and pushing past the inner dialogue and started paying attention to my thoughts, my body, and my emotions. With the help of a coach, I did parts work—connecting with younger parts of myself who were scared and needed reassurance. I learned how to feel my feelings instead of avoiding them. I learned how to regulate my nervous system, detach from my thoughts, and gently rewrite the story I told myself.

Little by little, my inner world softened. I became more confident—not because I had answers but because I trusted myself to find them. I stopped handing my confidence over to other people. I became more resourceful. I could accept feedback without spiraling. This work changed everything.

A gentle road out of self-doubt

Here are some tools and practices that helped me move out of self-doubt and into self-trust, confidence, and self-compassion:

1. Slow down and breathe

Focusing our breath brings us



Photo credit: Shutterstock/ KieferPix

into the present moment and calms our nervous system. You can't be spiraling into self-doubt while you are paying attention to your inhale and exhale. Try inhaling to a count of four and exhaling to a count of six. Focus on releasing tension as you do this.

2. Feel your feelings

Feel what's underneath the doubt. Emotions often come with physical sensations, so scan your body and notice where the feeling emanates from. Journaling is a great way to process the noisy thoughts and notice what emotions are present.

3. Fact-check yourself

When you have a doubting thought, ask yourself: Is this 100% true? Most of the time, our doubts are just stories on repeat.

4. Practice self-compassion

Talk to yourself like you'd talk to your child or your best friend. Tell yourself, “It's okay to not have all the answers,” “I'm doing my best,” and “I deserve kindness.”

5. Calm your nervous system

Simple practices like mindful breathing, meditation, walking outside, or tuning into your five senses can shift your state and bring you into the present moment, which can get you out of doubt.

6. Pay attention to your triggers

What fuels your self-doubt? If you struggle to help with your child's homework because you spin into thinking far into the future, do something mindful before you sit down. I used to hate driving with my husband in the passenger seat because I felt like he was critical of my every move. Every breath he took felt like criticism. I had to coach myself to feel my feelings and say nice things

to myself in those moments. Now I don't mind at all!

7. Catch and replace the doubt

What if the time you spent doubting yourself was spent loving yourself instead? Redirect your focus to self-love and self-acceptance. When you notice a doubting thought, choose a kinder one.

Rewriting the script

Self-doubt can become a habit and our default neural pathway. The way out is repetition in the other direction. You can begin by recalling a moment when you felt proud of yourself. What were you thinking? How did you feel? Let that memory anchor a new belief about who you are and what you're capable of.

You don't have to believe every doubtful thought. And you don't have to let those thoughts shape how you show up in parenthood, in marriage, at work, or in your relationship with yourself.

If you're struggling with self-doubt, especially around parenting, you're not broken. You're human.

You don't have to keep living with a constant inner critic. With presence, practice, and compassion, you can turn down the volume on self-doubt and turn up the voice that reminds you: You're doing just fine.

You are allowed to be learning and growing. You're allowed to feel unsure. You're allowed to ask for help.

Self-doubt might still show up for me, but it no longer gets to drive the car. And that changes everything.

Rebecca Fellenbaum is a certified somatic life coach, writer, Reiki practitioner, and Cleveland-area mom. She helps women and parents who have “made it” on the outside to feel great on the inside so they can enjoy their lives, children, and families. Find her at rebeccafellenbaum.com.



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Helping your child cope with seasonal allergies

Sniffles and sneezes are an inevitable part of growing up. But if your child has a lingering runny nose and cough—or both appear around the same time each year—it could be seasonal allergies. Seasonal allergies typically happen in the spring, summer and early fall.

Symptoms of seasonal allergies typically start to show up in children after the age of 3 and most prominently around 5 to 6 years. If your child has been diagnosed with eczema or asthma, they're also more likely to develop allergies.

If you suspect that your child might be among the roughly 20% of children who experience seasonal allergies each year, know that relief is possible. There are many steps you can take to make seasonal allergies easier on your little one.

What are common signs of allergies in kids?

Seasonal allergies, also known as seasonal allergic rhinitis, have the same signs in kids that they do in adults. Common symptoms of sea-

sonal allergies in children include:

- Itchy, stuffy or runny nose
- Red, itchy or watery eyes
- Itchy mouth or skin
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Increased fatigue

Sometimes it can be tough for kids to communicate how they are feeling, so parents can also watch out for behaviors such as breathing through their mouth while sleeping.

Why do we have allergic reactions?

You can think of allergic reactions as your body overreacting to something it has been exposed to. And different people may have different allergy triggers. People with seasonal allergies react to pollen or mold in the air—and their bodies produce antibodies in response. As a result, you get congestion and inflammatory symptoms. These inflammatory symptoms are caused by the body's release of different chemicals such as histamines. Histamines cause itching, redness, swelling and secretions



in the nose, eyes, skin, throat and ears.

What are common seasonal allergy triggers?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one in five children report having a seasonal allergy.

There is a chance your little one could grow out of their allergies. Outgrowing allergies may occur over time as the body develops a tolerance to the specific allergen after long periods of natural exposure. But, if your child has severe allergies, the chances of outgrowing them drops.

The timing of allergies depends on where you live and which plants and pollens are your personal triggers. Some general guidelines:

- Allergies from trees typically occur in springtime.
- Allergies from grasses occur in late spring and early summer.
- Allergies from weeds—including the common allergy trigger, ragweed, occur in late summer through early fall.

Weather can also affect your child's allergies. For example, pollen counts can increase after rainfall and when the wind picks up. Counts also tend to be higher in the morning and during periods of cool nights and warmer days.

What's the best way to treat allergies in kids?

Preventing exposure – When it comes to seasonal allergies, one of the best treatments is prevention. That means minimizing your child's exposure to known allergens. Some ways to help your child avoid seasonal allergy triggers include:

- Stay indoors with the windows closed (no window fans) when pollen counts are high.
- Shower, change clothes and wash your child's hair after being outside.
- Dry clothes inside the house (rather than outside on a line) to avoid pollen contact.
- Wear a NIOSH-rated 95 face mask if pollen counts are especially high.
- Use a portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in the bedroom.
- Clean with a vacuum that's certified "asthma- & allergy-friendly."

While it's important to be mindful of triggers, kids will be kids. Don't feel like you need to lock your child indoors for a whole season when they should be out playing.

Allergy testing – Allergy testing can also help to identify specific triggers so you can be more targeted in your approach. For instance, if your child is allergy tested and you have the specific tree or plant in your backyard, it may help to remove it.

To get tested, make an appointment with an allergist who will typically perform an exam, asking about symptoms as well as any history of seasonal allergies in the family. Clinical allergy testing can be performed using skin scratch tests, blood tests or elimination tests.

What medications can kids take?

There are several kid-safe, over-the-counter allergy medications on the market. They are typically the same treatments that are used for adults, although it's important to read the instructions because doses

Continued on page 14

Pasta
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All Are
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Thursday, June 19
4:30–6:45 p.m.
Tickets: \$15

Pasta, Meatballs, Salad,
Bread & Butter, Coffee or Tea

2025 Summer Season

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No lunches will be available. The dining room will be closed at noon.





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Every child needs family

May is National Foster Parent Month

Cuyahoga County children need your help. There are more than 2,000 children in DCFS custody through no fault of their own. Victims of abuse and/or neglect, some may need special care or attention to help them deal with the impact of trauma in their young lives. Each of these children needs and deserves a family who will love and protect them, but there is a shortage of homes and facilities across Ohio. You can help by becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

What is foster care?

- A protective service for children and families.
- Full-time care of children, usually on a temporary basis.
- Typically results in family reunification or a permanent, adoptive home.

Who are the children needing foster care?

- Children who have experienced physical abuse, neglect or abandonment;

or whose parent(s) are in jail or hospitalized.

- All ages, races, and cultures.
- Some may have physical, developmental, emotional, and/or behavioral issues.
- Many have experienced extreme trauma and deprivation.

What do foster parents do?

- Provide basic daily care and supervision.
- Act in the place of the parent, making sure all needs are met.
- Take children to medical and therapy appointments.
- Apply nonphysical discipline techniques that are fair and age appropriate.
- Advocate for the child and participate in Child and Family Services meetings.
- Support children in their visitation plan with their biological families or prospective adoptive families.
- Support either reunification or an alternate plan.



- Stay up-to-date on training.
- Respect the culture, race, and background of the children and their families.

What are the requirements to become a foster parent?

- At least 21 years of age.
- Have sufficient income to meet their own basic needs.
- Be in good physical, emotional, and mental health.
- Single or part of a couple -- homosexual or heterosexual -- in a stable relationship for at least one year.
- No educational or religious requirements and home ownership is not necessary.

Is there help to foster?

- Boarding expenses, reimbursed at a daily rate.
- Monthly clothing allowance.
- A medical card for medical, dental, and therapeutic services.
- Car mileage reimbursement for necessary transportation of foster children.
- Support groups, scheduled visits, 24-hour access to the agency, and a wide range of supportive services.

To learn more about fostering or adopting contact Cuyahoga County Division of Child & Family Services at 216-881-5775 or submit an interest form on their website at www.everychildneedsfamily.com.



EVERY CHILD NEEDS FAMILY

Children who have experienced the trauma of abuse or neglect need a safe place to call home.

You can help provide stability and security by becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

Visit everychildneedsfamily.com or call 216-881-5775 for more information



Cuyahoga County
Division of Children and Family Services

Motherhood myths from page 7

and downs. Letting them experience challenges builds resilience and confidence. It can be hard to watch them struggle, but love them through it and you'll both be stronger.

Myth #8

I should be able to do it all

Why we need to let it go: Moms are often expected to juggle everything—work, home, relationships, self-care—without missing a beat. But the truth is, no one can do everything perfectly all the time.

Truth to hold onto: You don't have to do it all. It's okay to set

priorities, let go of certain tasks, and accept that some days will be messy. You're doing enough, exactly as you are.

A Mother's Day gift to yourself

This Mother's Day, let's give ourselves the gift of grace. Let's release these myths and embrace the truth: You are already enough. You are doing an incredible job. And you deserve joy, rest, and love—not just on Mother's Day, but every day.

~Article by Rebecca Hastings

~Photo credit: Adobe Stock/
By Syda Productions

Seasonal allergies from page 12

may differ based on age. Talk to your doctor to find the best medication for your child.

Seasonal over-the-counter allergy medicines for children include:

- Topical nasal corticosteroid sprays.
- Antihistamines, like cetirizine (Zyrtec) or loratadine (Claritin).
- Decongestants are typically only approved for short-term use.
- Sterile saline nasal sprays and rinses, while not medications,

they may help relieve symptoms.

Content is for general informational purposes only and not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for professional health care. See your physician for medical advice personalized to your situation. Consult your doctor prior to beginning an exercise program or making changes to your lifestyle or health care routine.

~Article by Dr. Gary Grosel, CMO,
UnitedHealthcare of Ohio

Photo credit: Shutterstock/by pingpao

Beech Brook's 4th annual "Bash for the Brook" set for June 6, 2025, at Topgolf

Beech Brook is excited to announce the return of "Bash for the Brook" fundraising event, taking place on Friday, June 6, 2025, from 6:30–9:30 p.m. at Topgolf Cleveland (5820 Rockside Woods Blvd N, in Independence). This unforgettable evening of entertainment and philanthropy will directly support Beech Brook's mission to help northeast Ohio's most vulnerable children and families thrive.

Attendees will enjoy a fun-filled evening with delicious food, craft cocktails, and interactive golf games at the state-of-the-art Topgolf facility. The event will also feature an exciting hole-in-one contest, exclusive raffles, and Fund-A-Need opportunities, allowing guests to make a direct impact on the lives of the children and families Beech Brook serves.

Tickets are \$195 per person, with exclusive hosting packages starting at \$1,000. A variety of sponsorship opportunities are available for businesses and individuals looking to make



an even greater difference.

"Each year, Bash for the Brook grows bigger and better, and we are thrilled to bring our supporters together for another night of fun with purpose," said Tom Royer, Beech Brook's president and CEO. "This event not only raises critical funds but also shines a light on the work we do every day to support children and families facing significant challenges."

For more information, to purchase tickets, or to explore sponsorship opportunities, please visit www.beechbrook.org/bash or contact Heidi Lang at hlang@beechbrook.org or 216-831-2255, ext. 2240.

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Beech Brook
HELPING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THRIVE

Mother's & Father's Day weekends at Greater Cleveland Aquarium

Add a splash of wonder to mom or dad's day. Greater Cleveland Aquarium is "shell-abrating" special caregivers with parenting-themed trivia, celebratory pins, extended hours and discounted 50% off admission for moms/stepmoms/foster moms/grandmas on Mother's Day Weekend (Saturday & Sunday, May 10 & 11, 2025, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.) and dads/stepdads/foster dads/grandpas on Father's Day Weekend (Saturday & Sunday, June 14 & 15, 2025, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.).

Mother's Day and Father's Day Weekend activities are included with general admission (\$0-\$19.95 per person).

Greater Cleveland Aquarium is also offering everyone the opportunity to swap the more traditional mugs, tools, perfume and jewelry for the gift of a year's worth of under-sea adventures with a 10% discount on any level of Greater Cleveland Aquarium annual pass, May 3-11 (with code 25MOM10) or June 7-15 (with code 25DAD10). In addition to unlimited daily return admission



for the family, membership perks include free parking while visiting, exclusive programming and discounted and free events, as well as gift shop and birthday party savings.

*Cannot be combined with other offers.

Greater Cleveland Aquarium is located at the Flats West Bank, 2000 Sycamore Street, Cleveland. Call 216-862-8803 or visit them online at greaterclevelandaquarium.com.

Summer of Innovation series kicks off at Great Lakes Science Center

Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) will celebrate the progress driving northeast Ohio's future with its new Summer of Innovation series, providing hands-on STEM learning experiences and a chance to meet STEM professionals from regional forward-thinking companies.

With new technologies developing daily, new careers requiring a skilled workforce are rapidly growing.

The Summer of Innovation series expands on the GLSC's existing workforce development initiatives, such as Manufacturing Day, which introduces high school and middle school students to potential careers in modern manufacturing.

Jobs that require knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are among the fastest growing employment sectors, and informal science education has proven to be particularly effective at engaging diverse audiences to develop interest in STEM careers.

Four Summer of Innovation days, scheduled throughout the summer,



will introduce guests to the wide variety of the region's STEM career opportunities. Each day focuses on a different theme and includes industry partners and GLSC staff engaging guests in a range of activities. Summer of Innovation days will be held from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. focused on the following industry fields:

June 14 – Construction

July 19 – Technology

August 9 – Sustainability

September 13 – Aerospace

Summer of Innovation programming is included with Great Lakes Science Center admission.

Visit www.GreatScience.com for more information.

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