

Phoenix School Counseling, LLC
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Best Haircut Ever

What made my late-December haircut the “best ever” was this observation. The woman cutting my hair said she noticed her customers were so busy with their lists of “things to do” and “presents to buy” that they were not even present. She would ask them a question as she always does, checking in with them about their jobs or their families, and there would be this sluggish, delayed response, as if her question had to work its way through layers of preoccupation. Their minds were so busy with meal planning, preparing for guests and juggling shopping trips, all the while attending to the usual demands of family life, that you could wave your hand in front of their eyes and they would not even see it.

How did it go for you this Christmas season? The first few weeks of January allow an opportunity to review and reflect, not with the purpose of beating yourself up, but rather to take a hard look at the decisions you made and perhaps plan to make different decisions for next year. Were there any obvious red flags? Were you so stressed about getting everything just right for your children that you were tense when they needed you to be calm? Were your high expectations for the season (and the pressure you put on yourself to meet those expectations) wearing you down and making it harder for you to breathe in and breathe out, harder for you to parent at your best when your children were challenging?

Where did the stress come from? Was it from outside sources (e.g., the mall parking lot), or was it that you weighed yourself down with high standards that could not be met no matter how much you ran around and no matter how late you stayed up? Were

you convinced that everything had to be just so? Did you set yourself up even though all you wanted to do was to give your children a Christmas they would always remember?

Take advantage of January. Promise yourself an hour with a favorite beverage and a notepad. Write down what worked for you and your family this year and what you want to do differently next year.

If my wife and I could go back in time we would have started doing something earlier than we did. Some years ago we decided to scale back on the presents we gave our children and use the money to buy a goat or an ox for other people's children. There are many ways to do this. The organization we found is Heifer International (www.heifer.org). Now that our children are both in college it seems as if one of their favorite memories of the Christmas season is when we started buying llamas, cows and sheep instead of things they would tire of in a few weeks. And they told us it was way more fun telling their friends about getting a water buffalo than a My Little Pony.

Let me close with the last words my barber said to me as I was getting ready to leave. *"Some of these parents need to be kinder to themselves and take some time to remember that their presence is going to mean more to their children than the presents."*

What a great observation! And I got it for free along with the haircut. I really should have given her a better tip!

Please join us on January 29th (9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon)

Insightful Parenting: The Workshop!

Facilitated by Dr. Steve Kahn and hosted by

Oak Grove Lutheran Church

This is the approach that focuses on our lives as parents! Learn how to be at your best even when your children are being their most challenging selves. And this is the only 3-hour workshop of the year. If you can't make it, please tell a friend!



You will gain a better understanding of why you might get upset or react too emotionally at times and you will have the chance to learn about your blind spots and learn how to see the teaching opportunities in all the moments of childhood.

To reserve your spot, contact

Pastor Brice at

612-869-4917 or Brice@oakgrovelutheran.org

Location of workshop:

Oak Grove Lutheran Church

7045 Lyndale Ave. Richfield, MN 55423

Cost: \$10 per family

