



Prayer Tip: Make A Prayer List.

(From: **The All-Time 10 Best Tips on Prayer** by Jim Stephens, www.themarriagelibrary.com/Resources/10-Tips-Prayer.pdf)

Making a "Prayer List" is very helpful in being specific.

Write down a list of people and other things that you want to pray for and have the list with you when you pray.

Keep adding things to the list and subtracting them all the time. This helps you clarify exactly what you want to pray for and it serves as a reminder in case you might run out of inspiration.

The slight drawback of a list is that it can tend to become rote and then boring. We naturally tend to avoid things that are boring. So if you feel that your prayers are starting to bore you, then stop using the list for a while.

In the world today there are many books being written and seminars being held on the value of setting goals in your life. One universal point that is always stressed is that goals must be SPECIFIC if you ever want to reach them. This lesson applies equally and very importantly to our prayer life as well. We must be specific.

The things that you are praying for should be clear and detailed. They should be as specific as possible. No building was ever built, no patent ever given, no masterpiece ever created without specific and complete details. When you can clearly conceive in your heart and mind the purpose in your prayer, then it can be realized on earth by you and God together.

Visualize in as much detail as possible the results you want from your prayers. Even write it down to help clarify it. This can help substantialize your benefit from prayer and help you to see your progress. Also, very importantly, if what you are praying for comes true, then you can recognize God working in your life.

Experiencing God is essential to developing your prayer life and your faith.



He must be teething!

By Michele Weiner-Davis

Anyone who has had small children knows that when they are incredibly cranky or crabby, they make us miserable too. But as parents, we try hard to be understanding. We explain away their testiness by telling ourselves, "He must be sleepy. He probably needs a nap," or "Maybe she's hungry," or "He must be teething." These explanations thwart any possible hostility or anger while eliciting our utmost compassion.

But then there are our partners. When our mates are cranky or crabby, do we assume their motivations to be benign? Do we tell ourselves, "He must be sleepy," or "She must be hungry"? Heavens, no! We assume the worst! We nail them! We convince ourselves that they are undoubtedly out to spite us at every turn. When our partner arrives late for dinner, do we tell ourselves, "He must have gotten caught in traffic," or "Poor thing, his boss probably detained him after the meeting," or "I'm sure there must be a good reason he's late"? Hardly. We think, "He never takes my feelings into account," or "Why does he have to be so insensitive?" "That's it, I'm never making dinner for him again."

Now, the problem with these negative perceptions is that they greatly influence how we feel, how we treat our partners, and how they treat us as a result. For example, I know a woman who, because of several failed relationships in the past, needed more than the average dose of daily affection from her husband. If, on any particular day, he failed to profess his love to her, hug her and rub her back, and share his feelings openly, she assumed something was wrong. She told herself, "He's probably mad at me," or "Maybe he's not in love with me anymore," or "I'm obviously not important to him." Each time she had one of those negative thoughts, she clammed up. She went into a shell. If he talked to her, she was short with him. It wasn't long before he started to feel something was wrong because she was so moody. Rather than confront her directly, he withdrew even more. The distance between them grew.

Hearing her story, I couldn't help but think that she was misreading his behavior. I asked her, "If you felt completely confident that he loved you and wanted to be with you forever, how do you think you'd handle the 'off days' differently?" She replied, "That's easy. I would relax. If he were preoccupied or inattentive, I would just assume he had a lot on his mind, and I would go about my business and be cheery around him."

I suggested she try an experiment. "Rather than think the worst," I told her, "assume he just has a lot on his mind when he is quiet or inattentive." She agreed to give it a whirl. Several weeks later she returned, telling me that their relationship had improved dramatically. On one occasion when he had been somewhat distant, she told herself, "He must be preoccupied with a project at work. I know how important it is to him to do well on this project and I'm proud of him." Instead of feeling insecure, as she had in the past, she remained upbeat and made his favorite snack to ease his burden. He so much appreciated her kind gesture that he stopped what he was doing to give her a hug and tell her how much he appreciates her.

If we give our partners the benefit of the doubt, we treat them lovingly and respectfully. If, on the other hand, we assume the worst about our partner's actions or intentions, we behave in self-defeating ways. We turn inward. We get mad. We become suspicious. We declare war. Approaching one's mate with boxing gloves is not likely to bring out the best in him or her.

The moral of the story is simple. When you feel angry, hurt or disappointed by your partner, stop a moment. Ask yourself, "Is it even remotely possible that I am jumping to conclusions?" "Is there another, somewhat more benevolent way to look at my partner's actions?" If so, give your loved one the benefit of the doubt. After all, s/he might be teething.

Parenting Tip

Comment:

We highly recommend this book on positive parenting: **Children Are From Heaven**, by John Gray.

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Continuation from last 3 weeks...
Again here are the 5 key
messages:

1. **It's okay to be different.**
2. **It's okay to make mistakes.**
3. **It's okay to have negative emotions.**
4. **It's okay to want more.**
5. **It's okay to say no, but remember mom and dad are the bosses.**

New Skills for Asserting Leadership

When the first three steps of asking for cooperation do not work, parents need to command their children, just as a general commands the troops. To command is to tell your child directly what you want him or her to do. In a firm but calm voice say, "I want you to put your clothes away," or "I want you to get ready for bed," or "I want you to stop talking in there and go to sleep."

Once you use your command voice, you must remain strong. Getting upset or trying to convince a child to cooperate at this point is a sign you do not feel confident in your role as general, boss, or parent. If the child has already resisted steps one, two, and three, then the parent needs to establish a clear message of who is the boss.

Certainly, a parent doesn't always have to use the earlier steps, but if commanding is used too often, without the previous steps to invite and motivate cooperation, it loses its effect. In the past, children would submit to a parent's command, but today children need to be heard as well.

✓ ***Don't use emotions to command.***

If parents succumb to yelling, getting angry, displaying frustration, or making threats of punishment, they automatically give away their power to command. Using your upset emotions turns your command into a demand, and your positive position is weakened.

✓ ***It's okay to make mistakes.***

Certainly there will be times when a parent loses control and

gets upset while making commands. When you make mistakes by forgetting to hold back your emotions or you just lose control, the solution is to apologize later.

✓ ***Make your commands positive.***

Although it is always best to command in clear and positive terms, often when you are ready to command the first thing that comes out of your mouth is a negative. If this happens, make sure to follow your negative demands or commands with a positive command. For example you might say, "I *don't* want you to hit your brother. I *want* you to be nice instead."

✓ ***Command but don't explain.***

Besides using too much emotion, the other common mistake parents make is to justify their commands with explanations. Children have the right to question and negotiate during the first three steps, but once you begin to command, negotiations are over. It weakens your power if you digress to have a discussion about why the child should do what you want. At this point, the

best technique is repetition of the command. When you use these first four steps of positive parenting gradually over time, you only need to ask and your children will cooperate most of the time. Inevitably, those times will surface again and again when you may need all four skills. As you use these four skills, they become easier. Not only do they work to create cooperation, but they become clear and definite ways to nurture your children to be their personal best.

Commanding is well received after the parent has first listened to their child's resistance or objections.

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