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# PRACTICAL *family* LIVING NEWS

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## Encouraging and Strengthening the Family

We are so thankful to you for helping us touch the lives of thousands-whether they are casually listening to the radio or online, facing an urgent need, or seeking to improve the quality of family relationships. Your gift is extremely important because it offers resources that are directed to current needs and will make an immediate impact on our community.

*Thanks so much for your help.*

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- Send your donation to Practical Family Living, P.O. Box 1676, Appleton, WI 54912
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Practical Family Living is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to providing affordable healthy relationship principles to the public.

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#### February 2016

- The Push Pull of Adolescence
- What Teens Want Parents to Understand
- The Healing & Wounding Cycles Games People Play
- The 5 Components of Emotional Intelligence
- Emotional Intelligence: Helping Children Regulate Their Feelings
- ADHD & Homework: It Can Work!
- Honor Widows
- Preparing for End of Life

#### March 2016

- Boundaries: Being Someone You're Not
- Boundaries: Murder by Mouth
- Kid's Misbehavior and the Brain
- Standing Up for Yourself While Honoring Others
- What Men Need to Hear from the Women They Love
- Selling Sex: Sarah's Story
- Friendship Across Generations
- God's Healing Touch Through the Holy Spirit and Professional Help
- Murky Beliefs
- When You Feel Anxious or Lost
- Honey, Are You Doing That to Bug Me?

Be sure to check out the **Center for Family Healing mental health therapists and offerings at:**  
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**Center for Family Healing**

## One Sure Thing in Successful Relationships

By Lynda Savage, M.S., LMFT, LPC  
 Founder PFL/CFH

I'm teaching a couples class. I'm sharing with them well-researched and applied points that assure success in relationships. John Gottman and others have studied couples for 30 plus years discovering these things. One of many sure fire actions that work for success in relationships is thoughtful appreciation.

What does that mean; thoughtful appreciation? It means:

- Noticing and putting a few words to the tiniest daily things that make each other's day more pleasurable and comfortable
- Small gestures of appreciation and support
- Being grateful for the other's contribution to life together
- Small gestures of non-sexual appreciative touch
- Spontaneous words of kindness
- Speaking about effort a person makes, not waiting for an end product
- Couples who have been together for years still appreciate the words: "Thank you"

When assets appreciate, they grow in what they are worth. The same is true in relationships. When we value and appreciate the countless things that occur every day in life with those around us, we are investing in our own happiness and the happiness of our loved ones.

It is easy to always be on the lookout for ways we are not appreciated, especially when we have experienced hurt with a loved one in the past. As a therapist, I have seen countless people change from a very critical stance of defensiveness to using that same watchfulness to observe and comment on appreciation. Changing the habit of being sensitive to wrongs to being sensitive to rights in daily life, can and does happen.

When grateful appreciation is expressed the defensive position of being on the watch for being wronged diminishes. This cannot be a surprise given that long ago the writer of the Corinthian passage, presented at so many weddings, has said love does not keep a record of wrongs. Love is patient and kind and so on. (1Cor. 13:4-8) This passage points to what modern research says; a strong predictor of marital success is regular thoughtful appreciation.



*Lynda*

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## Rehearse the Facts

By Brenda Spina, M.S., LMFT, LPC  
Director/Clinical Family Therapist



Now that the holidays are over, many of us lift our eyes to the next year ahead of us. Reflective, wistful at times, feeling both sadness and joy, prayerfully thanking God for what has been and what He would have for us next. Requests made, concerns shared, fears laid at His feet, we praise God ahead of time for what 2016 holds; trusting His promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

In preparation for this transition, the words of Paul the apostle stood out for me as I read them early on a crisp Sunday morning. "Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand." (1 Corinthians 15:1 NIV) Paul goes on to outline the most important things chronologically that God has provided. The prophet Isaiah speaks a similar theme in chapter 25, listing all the victories God has performed for the children of Israel.

Tearfully, I realized the truth of what each of these men were promoting. We must remember what God has done. Not just on the cross but in each of our lives each year since the day we have chosen Him. With shorter days, little sunshine, troubled families, lost loved ones, job challenges, and relational conflicts, it is no

## In the Palm of His Hands

By Christine Vander Wielen, MSW, LCSW  
Clinical Therapist



A major responsibility of parents is to teach their children how to obey and how to behave appropriately. In most families, some days are better than others, especially when it comes to obedience. Occasionally, when we had a particularly trying day, I would speak with my child in private and ask the question, "What do you think Jesus thinks about this?" I often heard answers such as: "He is mad at me" or worse "He does not like me any more." Answers like these always saddened me;

however, I was able to get a glimpse into my child's heart and then speak about God's Truth.

Although it is natural to think that God is mad at us when

wonder many lose sight of who God is and where our hope comes from. Rehearsing the facts sounds easy but it does take some determination on our part. It is not a one-time event but something we may need on a regular basis. Here are some ideas:

- Audio/video tape or write a chronological list of what took place that you chose God as Savior
- Write down the relationships and circumstances in which God has come through for you
- Note the ways in which it seemed God disappointed you yet gave you promises to keep you going strong.
- Post these promises where you can see them and add to them as the year progresses

Being so on and off myself with tasks such as these, I realize the commitment this takes. Believe His Word. When weak, turn to those you trust for help. Paul knew the power of remembering, rehearsing the facts of God's behavior. It is to this end we begin this year.

"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58 NIV)

we turn away from Him or when we disobey, those thoughts are not based on Truth. Scripture is full of God's affirmations of His love for us and His benevolent thoughts toward us. In 1 John 4:10, we are told, "This is love: not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." (NIV) Ephesians 2:4-5 states, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved." (NIV)

God's love for us is perfect, complete and there is nothing that we can do to change His love for us. He accepts us just as we are, including our imperfections and our disobedience. Our finite minds cannot fully comprehend the infinite love God has for us nor the depth of His grace and mercy. We are so precious to Jesus that He carries us in the palm of His hands.

## The Shadowy Seasons

By Carrissa Pannuzzo, M.A., LMFT-T, LPC-T  
Clinical Therapist



With winter comes a literal time of shadows and darkness. The days are short. The sun is low and seems somewhat cold. Sure, there are bright, beautiful, pristine days in the winter but often the cold and the dark get to us. It affects every part of us. Skin gets paler, we're short on vitamin D which affects our brain chemistry, the dark stimulates melatonin production which makes us more tired, and more.

There are a lot of factors that contribute to struggles in the season of winter. Just as we have this season each year, we often have metaphorical winters in our lives. Sometimes it's due to a troubled relationship, a dashed dream, a job loss, a death. These times are full of shadows, cold, and dark. As with the

season of winter some light still filters through, but even that light seems less.

One of the best defenses during these periods is to expect and prepare for them ahead of time. Often, especially in our comfortable American lives, we have this strange idea that things will be and should always be good and easy and stable. But really, it's never the case. We live on earth and it's a fallen place. Things go wrong. They fall apart. Summer turns to fall, then winter. But, we can survive and even thrive in these times with realistic, healthy expectations and an understanding of God. He is loving and powerful.

When the shadows come and block our light we can remind ourselves that it's just a season and that God is in control. Yes, parts of our worlds die or go into hibernation. But, with spring comes rebirth and renewal. There's hope! The sun will shine high and bright again.

## Take Time to Celebrate

By Laura Demetrician, M.S., LMFT  
Clinical Family Therapist



I recently watched an old movie that involved a beautiful and elegant couple dancing. I don't know about you, but you won't find my husband and me dancing the waltz. So what has changed in our culture and times? Other cultures and countries continue to use music, beat, celebrations, and traditions to mark

special milestones and bring communities and families together. Where did we lose the art of celebrating?

It is my daughters who have taught me how to celebrate. When our eldest daughter was young, she learned at a wedding to clink her glass and make a toast. "Cheers," she would exclaim. The cute little "Cheers" that would escape her lips became a blessing to a simple meal I had prepared. It was an acknowledgment that we were blessed to have one another. And it was an invitation to join in the beauty of life. It is a practice she continues 10 years later.

Our younger daughter would have a party every day if we let her. She makes a countdown for every holiday! It begins as

soon as the previous holiday is done. She plans elaborate parties and celebrations (that I tactfully have to tone down). It can be excessive, but she understands that there is something special about celebrating.

All around us there is beauty, accomplishment, good news, and traditions worthy of celebrating.

In a careful reading of the Old Testament it appears as though Israel is to spend most of its time celebrating and preparing to celebrate. There are many feasts and celebrations that God asks Israel to observe. Why is this so important?

God wants us to celebrate for several reasons. First, celebrating helps us to connect with one another and with God. Secondly, celebrating is fun. We need beauty and fun in our lives. Thirdly, it helps us to remember God's faithfulness in the past, enjoy the moment, and look forward to the future.

There are many ways to celebrate. Dare to celebrate the small victories and big. "Cheers!"

Please join us in welcoming intern Cheryl Welch, RN, BS. Cheryl is leading groups and accepting clients at a reduced rate as she fulfills her masters level requirements. Call 920-720-8872 for more information.

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