

in your kid's shoes

Big things we learn
from our little ones

by Arricca Elin SanSone



ONE DAY WHEN MY NIECE WAS 4, she sat on our patio painting her tiny nails, a different color polish on each finger and toe. When asked why, she said, “I like it that way, and I’m who matters.” Talk about big wisdom from a little person.

As parents we spend years teaching our kids everything from how to tie shoelaces to how to drive, but any mom or dad can tell you that sometimes kids understand life—at least the big things—better than we do.

be happy when you do a good job

In the daily grind, we often forget to enjoy what goes right for us. “The first time my baby sat up by himself, he had a look of pure satisfaction on his face,” says Sarah Krise of Long Beach, California. “Even though it seems like a minor achievement to us grownups, it was a big deal to him. He was proud of himself, and it showed.”

it doesn't matter what you look like

Kids often see things more clearly. “Wherever she goes, my 5-year-old daughter finds friends,” says Cheryl Whipple Mumford of DuBois, Pennsylvania. “At day care, she befriended a child some of the other children were wary of because she looked different. At the school fair, she found little girls to share rides with. She has no preconceived ideas of who is ‘acceptable’ and who isn’t. She makes me want to be like her.”

your heart is really, really, really big

No one is ever prepared for the intensity of her feelings as a mom. “My love for my eldest daughter was so powerful that while I was awaiting the birth of my second, I wasn’t sure how I could possibly love another child as much,” says Penny Adams of Swartz Creek, Michigan. “But when she was born, my heart doubled in size, and then it happened again with *(Please turn to 46)*

© 2007 P&G

Protect your mouth right with Crest Pro-Health at night.



Crest Pro-Health rinse kills 99%¹ of germs that cause gingivitis, plaque and bad breath, without the burn of alcohol. For a healthier mouth that is cleaner in the morning,² try it tonight.

Healthy, Beautiful Smiles for Life.

¹In laboratory tests. ²Versus brushing alone.

IN YOUR KID'S SHOES

CONTINUED my third daughter. Just seeing their tiny faces and holding them taught me we have infinite room for love.”

don't be afraid to believe in stuff you can't see

We often wish or pray for something, it presents itself, and then we brush it off as coincidence. Kids accept the magic behind the tooth fairy paying for lost teeth and Santa Claus coming down the chimney. The next time your hopes or prayers come true, practice gratefulness instead of doubt.

have fun wherever you go

Sometimes the most memorable days are the ones you don't plan. “My kids always discover something interesting to do, even in the midst of a mundane task,” says Michelle Marshall of Rowley, Massachusetts. “On our way to do chores, we've skimmed rocks or looked for frogs and turtles in our pond. Before I had kids, spontaneity made me nervous, but I've learned to quit trying to control everything, and let life happen.”

do the really important things first

The chores can wait. “We're always running around trying to mark things off our to-do lists,” says Kelly Schneider of Raleigh, North Carolina. “But one day when I was rushing my son along, I noticed how big he was getting. My heart lurched because I realized he's only going to be this age once. Now, sitting and playing with the kids is my priority, not the dishes and vacuuming.”

believe you can do anything

When you ask a class of kindergartners who can draw, most kids raise their hands. Ask adults the same question, and very few of us would raise our hands. Take the phrase “I can't” out of your vocabulary. Kids help us recapture the confidence that we can do anything we want—they don't impose self-defeating limita-

tions on themselves like we adults often do.

being together is the best thing

“A few years ago, I re-evaluated my life and my job in corporate America,” says Kim Jenkins of Arlington, Texas. “When I asked my 14-year-old son whether he'd rather have me working at his school, so I'd see him during the day, or have me in a full-time job that made more money, he chose me. I recognized that my kids would much rather have time with their parents than have ‘stuff’ like a new bike.”

laugh like you mean it

Kids find the greatest joy in the simplest moments. “One day when my grandson was visiting, he let out huge belly laughs when our dog, Sunshine, dropped her favorite ball on his lap and ‘kissed’ him full on the mouth,” says Carine Nadel of Laguna Hills, California. “He laughed so hard he fell over backward. His delight over something so simple makes me want to share more laughter with everyone, because life is too short to take so seriously.”

it's all in how you look at it

Kids notice the positive things that happen instead of concentrating on the negative. “My daughter's school changed curriculum for math, so she didn't get any first-year algebra and had to go directly into Algebra II. On her first test, she got a 50. My heart was broken, and I was concerned we'd have a year ahead filled with frustration and bad grades,” says Christine Geiger of Groveland, Massachusetts. “But she said to me, ‘I think for not having any exposure to this material, I did pretty good!’ She was proud of her 50, which was a reality check for me. Sometimes when I find things disappointing, she finds what's amazing and wonderful—and she's often right. Now she has a 92 average and aced her last test.”

wd