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July 2011

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**Are you a "yes" mom?**

I posed that question two years ago on my blog. It resonated so much with the moms who hang out with me in the blog world, that it's since become an annual summer blog conversation.

It all started when my two boys, then 12 and 15, ran into the house on a very hot summer day and asked, "*Mom it's so hot out there! Could we*

*see if you can cook an egg on the sidewalk?"*

The practical side of me started to say no, but then I caught myself. What would it hurt for them to try it? Why couldn't I say yes? Is it "wasting" an egg, or simply using it for a different, but just as valuable, purpose?

After that quick argument in my head, I finally said, "*Sure. If you want to try it, go ahead! Just make sure you wash off the sidewalk when you're done.*" They got an egg from the refrigerator and ran out of the house to try their science experiment.

Over 26 years of mothering, I've finally learned how to be a "yes" mom more than a "no" mom. It wasn't an easy transition...but it was an important one. For years my interactions with my kids looked more like this:

*"No, you can't fingerpaint."* (It will make too much of a mess.)

*"No, you can't bake cookies today."* (I just mopped the kitchen floor!)

*"No, you can't have a friend over today."* (I don't want to go anywhere today, and I'd have to go get them.)

*"No, you can't play in the sprinklers."* (I'm not in the mood for wet swimsuits, towels, and grass tracked in the house.)

Over time, however, I started paying attention to the "no's" and my reasoning behind them. It usually had something to do with my selfish reasons. I didn't want to deal with a mess. I didn't want to be inconvenienced. I didn't want to have more work to do.

That's not fun to admit, but it was true. My selfishness was robbing my kids of some of the joy of just being kids!

I remember one afternoon many years ago when a couple of the kids asked, *"Can we blow bubbles in the house?"* I initially said no because bubbles have always been an outside activity. But then I thought about my answer. Why couldn't they blow bubbles in the house? We even have the bubble cups that don't spill! Why do I always say no so quickly? Finally, I called my kids back into the kitchen and said, *"Yes, you can blow bubbles in the house. Have a blast."*

And they did.

And I started being more of a "yes" mom than a "no" mom that day.

It's important to distinguish that I'm not talking about permissive parenting. I'm not talking about the times that we need to say no because our kids really do need us to set boundaries. Rather, I'm talking about the times that I say no out of selfishness, or default, or habit.

May you and I have many "yes mom" moments as we enjoy the

remaining weeks of summer!

Joining you in the journey,

*Jill*

Wife of Mark

Mom to Anne, Evan, Erica, Kolya, and Austin

Nana to 1-year-old Rilyn

## Four Summer Sanity Savers

We're halfway through summer, and some of us are already counting the days until the next school year begins! If you're longing for a little bit of summer sanity, put some of these strategies into action:

### Sanity Saver #1: Take care of mom.

What are you doing to keep your emotional fuel tank refueled?

If you don't work outside the home, your school-age kids are now with you 24/7. Create a moms night out once a week with a friend, or trade "days off" with another mom whose kids are close in age to your kids.

If you are working full-time, it takes a lot more effort in the summer to make sure the kids are cared for and getting to their summer activities. Make sure you're taking care of yourself in order to really be able to take care of your family.

### Sanity Saver #2: Create a routine.

It's hard to go from the tight routine of school to absolutely no routine in the summer. While it's important to not schedule every minute, a loose routine can give structure to summer days. Maybe Monday is swimming day, Tuesday library day, Wednesday friend day, Thursday house and laundry day, and Friday free day. A schedule can guide planning and give some sense of security to our kids.

### Sanity Saver #3: Set boundaries.

Kids are more likely to stay within boundaries if they actually know what those boundaries are. How much television is ok? How long on video games? Simply requiring the kids to use the kitchen timer to self-monitor their video games or computer time can be helpful. If they forget to set the timer, they lose the video games/computer time for the rest of the day.



### **Sanity Saver #4: Give opportunities.**

Summer is a great time for kids to learn new skills like cooking, gardening, or laundry. Take the time to teach them how to do a new skill and then give them ample opportunity to practice. If you have junior high or high school age children, they can be in charge of one meal a week. Grade-schoolers can learn to do laundry and be in charge of a couple of loads a week. This gives kids ownership and a sense of pride about contributing to the family. It also teaches them lifelong skills.

Summer is a great time for family, but it can wear on the sanity of even the best of us. Put some sanity savers into your strategy, and you'll find yourself enjoying this season even more!

## **Need *daily* encouragement as a mom?**



### **You can find it in four ways:**

#### **Blog:**

Subscribe to Jill Savage's Hearts at Home Blog for marriage, parenting, finance, cooking, and "keeping your heart at home" kind of encouragement!

#### **Facebook:**

Join the conversations on the Hearts at Home Facebook Page to be encouraged by other moms who understand what your life is like!

#### **Online Forum:**

Tap into the great online moms group found on the Hearts at Home Bulletin Board!

**Twitter:**

Receive little bits of encouragement in your twitter feed!



***Want to give them your best?***

A Hearts at Home conference provides the answers for the questions you have, no matter what stage of mothering you're in!



**REGISTER NOW!**

for the Western Conference, October 7-8, in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

**REGISTER NOW!**

for the North Central Conference, November 4-5, in Rochester, Minnesota.

*Don't have a conference close enough to attend?*

**REGISTER NOW!**

for a Conference To-Go!

### **Behind the Scenes...**



L-R Jessica Benzakein, Vicki Lawson, and Lori Coffman

**Jessica** is a mom of two who lives in Wisconsin. She's a Hearts at Home volunteer who's the "voice" behind our Twitter and Facebook pages.

**Vicki** is a mom of three boys who lives in Illinois. She is the receptionist in the Hearts at Home office. Often it's her voice you hear when you first call our office.

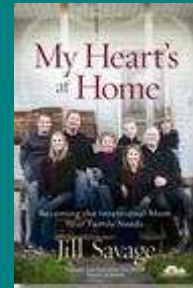
**Lori** also lives in Illinois and is a mom of two boys. She is the administrative assistant for the marketing team which means she's working behind the scenes to get you the materials you need to tell other moms about Hearts at Home!



## *Need to know you're not alone?*

Check out these summer Facebook studies that will help you improve your mom skills:

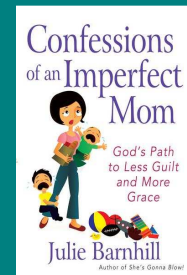
- Jill Savage's *My Heart's at Home*
- Julie Barnhill's *Confessions of an Imperfect Mom* formerly known as *Motherhood, the Guilt that Keeps on Giving*



July 6-August 6

Click on the image of whichever book study you'd like to join to "Like" the page.

Then grab the book off your bookshelf or order it online and join the discussion!



August

## God's "Mom Revolution" Truth for You

*"Are you tired? Worn out? ...Come to me. Get away with Me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me and work with Me -- watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace... Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."*

*Matthew 11:28-30 The Message*

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