



1509 N. Clinton Blvd. · Bloomington, IL 61701 · (309) 828-MOMS · hearts@hearts-at-home.org

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It's usually when I find myself speaking to my kids through clenched teeth that I realize it: I just reacted when I should have responded.

What's the difference? A lot, actually.

When I react, my child is in charge. When I respond, I am in charge.

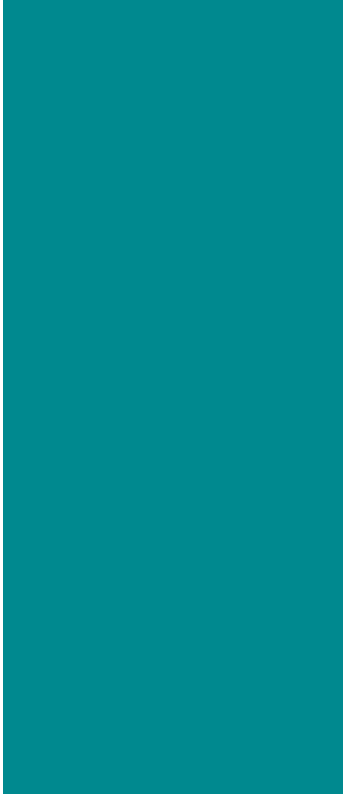
One thing I've learned after 26 years of mothering is that things are usually better in a family if mom and dad are calling the shots rather than the kids.

But even knowing that, sometimes my emotions just get the better part of me. Do you know what I mean?

If I'm honest, however, it's usually because I'm too distracted or too tired to appropriately lead my kids. That's a tough pill to swallow, but it's true.

What I've learned is that I can move from reacting to responding with three small but effective changes:

- Increase margin: When I cram too many activities into too little time, it's a recipe for disaster.

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- Lower expectations: When my perfectionism kicks in, I'm no fun to live with.
 - Expect the unexpected: When I expect that life will throw its curves, I handle it better.

A good friend once said, "Every once in a while, life is smooth sailing...then there's the rest of the time." The more I understand that statement, the better I handle all that real life and real mothering throw my way.

React or respond? I'm working on responding. Want to join me?

Joining you in the journey,

Jill

Wife of Mark

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

Nana to 17-month-old Rilyn

Hearts at Home helps you...

...Make proactive parenting decisions, rather than "knee-jerk" reactions.

...Decrease financial stress by learning how to maximize your family budget.

...Increase your confidence as a mom when you move from feeling overwhelmed to being an intentional leader of your children.



The Go-To Place for Moms

5 Things To Do Today for a Better Tomorrow

Life as a mom is busy and frankly sometimes exhausting. In order to respond rather than react, we have to make some daily choices. Doing a few simple things today will improve your day and set you up for a great tomorrow.



Connect With God:

God understands our challenges as moms. As Hearts at Home CEO, Jill Savage writes in her book *Real Moms...Real Jesus*, "Jesus had no personal space. Everywhere he went people needed him, people touched him, and people wanted something from him." That certainly describes a mom's world. Talk to Jesus about those things while you're folding laundry, driving carpool, or making dinner. He understands and He cares.

Play With Your Kids:

Children fill a home with laughter, and we moms need to take part in that joy. Allot time in your day to simply play with your children. This may mean stacking blocks with your 2-year-old or playing on a gaming system with your teenager. Identify something your child likes to play and join them for a few minutes!

Plan Your "Me" Time:

You may not be able to take some time for your own personal relaxation right now but take time to plan for it. Look at the next week to identify a time when a friend or your husband could watch the children and you can slip away (even if just to the privacy of your own bedroom) for an uninterrupted hour. Make this "me" time an item on your calendar just as you would any important appointment.

Take Care of Your Body:

God has given you only one body. Consider for a moment how you are taking care of it. Identify just one thing that you recognize is unhealthy for your body and replace it with one healthy item. This might be eating an apple instead of a candy bar or taking a walk around the block instead of watching television. By selecting just one healthier option, you will feel better about yourself.

Connect With Your Spouse:

One of the most important relationships you have is the one with your spouse. Take time to nurture that relationship. Ask your spouse for just 10 minutes every day when you can connect and share. If you are not married, identify a personal friend or family member who you can connect with at least weekly for 10 minutes of good conversation.

God's "Mom Revolution" Truth for You

"To you who are ready for the truth, I say this: Love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer for that person."

Luke 6:27 The Message

Top Smartphone Apps for Moms



Got a smartphone?

Check out these apps every mom needs to know about!

Rest Area Finder

Need to know where the next rest area is on a trip? This app gives the mile marker location and what amenities you'll find at the rest area.

Mom Maps

This app pinpoints nearby playgrounds, restaurants, and museums in major cities.

Card Star

Tired of carrying around all the discount/membership cards on your keychain? This app puts all the bar code cards in your phone!

Mapquest

This travel app has voice guided GPS navigation.

Evernote

Keep all your random information in one place!

Dragon Dictation

Lets you send emails and texts by speaking them.

Focus on the Family Daily Broadcast

A daily 30 minute program of marriage and parenting encouragement hosted by Jim Daly, Dr. Julianna Slattery, and John Fuller.

Family Life Audio

A daily 30 minute program of marriage and parenting encouragement hosted by Dennis Rainey and Bob Lepine.

Plugged In

Reviews that help you determine if movies, videos, tv episodes, and music are appropriate for your kids.



It doesn't matter whether your kids are toddlers or teenagers, a Hearts at Home conference is designed just for you!

Walk-in Registration is still available for the Western Conference, October 7-8, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Call 309-828-MOMS or click [here](#) for more information!

REGISTER NOW!

for the North Central Conference, November 4-5, in Rochester, Minnesota.
(Best value deadline is October 12!)

Can't make it this year?

REGISTER NOW!

for a Conference To-Go!

Hearts at Home
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Bloomington, IL 61701

Email: hearts@heartsathome.org

Phone: 309 828 MOMS

Web: <http://www.HeartsAtHome.org>