

## Stress Reduction Lessons Children Teach

Did you know you can learn how to be healthy from a five year old? It's true. These articles have always been dedicated to the discovery of low cost, effective ways to make you happier and healthier. If we can bring more joy, humor, goodwill and happiness to our lives, we will reduce stress, depression, and fatigue. A child can be our best teacher for this. If you pay attention and copy the attitude of a five year old, your whole life can change for the better.

I volunteer as a soccer and baseball coach for boys and girls six and under. My experience working with young children has been one of the most rewarding decisions I have ever made. I notice after a practice or a game, my mood and attitude is always happy. I feel good being around kids. Let me provide some examples that are lessons for all of us to learn. First of all, before formal practice begins, the children play a game of tag. They initiate this on their own, it is spontaneous. After practice, the same thing happens; they spontaneously begin another game of tag. If we didn't play soccer at all, they would play together and not even notice. If they play soccer, it is ok, if they play tag that is just fine too. The lesson is to play games. Recreation in any form can bring joy to your life. Play cards, bingo, go fishing or waterskiing, or play Monopoly. A five year old does not complain when they decide to play, they just play.

My son, Luke, is my best teacher about having fun. Watching his behaviors and being more like him improves my attitude. For instance, Luke sings all the time. He doesn't need to be in the shower like an adult. He sings everywhere at any time. He will sing classic rock; he will hum the theme to Star Wars, or Itsy Bitsy Spider. To Luke it makes no difference, he sings. What I have noticed about myself is now I sing more too. It feels good to sing, try it.

For a five year old, everyone is a friend. They love their teachers, their pets, their parents, and their toys. They have an innocence and trust for the world. Despite all the negativity in the news, the lesson my son teaches me is overall mankind is good. If I would ask Luke the question of whether mankind will make it in the future, his trusting response would be, "Of course, daddy, because we can still play."

Another lesson from a five year old is enthusiasm. When I ask the children on my soccer team, "Who wants to be the goalie?" Every hand is thrust into the air. When I coach baseball and ask, "Who wants to play second base?" Every hand is thrust into the air. Every child is enthusiastic about every position. The lesson is they have no fear of failure. If they save a goal, that's great, if the ball goes past them, no big deal. A five year old will be whatever you ask of them, and they will do it with no fear. Nice lesson.

One of my favorite lessons from my son is not to be so serious. Life for Luke is funny. A five year old will say, "That is just silly". The word, silly, describes most of his world. Until my son, I don't think I spoke the word, silly. Now I agree with him, life is silly.

Lastly, a child teaches you the most healthy and happiest lesson of all, Love. Everyday, without exception, Luke will say to me, "I love you all day long." Before bedtime every night, he will say, "I love you all night long." When a child speaks these words to you there is no room in your life for stress or depression. Thanks for the life lessons, son, you're my best teacher.

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