

A Joyful Mother Taught by Angela Baker

“...Joy does not come from outside, for whatever happens to us it is within. The second truth is that light does not come to us from without. Light is in us, even if we have no eyes.” Jacques Lusseryan—blind French Resistance leader

LENS # 1 CONNECT

EXERCISE: Write the names of your children on a piece of paper. Think of each one, picture them one by one. How is each child inviting you to connect with them? What do you need to do to connect with them? How do you need to be? Do it. Be it. They not only need it, but you will find JOY in connecting.

LENS #2 GIVE PRESENCE

“But being There isn’t about money or even about staying home full-time. It’s about an emotional and spiritual shift, of succumbing to Being Where You Are When You Are, and Being There as much as possible. It’s about crouching on the floor and getting delirious over the praying mantis your son just caught instead of perusing a fax while he is yelling for your attention and you distractedly say over your shoulder: “Oh, honey, isn’t that a pretty bug.” Iris Krasnow in *Surrendering to Motherhood: Losing your mind, finding your soul*

EXERCISES:

1. Think of a time when someone was fully present for you. Describe the experience in detail and how you felt.
2. Think of a time when you were fully present for someone else. What did it feel like? What was your experience?

IDENTIFYING THE VOICES

EXERCISE:

Identify at least one voice that you allow to get in the way of your being present. Recognize this negative voice next time you hear it. Pause and listen for the voice of Truth. Follow it and notice the difference in your experience.

LENS # 3 RENEW

“If we can begin to fathom how much our teaching [role as mother] matters, then perhaps we will begin to take more responsibility for nourishing ourselves as [mothers] teachers and as people. In the end, what we bring to our [homes] classrooms is ourselves. Because our teaching matters so very much, we have a responsibility to take care of ourselves as learners and hoppers and dreamers. ‘We cannot create what we cannot imagine...’ Quote from “The Art of Teaching Writing” by Lucy McCormick Calkins

EXERCISE FOR RENEW:

What are my needs for renewal? What are the signs that so clearly call me to RENEW?

LENS #4 REJOICE

Chinese fortune cookie: “The pleasure of what we enjoy is lost by wanting more.”

EXERCISE:

1. Right now, in this moment, in what can you rejoice?
2. What keeps you from rejoicing?

LENS #5 TRUST

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you...”
(Matthew 7:7)

EXERCISE:

Identify one area in your mothering that could use a boost of trust, either trust in God, trust in yourself, or trust in your child’s innate drive to grow and learn. How can you deepen your trust in this area?

LENS #6 LET GO

EXERCISE:

1. What one thing do you need to let go of now?
2. Why do you cling to what you need to let go of?

LENS #7 HOLD ON

“The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly. It is dearness only that gives everything its value.”

EXERCISE:

What do I need to hold on to and why?

* * *

Psalms 113:9 “He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.” He maketh is the key phrase. It is God or rather turning to God that makes a joyful mother of children.

Psalms 30:5 Joy comes with a change of heart: “ For his anger kindleth against the wicked; they repent, and in a moment it is turned away, and they are in his favor, and he giveth them life; therefore, weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

“When we put God’s purposes first, He will give us miracles. If we pray to know what He would have us do next, He will multiply the effects of what we do in such a way that time seems to be expanded. He may do it in different ways for each individual, but I know from long experience that He is faithful to His word.” Henry B. Eyring