

Rachel Bailey's Parenting Academy

DEPOSITS FOR YOU



**How to create more energy for yourself
to improve your CALM and help you
be the parent you want to be**

The Parenting “Easy” Button

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Once when I was doing a workshop for a group of parents, one woman raised her hand tentatively. I called on her and she said, “Rachel, I love what you’re saying. It makes so much sense, and I can see how these strategies will work. But these strategies **take so much energy**. Isn’t there an “EASY” button when it comes to parenting?”

Ohhh, I love that question! Because although I do focus on parenting strategies that make the biggest impact for the least amount of energy (a huge reason that I emphasize making proactive deposits rather than wasting so much energy parenting “in the moment” when Yuck abounds), I do acknowledge that *raising kids to be responsible, resilient, and confident takes energy*.

AND I think there IS an easy button.

What makes parenting easier (or harder) is how WE are doing ourselves. When we’re in a good place, raising kids is easier. When we’re in a bad place, parent respectfully can be torture.

Have you ever noticed how much more resentful you are of your kids **when you haven’t had any time to yourself**? Have you noticed that when you’re tired, or hungry, or things just aren’t going well, you can’t help but FREAK OUT when your kids misbehave or melt down?

The Parenting “Easy” Button

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Just like with our kids, if our lives are full of withdrawals – which, to be honest, most of our lives are – parenting is much more exhausting, and we’re much less patient. And **since life is inevitably full of withdrawals** (our kids won’t always behave, we might not always get a good night’s sleep, sometimes we will run out of coffee and the cat will throw up on the floor), we must make sure that we’re **making deposits to offset those withdrawals.**

I personally think that **making deposits into ourselves is the “EASY” button for parenting.**

But I don’t think that making deposits is just about taking bubble baths or exercising (though those things CAN be forms of deposits). In this document I’m going to suggest **other types of deposits* that that will make parenting much less draining.**

Ready to find more energy? Let’s get started. (By the way, you may want to read through all of these suggestions at once, **but please only try to implement ONE AT A TIME.** Otherwise, you’ll create more withdrawals instead of deposits.)

*These deposits align with your emotional needs for connection, significance, capability, control, and security. It is when these emotional needs are not fully met that we go into Yuck and parenting becomes much more exhausting.

Suggestions for Deposits into You

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1. Spend time with people who GET IT.

Parenting can be lonely. Even if you spend time with other people, if those people judge you for your child's behavior (or any other aspect of your life), **time with them can be a withdrawal instead of a deposit.**

So spend time with people **who you can talk to about what you're going through** – who not only understand but who can say **"Yes, I am going through that too!"** It's not coincidence that I encourage parents to participate in group programs (and this parenting community) rather than working with me individually. It makes such a difference to know **that you are not alone in your struggles.**

2. Spend time with people who take your mind off of your life.

Sometimes you just want to STOP thinking about the issues you're facing. Try find people who remind you of the bigger picture -- **that there are things outside of the issues you face on a daily basis.**

It doesn't matter if this is friends, family, colleagues, or neighbors. Just find people you want to do an activity with, or laugh with, or even dance and sing with.

The key is to make sure **you're spending time remembering that life is about more than parenting and stress and overwhelm.**

Suggestions for Deposits into You

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3. Do something that is definitive of YOU.

One of the biggest problems with parenting is that we **LOSE OURSELVES** when we have children. We start doing everything for everyone else, and we forget that we are people too – people with interests and hobbies and passions. Try to remember **what you enjoyed doing before you had kids... and do it**. Of course **you might have to modify the activity a little**. For example, if you like to go shopping all the time, you might not have the time or budget for that. But you could flip through some magazines or spend a little time on Pinterest. The key is to do something that excites you and gives you the energy that used to come more naturally **when you had time to be you**.

“Give more to yourself so you can ask more from yourself.” – Shana Lyn Yao

4. Set a boundary.

People will take from you as much as you let them. And for many of us, saying no (to our kids when they ask us for one more story...or to adults who ask us to be head of the “Field Trip Committee”) **can seem virtually impossible**. But **lack of boundaries inevitably leads to resentment**... And resentment is a true energy drain. (It’s like those programs that run in the background of the computer that use all of the power when we may not even be aware of it happening.) **So tell your kids or your spouse or the PTA president that you will NOT do something**. And realize that not only will the world NOT crumble, but you can actually gain energy when you spend some time on things that matter to YOU.

Suggestions for Deposits into You

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5. Ask for help.

We parents are the helpers. When someone needs something, we are there.

But when do we ever ask for help? True, it often IS so much easier to just do something ourselves... but when we are always doing things for others, **we have no energy left for ourselves.**

"Sometimes we have to stop being so giving to others because in the process we end up destroying the part of us that needs to be giving to ourselves." – r.g. moon

6. Treat yourself with respect.

We are so hard on ourselves. We make mistakes and tell ourselves we're the worst parents ever. We look at everyone else and wonder why they seem to be doing so well when we're struggling. **We also speak to ourselves with such judgment.** We say to ourselves, full of judgment, "How could I have yelled at my child again?!" instead of, with curiosity, "why DID I just yell at my child?" Just as our kids' behavior always has a reason, our behavior does too. So instead of judging your behavior, **ask yourself with curiosity why you did what you did.** And then give yourself a break. Then find a way to do something different the next time. (And while you're at it, **take time to think about the things you're doing well as a parent.** Why is it that we forget about those things so easily?!)

Suggestions for Deposits into You

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7. Make a difference to someone (other than your kids).

We do so much for our kids. But for better or worse, our kids rarely appreciate what we do for them, **so we rarely feel fulfilled by how much energy we put into them.**

However, most people do feel better when they do something for others, especially when we know **our actions have made a true difference in their lives.**

So think about a friend who could use a few kind words or tell someone who means something to you about the impact they have had in your life. Knowing you are giving happiness to someone else can often create joy in yourself.

8. Pick one tool to learn.

Parenting is hard, and no one likes to feel helpless. But too many **people try to learn so many tools all at once that it feels overwhelming.** So pick ONE tool at a time to implement. Focus only on trying to stay calm in the moment. Or focus only on trying to make a connection in the moment. **Mastering one tool at a time** can make you feel **more in control and less overwhelmed.**



Deposits into You

9. Reset your expectations.

Parenting can be exhausting simply because our kids don't act the way we want (or expect) them to act. We need to get out of the house by 7:30AM, and they take their time. We want our kids to be nice to each other, and they won't stop fighting.

Sometimes when we change our expectations to be a little more realistic, we become less frustrated. For example, instead of getting mad that our child won't sit still at the dinner time, we can expect that sitting still will be difficult. Entering situations with a more realistic mindset prevents the Yuck (and energy drain) that occurs when things don't go the way we want them to.

"What consumes your mind is what controls your life." - Anonymous

10. Focus on what is in your control.

One of the reasons so many of us become discouraged by parenting is because as much as we try, **we actually don't have control over our children.** We can certainly influence them, but we can't MAKE them get into their car seats, we can't MAKE them do homework, and we can't MAKE them eat vegetables.

So instead of feeling out of control because you are trying to make your kids do something, **focus instead on what YOU can control – YOUR behavior, YOUR thoughts, and YOUR attitude.** When your kids are fighting in the back seat, you can't make them stop... but you can pull over until they quiet down. You can control whether you consider your child defiant when they are not listening to you – or whether you consider that "misbehavior" indicates that they are truly struggling.

Controlling your own thoughts and behaviors can make you feel so much more successful than focusing on something that you ultimately you cannot MAKE happen.

Deposits into You

11. Focus on the present instead of the future.

One of the reasons many of us get so angry with our kids is because **we worry about how their current negative behavior will affect the future.** If they don't listen to us now, will they continue to be defiant toward us and other authority figures? If they don't do their homework now, will we have power struggles for over homework for years and years to come? If they aren't outgoing and charming, will they be lonely for the rest of their lives?

But focusing on the **future takes us out of the present moment and prevents us from giving kids what they need NOW.** If your child isn't listening now, think about what they need in this moment. If your child isn't doing their homework, consider what is going on for your child right now. The irony is that **offering your child positive PRESENT moments is more likely to lead to a positive future** than worrying about all of the things that might go wrong later.

"Happiness can only be felt in the present."

12. Turn inward instead of outward .

With so many messages about how we are supposed to parent, it's so easy **to listen to what everyone tells us we "should be" doing.** It is also natural to look outside of ourselves, compare ourselves to others, and **feel like we are falling short.** But when we compare ourselves to others' ideas and others' lives, **we are setting ourselves up for discouragement.**

Instead of thinking about what other people are doing -- or what they are thinking about your kids -- consider what is important to YOU. **Turn inward instead of outward, and compare your choices and your children to YOUR values and YOUR ideas of what matters.** And if things are not where you'd like them to be, think about what small steps you can take to get there. Just make sure **your destination is your own, and not someone else's.**