

From the Heart...

...Lifeskills for Today's Family
By Sharon L. Benedict MS



Rec so you won't Wreck!

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 2, 2015)

Your daughter or son gives you a call to vent about their very rough week or two. Did it sound something like this? "Hi Mom (Dad), I am so bummed and feeling sick. Something been going around work, and I haven't slept well for a few weeks. Not sure what it is. Maybe it's because my house is so hot and I'm so stressed. Thinking about all the things I need to get done but I'm always chasing the clock, morning till night. Always rushing it seems. Really need to quit my second job. I am going to tell them November 1 I'm done, no matter where it's at. On top of that, we are so slammed at work and everyone has been working sick. Weird world we live in where our bodies mean so little and work and money decides your day."

Heard something like this from your kids lately? I know I have, in fact, recently. What do you say to them? Maybe your first inclination is to start with "I'm so sorry you are going through this." Or maybe, you are also having a rough week or two, and you prefer to say "Get a grip. We all have rough days and weeks. Be lucky you have a job or two." How does either really help their situation? Do you think the latter may stop them from calling you next time? Probably so.

We hopefully all know as parents of adult kids, we often need to just listen and let them vent. Then, at least, they know they can with Mom and Dad. More often than not

they eventually work it out on their own. We simply say “I love you and am confident you will work it out and feel better soon.” And they usually do. Yet, is there something else Mom and Dad could say or do, besides knowing our kids need to “work it out” just like every other adult?

Before any of us become a wreck, don't we all need to have some fun or “recreate” a little and even a lot sometimes? I like the word, recreate, because we can actually gain a way to “re-create” our lives in a more creative, balanced way. But when we get “stuck in our stress,” where's the fun in that? When we can't seem to get ourselves unstuck, what does?

For some, we tend to reach for that second or third glass of wine, trying to imbibe the irks away. For others it may be those comfort foods and treats we relish when ranting. No matter the temporary numbing, we still end up stuck next time. There are a few of us who have found some more healthy remedies with running, racket ball, or simply resting.

Sometimes it's more of a “who” that offers the “what.” Here's a suggestion for us parents, in particular, who don't want to “fix” our kids as much as find a way to affirm our love and understanding for them. Although they are the ones to make the mind shift and action, offering a little boost in that direction may be just what can encourage a more positive perspective from “things suck, I'm stuck.”

What would you like to do for your adult kids? Here are some things John and I do for our grown up girls when they are “stuck in stress.”

First, we listen, love them, and send oatmeal cookies with Ghiradelli chocolate chips!

Second, we find ourselves often worn out from the “listening” and “rehearsing.” So, we turn on some fun “kids” music that helps us both feel a little young once again. We then text our daughter(s) what we are doing. They always invariably text back, “You two are crazy, adorable, nutty!” Somehow, without another word our “nuttness” lifts their spirits as well. Someway, there is a letting go of the frustration, anger, hurting emotions or whatever made them “stuck.”

Then there are times when we know that the only thing to do is pray for them, either right on the phone at that moment, in an email, or later when alone. It all depends on how “stuck” they are and ready to give prayer a try. Life always seems to go better even when the circumstances don’t immediately change. We change inside for the better. Why? Because we agree to let go of what we can’t seem to change but decide to trust. It’s definitely a time for “let go and let God do His thing He does so well.”

Think about what you do before, during, and after the venting, listening, loving. Bet you just might do some “funny rec” things that break the mood so everyone gets “unstuck.” You almost do them automatically now. Practice does make perfect for that peace to show up, doesn’t it?

Would love to hear what you do for your kids and yourself when “ stuck and stressed.” Send them my way so I know we are all in the same boat rowing, recreating far away from being a wreck!

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From the Heart...

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Art, Artists, Artful Fun

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 9, 2015)

With this month of October covering lifeskill, *Recreation/Entertainment*, I couldn't pass up a chance to shout out, it's "The Texas Hill Country Invitational time!" for art, artists, and some artful fun in Boerne, Texas.

This awesome annual event is hosted by the Boerne Professional Artists organization that invites artists from Texas and surrounding states to be a part of this spectacular art show in the Hill Country. With more than 50 talented artists participating, it will be the largest in the 13-year history of this event. Works of art will include paintings in oils, acrylics, pastels and watercolor; graphite, photography, pottery, jewelry, fused glass, encaustics, reliefs, sculpture and mixed media.



On Wednesday and Thursday, October 14 and 15, from 7:30 am. to 5 pm *En Plein Aire "Paint Out"* artists will be painting outdoors throughout Boerne and its parks, recreational and heritage centers. Finished works of the open-air artists will be offered in a "Wet Paint" Sale that begins during the opening night preview event in the Cana

Ballroom. On Friday, October 16, from 7 to 9pm, it will be Preview and Opening Night. On Saturday, October 17, from 10am to 8pm, the official *Beginning of the 2015 Texas Hill Country Invitational* will kick off. Also, watch out for the “*Drawn to Animals*” *Children’s Art Contest sponsored by the Hill Country Council for the Arts* (www.hccarts.org) and *Petland Boerne* (<https://www.facebook.com/PetlandBoerne>). The top three winners of the “Drawn to Animals” Children’s Art Contest will have their artistic efforts on prominent display throughout the three-day event.

The Texas Hill Country Invitational will be open to the public with artists in attendance to describe the works they have on display. Artists’ lectures and demonstrations will be held from noon to 6pm. On Sunday, October 18, 10 am to 3pm, there will be *The Finale of the 2015 Texas Hill Country Invitational*.

The prestigious Oil Painters of America (OPA) again endorsed BPA’s two full-day En Plein Aire “Paint-Out”, the Wednesday/Thursday prelude to the Invitational. ‘En Plein Aire’ is a French term that translates to ‘open air’, so you will be seeing as many as 40 artists at work mid-week in the open air prior to the Invitational. The finished works of the “Paint-Out” artists will be offered in a “Wet Paint” Sale that begins during the opening night preview event in the Ballroom.

Here are the 2015 Texas Invitational participating artists:

- Margie Barker (acrylics) jrmooneygalleries.com
- Martha Breternitz (jewelry) joiasdesign.com
- Angie Carney (oils/encaustics) carriagehousegalleryofartists.com
- Elizabeth Castle (photography/oils) castlephotographytx.zenfolio.com
- Roy & Blanche Cavarretta (3-Dimensional Gourd Art) [facebook.com/gravelroadarts](https://www.facebook.com/gravelroadarts)
- Linda Chalberg (watercolor) lindachalberg.com

- Karen Cooper (pastels) artbc.com
- Karen Skipper Cruce (clay) karencrucepottery.com
- Donald & Linda P. Darst (oils/pottery/rug hooking) donalddarst.com
- Lenell Deane (bronze sculpture/oils) lenelldeane.com
- Bill Eichholtz (photography) billeichholtzphotography.zenfolio.com
- Kim Felts (oils) kimfelts.com
- Virginia Floyd (oils)
- Noma Freeman (oils) noma@gvtc.com
- Joe Friddle (watercolor) joefriddleart.com
- Gloria Garcia (acrylics/mixed media/photograph) gloriagarciaart.artspan.com
- Louis A. Garcia (oils) lagartstudio.com
- Pamela Gardner (oil/graphite/mixed media) pgardnerstudio.com
- Cathy Geib (pastels, acrylics, encaustics) yessy.com/cegeib
- Sheila Gritte (silk screen/monoprints) sheilagritte.wix.com/artist
- Ed Hall (photography) edhallimages.com
- Morgan Hampton (watercolor/graphite)
- Jay Hester (oils/bronze sculpture) jhestergallery.com
- Jim Heupel (photography) jheupelphotography.com
- Mark Holly (photography) mshDigitalArt.com
- Anna Johnson (watercolor) annamjohnsonstudio.com
- Chad E. Keith (graphite) chadekeith.wix.com/chadekeithsketches
- Paula Lay (watercolor) paulalay.weebly.com
- Dixie Lee (photography) dixielee.me
- Robert Lombardi (oils/pastels) thelombardigallery.com
- Bonnie Mann (oils) carriagehousegalleryofartists.com
- Linda Manning (pottery) throwinafit.com
- Leslie Matiaccio (acrylics) lesliematiaccio.weebly.com/blog
- Kathleen McBride (kiln-formed & blown glass) kathleen-mcbride.com
- Teri Jo McReynolds (oils) terijomcreynolds.com
- Lyrae Perry (watercolor/gouache/oils) lyraeperry.weebly.com

- Sylvia Ramsey (oils) sylviahramsey.fineartstudioonline.com
- Kay Reinke (acrylics/inks) kayreinkeart.com
- Robert Ruhmann (acrylics/watercolor) robert-ruhmann.com
- Bill Scheidt (oils) billscheidt.com
- Shari Sheldon (custom designed and hand-fabricated jewelry) srdesignstexas.com
- Sidney Sinclair (oils/mixed media) sidneysinclairfineart.com
- Dena Szymarek (bronze sculpture/oils) denaszymarekstudio.com
- Harold Teel (watercolor/oils) Harold-Teel.artistwebsites.com
- Nancy Yarbrough (kiln-formed glass/watercolor)

The Invitational will be held at the Cana Ballroom (<http://canaballroom.com/>) at St. Peter The Apostle Catholic Church, just off Main Street (Hwy 46) in Boerne, Texas. Make your reservations now to stay in the beautiful Hill Country town of Boerne, so you won't miss a single day of this spectacular! There will be special hotel rates available at *Comfort Inn & Suites Texas Hill Country* and *Fairfield Inn & Suites*. Just use the code "ART" when you call. All of this will be held in the heart of Boerne in a most elegant venue with breathtaking northern Hill Country views that is easily accessible with plenty of free parking. So, come and have a fantastic day of art, artists, and artful fun!

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From the Heart...

...Lifeskills for Today's Family
By Sharon L. Benedict MS



Fun Fashioned for Family, part 1

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 16, 2015)

How do you play? There is a big wide world of choices out there. Where do you even begin besides the usual “dinner and a movie?” And let’s remember that the most rewarding fun doesn’t have to empty your bank account. Some of the most fun comes from doing simple things with those you love.

Hopefully, we all play in a way that supports our core values, encourages healthy, wholesome social interaction, and results in just plain fun. Whether your family has a house full of toddlers or an empty nest, let’s see how fun begins at home, in your community, state, and nation.

What does your family do together at home? If you have little ones, when was the last time you rolled on the floor or spread out the crayons and paper for everyone to join in? For the empty nester, what kinds of home hobbies and activities bring a smile on your face and a dance to your step? There is always the traditional Arts/Crafts, Sewing, Knitting or Needlework, Computers & Software for home use—including computer games, internet. Then there is the fantastic activity of doing Absolutely Nothing!

How about some Music to get you dancing or soothe the stress away? Then there are endless Audio/Videos, Stereo Systems, Musical Instruments to pull out of the

closet and get jamming. Have Pets? Whether they may be cats, dogs, fish, reptiles, birds, hamsters, you name it, I bet they really miss you playing with them! Then bring out that book collecting dust. What about the Magazines and Newsletters that got piled up on your front porch? And let's not miss a chance at Storytelling.

I remember so vividly when our daughters were so young. At bedtime, with each in their beds, my husband, John, would sit on the floor in the hallway between their bedrooms and create a story. He first asked us to give him one word that he would weave a story around those words. The girls never forgot those stories. He did the same when going on camping trip on those long drive to the next exciting spot. The driving hours flew by.

Have you pulled out your kids Toys, Balls, Games and Dolls—including riddle making, puzzles, interactive game boards, magic games, juggling, mime, skipping rope, whipped tops and hoops? If not, now is the time before they fly the coop and you start walking with a cane!

And yes, there is always some good TV Program Viewing. One good thing about technology today is you can record your favorites and watch them at your convenience. Whether the programs are in daytime, prime time, soaps, dramas, documentary, how-to programs, and VCR/DVD movies you rented or are saving them on Netflix, the choices are endless. Just remember to prioritize and filter them to support your family's core values and childhood development goals. Any other things at home you love to have fun with?

What about your Neighborhood and Community. Fun Is Just Around the Corner! Check out your local Concerts, Library activities/events, Lectures/Speaking

Engagements, Local Amusement Parks, Movie Theatre, Live Theatre, Museums & Galleries, Neighborhood Park activities, Shops of every variety, Sports, and Exercise—golf, tennis, soccer, basketball, baseball, water sports/kayaking, walking, hiking, running, fitness training, you name it! Some people actually love exercise! Don't forget day Touring, Sightseeing, Historical Sights, Lounging, Resort Accommodations nearby. Any others you can think of?

In the next article, fun to be had in our nation and around the globe will be covered. Now, remember, this weekend and through the week find some fun fashioned for your family. A family that plays together stays together!

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From the Heart...

...Lifeskills for Today's Family
By Sharon L. Benedict MS



Fun Fashioned for Family, part 2

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 23, 2015)

In the previous article, we covered fun ways to play at home and around the neighborhood and local community. Let's now look at what interests you around your state, nation, and globe.

What are your favorite fun places to visit? Or maybe the first question should be, "What are your top interests?" For some, it may be history or outdoor adventures. There are just about every interest from A to Z. Although there will undoubtedly be areas of interest missed, let's move through the first part of the alphabet, A-M.

What would you add to the alphabet of "play" categories? We all know play can also have a purpose. Yet, don't end up losing the "fun" as you broaden play possibilities for you and your family. What are the first words that come to mind for each "play" letter? Here's is what I came up with so far.

A = Adventure, Animals, Antiques, Archeology, Art, Automobiles

B = Board games (i.e. chess), Books/Authors

C = Collecting, Community Involvement, Cooking, Crafts

D = Dancing, Doodling, Dude Ranch

E = Entertainment, Exercise

F = Flying, Food, Friends

G = Games, Gardens, Genealogy, Giving

H = History, Hobbies, Home Improvement, Horses, Hunting

I = Internet, Inspiration

J = Juggle, Jamboree

K = Karaoke, Knowledge

L = Laughing, Learning, Lectures, Leisure, Listening, Literary

M = Magic, Machinery, Ministry, Movies, Museums

For my husband and myself, Animals, Archeology, and Art have our attention. Whenever we get a chance we go to the San Antonio Zoo (<http://www.sazoo-aq.org/>). When we go for a hike or walk, John always checks under a rock or two to see what fauna fancy is there. Then, with excited eyes lighting up, he gives me an historical and biological treatise on his found creature! And yes, he puts the rock back in place so the little one will still have a home to hide in.

When it comes to Archeology, John is actively involved in the Hill Country Archeological Association (www.hcarcheology.org) going on digs. He is also a steward for the Texas Historical Commission (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-archeological-stewards>) helping to preserve the history and heritage of the Texas Hill Country by finding, recording, and monitoring archeological sites.

For us both, we love art in all its form and visit art galleries, museums, and exhibits around the Hill Country and beyond. We are also hands-on with art. John paints wonderful pieces as a hobby and I weave on various sized weaving looms, from Inkle/belt loom to an eight-harness floor loom. Whether I weave functional art such as a

poncho, purse, or wall hanging/sculpture, It's always an adventure in creativity. We always have a project or two in the works. So much fun!!

So, what "play" letter got your attention? What activity brings the fun, and where do you go to play? The next article will cover the remaining "play" alphabet N-Z. In the meantime, whether you are intent on having an Adventure or simply love going to a Museum, be sure to have fun whatever you do and wherever you go with friends and family. Sharing the fun makes the play even more memorable.

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From the Heart...

...Lifeskills for Today's Family
By Sharon L. Benedict MS



Fun Fashioned for Family, part 3

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 30, 2015)

In the previous article, we covered fun ways to play at home and around the neighborhood and local community. Let's now look at what interests you around your state, nation, and globe.

Remember the questions? Here they are again. What are your favorite fun places to visit? "What are your top interests?" From just about every interest from A to M, what got your greatest attention? For me it was Art, and for my husband, John, it was definitely Animals and Archeology all wrapped up together. He not only love to learn about "anything" but he seems to always have fun at it. So, no matter what part of the alphabet of "play" category caught your interest and give you a purpose, be sure to love having fun with it.

Now let's move on to the other part of the "play" alphabet N to Z. So, what "play" letter got your attention this time? Here are words that came to mind for me.

N = Nature, Nightlife, New Language

O = Observatory, Ocean, Olympics,

P = Parks & Trails, Pets, Performing, Photography, Plants

Q = Quest, Quilting, Quiz, Quotable

R = Reading, Restaurants, Road, Romantic

S = Speaking, Sports/Athletics, Studying

T = Theatre, Touring, Traveling,

U = Umbrella, Unlimited, Universe, US,

V = Vacation, Vagabond, Volunteering

W = Walking, Weaving, Wildlife, Writing

X = Xeriscape, X-ray

Y = Yacht, Yard, Yearning, Yummy

Z = Zebra, Zest, Zone, Zoo

Where do you go to play around the state, nation, and the globe? And what activity brings the fun? For me the letters S & W say it all. I love to Speak to groups and share my story and tips about life, love, and laughter. My other favorite is Weaving. And as you can tell, I love to Write!

Over the years I have written for a variety of regional newspapers. In addition, for about five years, I wrote for a national medical journal as a professional lifeskill/wellness coach, *Integrative Medicine, A Clinician's Journal* (www.imjournal.com). Two books have been published. The first was my story. *In Daddy's Eyes* is an autobiography of one woman's journey to wholeness through childhood abuse, family tragedies, and a cascading list of infirmities and medical mysteries, one life forever changed by an enduring faith in God and the healing miracle of forgiveness. The other book, *Celebrating Your Journey*, is an invaluable self-paced, hands-on journal for anyone who wants to bring synergy to their everyday routines, life dreams, and goals. *Celebrating* represents my life's work and resources helping others seek, reach, and achieve

fulfilling lives through 12 practical daily lifeskills. Both are available at most any online bookstore.

Right now I am working on a daily companion calendar for women going through the "Pause." Hopefully, there will be some laughing whimsy and wisdom offered throughout. I know, not the kind of topic you men may want to read or have a daily thought for the day! Yet, maybe your spouse just may ask you to give it a try to gain a glimpse into the journey so many of us women would like to skip! And you too may have your own "Pause." So, a little compassion may be in order here for you both?! After this "Pause" writing project, I think it may be time to continue working on my historical "novel" creation. I have my outline/timeline in place and about 25 pages written so far. Hope I can get it done before another decade goes by!

John also loves to write. Most of the time he is writing archeology reports for the Texas Historical Commission and other nonfiction. He does have one children's story almost done. With a little more time and opportunity, he will create some awesome tales, whether Sci-fi or children's stories. What an imagination he has!

We both still have a pile of story ideas, both fiction and nonfiction on our computers waiting to be awakened! We should both be busy for the next few decades. And I will leave it to you to guess our age by then! Before I forget and close out this month's lifeskill, *Recreation/Entertainment*, sightseeing and traveling are always a fun adventure. In our great state of Texas, we try to find time to check out local San Antonio/Hill Country - to be more specific, there is always Six Flags (<https://www.sixflags.com/>), Sea World (<http://seaworldparks.com/>), and Schlitterbahn Water Parks (<http://www.schlitterbahn.com/>). Then add all kinds of more indoor/outdoor

adventure museums, such as The Alamo (<http://www.thealamo.org/>), Witte Museum (<http://www.wittemuseum.org/>), McNay Art Museum (<http://www.mcnayart.org/>), and even the more local Agricultural Heritage Museum (<http://www.agmuseum.us/>).

There are so many wonderful sights and sounds right here at home, across Texas, the nation, and the globe. Here are just a few resources to see where your next stop may be. <https://www.traveltex.com/>, <http://gotexas.about.com/>, <http://www.tripadvisor.com>, <http://www.kayak.com/>, <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/>.

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