

## Answers

Written by Gayle Nobel

Wednesday, 12 May 2010 16:24 - Last Updated Wednesday, 12 May 2010 16:51

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I have recently become an online friend of life-coach and inspirational writer Courtney Long (Caring for Your Spirit, LLC [www.CaringForYourSpirit.com](http://www.CaringForYourSpirit.com)).

Courtney sent me a batch of great questions- at least a dozen. Food for another book, perhaps? In the meantime, I am going to answer them one at a time in a series of blog posts. So stay tuned.

### ***What are your biggest challenges in being a parent/caregiver?***

There are many challenges.

1- Making and taking time to fill my well

Filling my well is about doing things that are unrelated to my job as caregiver. These are things which are nurturing and fun and force me into the present moment. Yup, that means not thinking about what I "need" to do for my son, or "should" be doing, or am not doing "good enough". You get the picture. Getting into a different head space.

I fill my well by exercising. I love to hike, do yoga, workout at the gym, and bike. I enjoy reading, playing the piano, and cooking. Dates with my husband are great "well fillers" too. I like to get lost in a good movie or good book (uninterrupted, if possible) once in awhile or just take a nap. And of course, there's always pampering girlie stuff like massages, nails, and hair. Those seem to be harder to fit in and can be a matter of cost. Lock yourself in the bathroom and do your own nails. They take all evening to dry- so no dishes allowed after that! AND, bubble baths are free and can be done after the kids are asleep (or hire a husband to stand outside the bathroom door while you are luxuriating in the suds).

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For me, spending time with my daughters is also a great well-filler. They are young adults now and so much fun to be with. Connecting with friends online, on the phone, or in person is a was to fill my well too.

Not only can it be a challenge to make and take time for these endeavors, it can be a challenge to let go of any guilt or judgments about taking the time to do these things. I've gotten much much much better at that over the years. It takes practice and it's an on-going process. You're never done!

I've found that scheduling these things as an appointment or as part of a "to do" list helps. When my children were small, I had regular exercise classes I attended and if possible, with a friend. Alone time is great, but friends can double the fun and make you more accountable.

### 2- Asking for help

Why is it sometimes we get into these modes of trying to be superwoman and thinking we are better off not "needing" any help? Not sure, but allowing yourself to ask for help and then don't stop asking until you find it, is an ongoing challenge that should be continuously pursued.

### 3- Finding quality help

Oh my, this is a challenge. But it is important to build the best possible support team for the person you are caring for and your family. As a matter of fact, I'm hot on the trail of finding some more respite providers for my sweet 26 year old son with autism. Anyone??

### 4- Trusting your own instincts

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It's easy to fall back on someone else's opinion as if they know what's best for you and your child or family. Yes, take in all the opinions and advice. Talk to the "experts" and the therapists and the friends or relatives who think they're experts. But then, run it through your own filter and make your own decision and feel good about it. (even if it might later turn out to be a mistake). There are no definitive answers, only options.

I recently had an ah ha moment where I found myself listening to what someone else believed was right for my son and trying to force myself into that decision because I valued the opinion of the person giving it. It took me a little time to realize it was not the right fit for me or my son at the time. But for some reason, at first, I kept trying to force it- you know- square peg, round hole.

Well, I could probably go on and on, but these are some of the biggies.

Thank you Courtney for providing the questions. I will continue to provide some of the answers.

Gayle

PS Who is Courtney Long, MSW, LC, CHt?

### **Caring for Your Spirit, LLC**

480-292-2201 [Courtney @caringforyourspirit.com](mailto:Courtney@caringforyourspirit.com)

Courtney provides life coaching & guided imagery services. She mainly focuses on self-care without guilt, stress reduction techniques, sleep/conquering insomnia, and smoking cessation. She provides different workshops/presentations around the community and soon will be starting some teleconferences.

Here's what Courtney had to say about "Breathe"...

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"Every time I pick it up, I feel uplifted & inspired. I admire your courage and your ability to see the blessings & positives, even amidst so many challenges. Keep that beautiful spirit going! Can't wait to meet you in person at some point. :)"

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