



## **Parenting: Avoiding Burn-Out** by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

**Q:** Dear Susie, My children constantly squabble and it has reached a point where I just don't know what to do to help them, or myself. Unquestionably, they do love one another. But this bickering is making us all miserable. How can I find peace in my heart and in my home when my kids are constantly fighting?

**A:** You've described a very difficult family situation and unfortunately, not an uncommon state of affairs in today's culture. Kids are feeling stress too. In fact, one of my upcoming e-newsletters will be on that very topic. The actual sibling squabbling is really something best addressed by an expert in child development. Maybe a classroom teacher or school psychologist could offer some free advice in restoring "peace in the land." Look in adult education listings or the community bulletin board at your public library for upcoming workshops or classes. You and your children might benefit from some short-term counseling with a pediatric psychologist for some guidelines and strategies. This will also give each of you a forum to express your personal perspectives and concerns. Some households are calmer and more cooperative environments than others, and there is good help available to stop a destructive pattern of behavior before it goes too far.

For many parents, juggling responsibilities of work, family, home, health (and remember recreation?) is a daunting and exhausting task. Too often, our personal needs fall at the bottom of our "to do" list. One of the first things I suggest to people who feel overwhelmed by stress is to take a look at the roles of nutrition and exercise in their lives, with particular attention to sugar, caffeine, and alcohol. The advent of 24-hour-everything, cell phones, fax, FedEx, email -- has our world spinning very fast. Finding brief respite in segments in your day is going to be the only way, for the moment, to get the breaks that you need.

It is important to establish realistic expectations, so that relaxation techniques and stress management fit within within personal lifestyles and belief systems. Is there a way for you to get out to dinner with a friend once in a while? Periodically, when you are assured that your children are well-supervised, close the door to your room and take mini-meditation breaks. Inhaling, cool white light... imagine exhaling through the shoulders. Even curling up with a magazine for five minutes can give you a little break. Spend some time browsing around our website and look at the tips that might be very helpful at [www.relaxintuit.com/](http://www.relaxintuit.com/)

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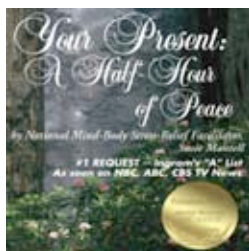
## Parenting Burnout

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### More Simple Soothers for Parents

- Do a minimum of one fun thing every single day, without exception.
- Call up an old friend
- Take yourself to a funny movie (*Try a tearjerker! Crying is a great release.*)
- Get some moderate, pleasurable exercise
- Watch a goofy TV show
- Organize a pile or drawer or closet (*This one's not fun until afterwards*)
- Buy yourself flowers
- Do something small each day for a total stranger.
- Take a long, hot bath
- Go out for a nice, healthy, really-delicious meal
- Get hugged
- Listen to music you love and dance like crazy -- all by yourself !
- Go someplace beautiful, museum, a garden...
- Many people find great relief in acupuncture, massage or other body/energy work, the buoyancy of swimming
- Identify some stressors you can anticipate and see if any can be avoided or diminished.
- Limit alcohol, caffeine and sugar consumption. All three can exacerbate stress and depression.
- At bedtime, try my soothing relaxation audio, "*Your Present: A Half-Hour of Peace.*"
- Journal about your feelings.
- Spend time with friends several times each week and let people love you.

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## END OF THIS TIP##