



Things to Think About!

A Year of Grump Busting

By Linda Jorgensen

In January 2013 I wrote a newsletter titled, *Banishing the Grumpmeister*. My daughter had bestowed the title on me after what had been, for me, a rather grueling 3 months of playing keep up, catch up and “Happy Holidays”. I really was grumpy and realized I couldn’t continue that way for long. It was not healthy for me and the rest of the family was ready to sell me to the gypsies. Something had to change. And while I wrote the newsletter over a year ago I am still getting enquiries about what I have been doing, 15 minutes at a time, to improve the Grumps. So, here’s what I’ve been doing.

I hate to admit it but one of the first things I did was haul myself down for an overdue visit with my physician. I’m generally pretty good about getting in to see him at least once in a while but (and here comes the whine. Anyone have a wheel of good cheese to go with it?) I am the parent of a special needs child. I spend so much time at various hospitals and clinics with my daughter that the idea of seeing yet another doctor is not my idea of a fun afternoon. I grit my teeth and went anyway. And yes, I grumped most of the way there and most of the way back. One more waiting room...

A week later I found out I was “a bit sleep deprived” but more importantly I had dangerously low levels of vitamin D! No wonder I was grumpy! I was told to get more sleep and, “Get 15 to 20 minutes of sunshine, daily, WITHOUT sunscreen!” Well, that was interesting. I found myself, regardless of the weather, sitting on my front porch (it’s a sheltered corner on that porch) when the sun was shining with bare feet, my pant legs rolled to my knees, wearing a short-sleeved T-shirt with a v-neck and a book in my hand for 15 minutes “without sunscreen”. After several months of this not only did the Grumps improve but my vitamin D levels came up to safer levels as well. And the rest of the time? Well, here’s a list of some of my favorites:

Grump Busters

1. Got checked out by my physician
2. 15 – 20 minutes of sunshine outside, without sunscreen (Vitamin D!), 3-4 times a week. While

out there read a magazine, a novel, did some knitting, gardening or I just sit outside and enjoy the sunshine. Yes, I did this at every opportunity during the winter as well. Did I mention that corner is sheltered?

3. Tuned out the rat race and spent an hour with the kids making Valentines for helpers and providers. The result was a very happy paper mess with some wonderful Valentines.
4. Started a small “good things” diary/journal. At the end of the day I write at least one GOOD thing that happened that day. There is always something. Sometimes more than one “something”. It’s only a line or two but it’s a great reminder the day was not a total loss in the eternal scheme of things!
5. 20 minutes of yoga or Tai Chi.
6. A short, brisk, walk outdoors.
7. 15 minutes of sitting quietly and focusing on just deep breathing in and out while relaxing muscle groups.
8. 15 minute exercise circuit. Jump rope in the garage, run 10 laps up and down stairs, pushups, and sit ups. Do each in groups of whatever you can do with a short pause between each rotation. I lost weight.
9. Periodically schedule some time with a couple of good friends (or even one) and go do something fun! We tried out the new cupcake shop, an art gallery and the train station. Not all at once.
10. 15 minutes of closet clearing. Winter things have been put away or sorted into a charity box for donation, linen closet has been sorted, the pantry looks better. Continue, 15 minutes at a time until each closet is done. I did this a lot.

11. Changed up one of my regular activities. Instead of one of my standby novels I grabbed a book of cowboy poetry one day when headed out for 15 minutes of Vitamin D on the porch bench. Picked up some great words of wisdom. My favorite lines of the afternoon, "When the horse dies, get off". Kind of like starting a land war in China...
12. Spent 15 minutes coloring with crayons. I CAN stay in the lines. When I want to.
13. Call a friend. Often.
14. Picked up a bouquet of flowers from the grocers "just because". Be sure to put them in a sunny place.
15. Learn something new. Pick a subject new to you and do some reading or research. I checked out quilting techniques.
16. 15 minutes of crafting or creating time. Needle work can be fun.
17. Power snooze! This is great on days that you're running on interrupted sleep from the night before. The kids tell me I snore.
18. Dance with your kids. Or your husband! Just put on some music and go for it. You aren't in public and no one but your kids or your hubby will notice if you have 2 left feet or dance the jitterbug. No matter if they break into hysterics. They can't dance any better than you can. Have fun!
19. Make a new recipe for dinner. Check out online recipe web sites; drag out the cookbooks you inherited from your grandmother or check out a cookbook from the library. Whatever it is, find something different and try it out. We've had some doozies.
20. 15 minutes shredding old bills from the power and gas companies, city water and the trash collector. Stuff you don't need to keep for very long. The sound of the shredder can be very satisfying.

Then there are the weekends. Friday nights are reserved for date nights with my husband (I'll more about those later) then Saturday or Sunday afternoon

we do something that takes a longer block of time. We choose a different activity every weekend and try to do new things every so often.

Weekend Grump Busting

1. Work errands into the weekly schedule if possible. This gives you plenty of off time over the weekend. Make sure a 4 hour block of time with nothing more pressing than a nap and spending some quality time with the family is on the "To-Do" list.
2. Take an afternoon drive on a road we've never been on. (We're running out of those)
3. Unplug the phone and turn off the porch light after dinner. Double the marshmallows in my dark hot chocolate, sit down with the family and pop in a favorite movie. Stick with something fun or funny. Pop popcorn and try new flavors.
4. Turn off all the electronics in the house for an afternoon. The phone can go to voice mail, electronic games, movies and music can all be played later, and the computer can wait. Take some time to just "be quiet". Feel the need for a bit of noise? Have a focused conversation with your significant other or your child (children). It doesn't have to be deep or earth shaking, just have a nice, uninterrupted, conversation.
5. Board games. We have a large variety that can be played by all members of the family. Partner up and play teams against each other. Looser cleans the _____. You can fill in the blank.
6. Have a picnic. Inside or out, it doesn't matter. Pack up the picnic basket and haul it to the family room. Spread a blanket out on the floor and there you go.

Over the past year I have discovered that taking at least 15 minutes out of my day has improved not only my mood but the mood of the household as well. We're all feeling better. 15 minutes a day during the week and a few hours on the weekend are a small investment in time that pays off big in the well-being of the entire family. Give it a shot! The least that can happen is you may find yourself smiling a bit more often and the gypsies will be less one more firewood gatherer.