



180 Power Tips
for Parents

DR. KAY KUZMA

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How to Get the Most Out of Your Power Tips

Parenting is a twenty-four-hour-a-day job. Every minute is crammed with things that must be done for your family. But you can give only so much without refilling yourself with thoughts to help you refocus your priorities and reflect on what God may be trying to say to you through His Word.

That's why I've written this practical daily inspirational guide filled with power tips that can be read in less than a minute. Each practical suggestion is tied to a Bible verse that can change your life, if you will reflect on it and allow God's Spirit to impress you with how you can apply it. Remember,

*Through wisdom a house is built,
And by understanding it is established;
By knowledge the rooms are filled
With all precious and pleasant riches
(Proverbs 24:3, 4, NKJV).*

May this be your experience as you daily apply the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of God to your family. One minute a day can change your life—if it's a God-inspired minute!

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What Is a Family?

What does the word *family* mean to you?

Here's how some third-graders defined family. Janet said, "A family means a free apple, and you don't have to pay a five hundred dollar fine for a mistake." Sheila wrote, "A family is a place where you can play the piano without being shy." Corrine said, "When you have a family, you don't need anyone else but God."

What does your family mean to you? If your family means more to you than you've let them know in the past, maybe it's time to make sure that your love message gets through. Perhaps you'll identify with Louise Fletcher's famous lines:

*I wish that there were some wonderful place called the Land of Beginning Again,
Where all our mistakes, and all our heartaches and all of our poor selfish grief
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door, and never be put on again.*

Why not resolve today to start living each day the dream you have for your family? Dreams can come true.

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. —Psalm 127:3, NKJV

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New Week's Resolutions

When you make New Year's resolutions, do they last about a week, and then you're back to your old habits? The reasons may be that the resolutions are too general or too idealistic or that you make too many. For example, you decide you want to spend more time with the kids, lose weight, be on time to appointments, and never discipline in anger. There is no way anyone is going to keep all those resolutions!

The answer is to make New Week's resolutions, not New Year's resolutions. And make them specific. Say, "I will spend fifteen minutes each day with each child," or "If I am angry, I will go into my bedroom and pray before disciplining."

At the end of the week, you will have no doubt whether or not you have kept your resolutions. If you have, celebrate. Success for one week will spur you on to continue the next. If not, you may want to modify your resolutions and make them more realistic.

Why not make some specific New Week's resolutions today and see if it doesn't help change those bad habits into better ones?

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. —Philippians 4:13, NKJV

Making Family Appointments

If business appointments keep you from spending time with your family, perhaps you should start making appointments with your family!

Consider the example of Connie Giles, a busy executive. When her children wanted to do something with her, she would usually look in her schedule book and say, “I’m sorry, kids. I already have an important appointment.”

One day her son asked, “Mommy, do you think I’m an important appointment? Why don’t you write my name down in your appointment book?”

From then on she reserved time with her kids and wouldn’t miss those important appointments.

Her children are grown now, but the times Connie remembers and cherishes the most were not committee meetings and conferences. They were the appointments with her children to go backpacking, deep-sea fishing, and star gazing.

Why not try what Connie did? Take out your calendar or schedule book and make the most important appointments of all.

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. —Ecclesiastes 3:1, NKJV

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Team Spirit

How is your team spirit? I'm not talking about a football or baseball team, but your family. Does your family feel like a team? Or is everyone doing his or her own thing?

Deanne and her two kids didn't feel like a team. As a single mom, Deanne was overburdened with work, graduate school, and family responsibilities. Training for an up-coming marathon was what kept her invigorated. But her kids hated jogging, so they spent most of their after-school time with friends.

If Deanne didn't do something quickly to revive her team's spirit, they were all going to feel like losers. The answer was buying Rollerblades for the kids. Now they could look forward to spending time together with Mom while she was running.

If your family's team spirit needs bolstering, start doing things together! Start living for each other, not just for yourself. And make your home the most attractive and fun place on earth for your children. Team spirit gives energy, enthusiasm, and creative solutions to family challenges so everyone can be winners. It's essential in order to survive in this fast-paced world.

Make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. —Philippians 2:2, NLT

Who in Your World Needs a Hug?

It was only a sixty-second TV spot, but it scored. The scene: a typical American family rushing to prepare breakfast.

The phone rings. Sis grabs the receiver and dashes across the kitchen as she talks. Junior piles the toast high and heads for the table. *Crash!* He stumbles over the phone cord. Mom appears just in time to see the toast flying in all directions. She delivers an ultimatum, “The next one to spill anything is going to get a smack!”

Waving her arms for emphasis, she bangs into the glass of milk held by little brother. Milk splashes all over the floor.

Dad comes forward to administer the punishment. “Well, honey, it looks like you deserve a smack.” He grabs his wife, raises his hand, and hugs her, then gives her a kiss with such a loud smack that the kids clap their hands and cheer.

The next time things get a little hectic and you’re tempted to deliver an ultimatum, why not deliver a hug and a kiss instead and see what a difference it makes.

“Do for others what you want them to do for you.” —Matthew 7:12, TLB

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The Love Cup

We're all like love cups. When we're empty, we have nothing to share. But when we're full and overflowing with love, we have enough to give away—and we can be loving to others.

The hard part, especially for a child, is to keep the love cup full and overflowing in a world where cup emptying is so common. Criticism, rejection, looks of disappointment, being too busy, or harsh, angry words can quickly empty a love cup!

And because children equate love with attention, when they feel their love cups are empty, they often end up misbehaving in order to get a parent's attention. Care for them with kindness, show respect, accept them unconditionally, let them know they are forgiven, and trust them appropriately.

The cup-filling way is to give your family what they need. Give them some positive attention—a little love.

Fill them up until they overflow. And chances are that obnoxious attention-getting behavior will melt away, and they'll have enough love to give a little back to you.

“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” —John 15:12, NKJV

Making the Terrible Terrific

Every morning, rain or shine, Mom would greet her son with, “Wake up, it’s going to be a terrific day,” and together they’d go milk the cows.

One cold, windy morning, Jim rebelled. He said, “It’s going to be a terrible day.”

“Well,” Mom replied, “if you think it’s going to be a terrible day, you’d better stay in bed.”

Sighing in relief, Jim dozed until he smelled breakfast, then dressed and went downstairs. “What are you doing?” Mom asked.

“I came for breakfast,” Jim said.

“You can’t eat breakfast. That would make it a terrific day.” And she sent him back to bed.

He tried to come down for lunch but was again sent back. By dinnertime, Jim admitted that this was the worst day of his life.

“Well,” said his mother, “it’s up to you to choose whether you have a terrific or a terrible day. But you’ve got to work to make a day terrific.”

I think that’s great advice. Why not put a little extra into today—and make it a terrific one for your family?

And now, dear [parents], one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. —Philippians 4:8, NLT



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Investing in Smiles

Usually when you give something away, it's gone. But it's just the opposite with a smile. Give it away and it multiplies.

One day Tammy's daughter complained, "Mommy, why don't you smile like you used to?"

At that moment there wasn't too much in Tammy's life worth smiling about. Then she remembered a home-finance principle she had learned: "Start saving when you have the least, and you'll be investing in the future." What if she started smiling when she least felt like it? Would her smiles multiply like money?

It didn't take her long to find out. Her daughter seemed happier, her office became a more cheery place, and her own life didn't seem so dreary.

A smile can't solve serious problems. Nor should it be used to mask troublesome emotions that need to be dealt with. But it's an investment that will multiple and offer some great returns. So, why not give it a try?

A glad heart makes a happy face. —Proverbs 15:13, NLT

Elevating Your Home Career

Kate Hanson used to be embarrassed when people asked her what she did. She didn't like saying she was "just a housewife," so she began to call herself a "family management and relational specialist."

Then when people would ask, "And what do you do?" she would explain that her job was to prioritize goals and work out a plan of operation so objectives could be achieved, thus fulfilling the needs of family members.

"My biggest challenge," she would continue, "is with conflict resolution between parties of different age and rank."

"Interesting," many would comment. "And where's your office?"

"Oh," she replied. "My base of operation is my own home, and my best client is the Hanson Family Corporation."

One woman was so impressed, she told Kate, "I'd give anything to have a job like yours. And here I thought you were just a housewife!"

Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised. Reward her for all she has done. Let her deeds publicly declare her praise. —Proverbs 31:30, 31, NLT

The Importance of Goals

What if Sir Edmund Hillary had said, “I doubt if we can make it to the top of Mount Everest”? His name would have never made the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

What if Beethoven had said, “Whoever heard of a deaf composer?” and quit writing music? We’d be deprived of the beautiful strains of his ninth symphony!

What if the apostle Paul had lamented, “Now that I’m in prison, I’m too cold and stiff to write any letters”? A portion of the New Testament would never have been written.

Why did these individuals accomplish so much? Because they had goals.

When your children balk at practicing the piano or would rather watch Monday night football than tackle their homework, it’s probably because they don’t have goals.

Goals give a focus to life. As Edison once said, “Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.” Without goals, the perspiration just isn’t there!

Finishing is better than starting. Patience is better than pride. —Ecclesiastes 7:8, NLT
