



How to Keep Your Cool in the Summertime

For all the talk about summertime and the living being easy, it may not always be as easy as it seems. Along with longer daylight hours and warmer temperatures, summer can bring its own stress.

See if you can relate to any of these 10 summer stressors below. Just know that anticipating and planning for summertime's changes will go a long way towards making your summer the pleasurable experience you want it to be.

Weather

Temperatures can flare along with the temperature. Heat can also bring on lethargy. It may be difficult to feel energized to get work done.

More traffic

Longer daylight hours means more people out and going places. The streets and freeways can be crowded with tourists and travelers. Drivers may be irritable and quick-tempered. It can take longer to get anywhere.

Kids home from school

If your children have summer off from school, you may face daycare situations or having the kids be home alone. Plus there are more activities, ballgames, swimming, camp—all that running around can cause more stress.

Vacations

Much as vacations are stress reducers, they can be stress inducers, too. The planning and packing, the traveling itself, being away from home and out of familiar surroundings. Re-entry when you come home again can be overwhelming. Not to mention the cost of vacations. Whether you visit family or they visit you, stress is often packed in someone's suitcase.

Changes at work

More people on vacation may mean more work for you. Or when you take vacation, there's work to do before you leave and more to catch up on when you return. Summertime can be the slow time for some businesses, so it can affect income. It can also mean more work for some seasonal businesses. Either way, stress can result.

More home chores

Seems like the number of projects to do increases directly with the length of daylight hours. The garden just won't stop growing! All those weeds—and what do you do with all those tomatoes and squash?

More activities to choose from

There are more leisure activities available in the summertime, more decisions to make, more money to spend and more planning to do—all this can cause stress. Strangely, more leisure time may mean you're busier than ever.

More alcohol consumption

Outside and leisure activities mean more drinking—at ballgames, the beach, camping, outdoor concerts. Along with increased drinking may come increased drinking-and-driving, or you may experience bad behavior or noisy situations.

Body image

Summertime means fewer clothes. Along with sleeveless dresses, shorts and bathing suits, summertime can bring up body issues.

Food/diet

More leisure activities may mean junk food/fast food. Regular meals are interrupted. It may be too hot to cook. Diet can be affected by the season, and diet affects stress levels. *

10 Daily Practices of Loving Relationships

Living with those you love—whether they be mates, children or older parents—brings intimacy and stresses that are different from other relationships. Here are 10 daily practices that help keep the love flowing and the relationships growing.

- 1. Share something from your day.** Involve your loved ones in your life outside the home—or inside your heart.
- 2. Express gratitude.** Show that you notice their daily contributions to the family and your life. Receiving a “thank you” for doing the dishes or taking out the trash feels soooo good!
- 3. Eat dinner together.** Connecting with each other over food is an ancient human practice. It's worth it to make time for this warming activity.
- 4. Do something for yourself.** Doing what nourishes you strengthens your relationships.
- 5. Smile.** Laughing is even better—especially if it's at yourself!
- 6. Express regret and make up.** The sooner the better. And from a truly open heart.
- 7. Take responsibility.** Renew daily your vow to hunt out your own “stuff,” to own it as yours, and to do the work of transforming it.
- 8. Be a sanctuary.** Give psychic “shade” to each other from the scorching rays of difficult days.
- 9. Speak from the heart.** Risk telling the truth about your feelings.
- 10. Envision the best.** It's a wonderful bedtime meditation to visualize your loved ones being their highest, best selves. *

A Letter From



Michelle Barone, MA, MFT

I hope you find this newsletter helpful. I am always looking for ways to help my clients find joy and lead a fulfilling life. I have spent the last year studying a process that facilitates lasting change: NET, Neuro Emotional Technique.

I am now certified in NET, a mind-body technique that I find exceptional. I have personally experienced its benefits and clients report swift, long-lasting change. If you are ready to clear old patterns, reduce stress, and unlock hidden potential, it is time to experience NET.

In line with mind-body healing, I continue to marvel at the changes that occur for people when they increase their use of whole food and whole food supplements, and eat in accordance with their unique body chemistry. Support your mental health by insuring that your physical health is also well cared for.

Your mental and physical health is your most important asset. Take time and invest in yourself.

Currently, I work with individuals, couples, families, children and teens. I bring my knowledge of interpersonal neurobiology, mind/body therapy and alternative health/education to my work. I maintain a large referral base of supportive health care providers. I currently serve on the board of the Glendale Area Mental Health Professional Association as the e-list facilitator.

Services Offered

- Individual, couple, family counseling
- Healing grief and loss
- Stress management
- Alternative education/homeschooling support

• Parenting classes and support groups
Office and phone sessions by appointment. Please visit my website www.michellebarone.net for listings of groups, classes and speaking engagements.

Treat yourself gently,

Michelle Barone, MA, MFT

Test Your Temper

Everyone gets angry. But people who “fly off the handle” easily may be at greater risk for heart attacks or other illnesses—not to mention the risks of damaged relationships, unfulfilling lives, feelings of worthlessness, even trouble with the law. Test your temper with this quiz, to see how much risky business there is in your life.



- 1. I feel infuriated when I do a good job and get a poor evaluation.
- 2. When other people’s mistakes slow me down, it can upset me for the whole day.
- 3. When I get mad, I say nasty things.
- 4. I feel annoyed when I’m not recognized for doing good work.
- 5. I feel like hitting someone who makes me very angry.
- 6. I feel stupid and inadequate in challenging situations, and I hate that.
- 7. I get furious when I’m criticized, corrected or embarrassed in front of others.
- 8. Sometimes I feel so powerless.
- 9. I often wish people who have hurt me could be punished somehow.
- 10. It doesn’t take much to get me mad.
- 11. People call me hotheaded and tell me I should calm down.
- 12. I blow up at terrible drivers.
- 13. I have a hard time forgiving others when they hurt or frustrate me.
- 14. I hate the way I get treated at restaurants or stores.
- 15. I swear loudly to blow off steam.
- 16. I’m a very ambitious person, so sometimes I get impatient and angry with other people.
- 17. I’ve been known to break things when I’m frustrated.

If you answered “true” more often than “false,” you may have a problem controlling your anger. It’s helpful to realize that underneath anger are usually feelings of fear and hurt. Understanding your deepest feelings will help you curb your anger, get along better with co-workers and bosses, improve relationships and improve your life. Here are some healthier ways to respond to anger.

- 1. I can—and often do—laugh at myself, or at a difficult situation.
- 2. When I’m really angry, I remove myself from the situation and go for a walk or do some light exercise.
- 3. I use “I messages” as much as I can instead of pointing fingers.
- 4. When I begin to feel angry about a situation, I try to step back and figure out why I have let other people get to me.
- 5. I understand where my anger comes from, as well as my habit of acting out angrily, and I am actively trying to learn a different way.
- 6. I accept the fact that only I can make myself feel anger, that it is actually my choice to feel or not feel anger.

What Does It Mean to Be Vulnerable? (And Why Is It Empowering?)

Leslie is terrified of getting older, of her children leaving home, of being alone. These feelings scare her so much, she invents ways not to face her fears. Mostly, she lashes out at others for “making” her feel bad. She wonders why she has so few friends and can’t find a mate.

Tom doesn’t walk, he swaggers. He doesn’t talk, he commands. When his children and friends head for the exit, he figures they just don’t have the guts to handle such a big man. But he has an ulcer and he can’t sleep. Lately, he’s been having nightmares about being trapped. Deep, deep down, he’s afraid he’s really a little man after all.

Vulnerability Is Not About Being Weak

It hurts to admit we are vulnerable. For so many of us, it means we are weak, helpless and open to attack by others or by whatever life throws at us. Our culture demands that we be strong, so we try our best to hide our fears and cover up our weak spots. We don’t want to be seen as failures.

But there can be beauty in vulnerability and value in exploring so-called weaknesses. By exploring our “dark” side, we can turn our fears and vulnerabilities into strengths. To paraphrase author Matthew Fox, “Our demons aren’t *in* the way; they *are* the way!”

Often, we believe that keeping a stiff upper lip will keep us strong. We hold a tight lid on our fears and pain, but in doing so, we also cover up and lose touch with our feelings. This, in turn, shields our hearts and separates us from our connection to humanity.

Instead, imagine the worst thing that can happen and explore your fears. It is often helpful to work with a therapist to face what it is you

believe you are defending yourself against, and then to help you understand, accept and let go. This is a journey that can be long and difficult, but it’s only by facing our vulnerable places—not covering them up or running from them—that we come out the other side.



Vulnerability Is Empowering

Being vulnerable actually empowers us. We all have a wound, and when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable, we accept that wound and then we can move forward. Our wound is our blessing.

Being vulnerable hasn’t been very popular in our society, but this is changing. Words such as “humility” and “gratitude” and “forgiveness” are being used more frequently. They are terms that show a cultural shift towards accepting all human traits, negative and positive, strong and weak.

Author and therapist Beth Miller takes this one step further. In her book, *Resilience: 12 Qualities to Cultivate*, she calls vulnerability “falling apart” and urges that “it is time to bring falling apart into fashion.”

Being a student of life means being vulnerable—open to life, to learning, to experiences, to yourself and to emotions. Most of all, it means being willing to accept things as they are.

Being vulnerable comes easier to some than others. Here are some ways to explore being vulnerable:

- Be honest with yourself.
- Look for deeper reasons or motives for your own behavior. Take responsibility for your behavior.
- Take a risk. Start by letting someone you trust know your weak places.
- Be willing to listen to honest feedback.
- Accept the fact that you have anger, and find words to talk about it.
- Let go of guilt and resentment. The past is past. Make amends if needed.
- Accept that you make mistakes. That’s part of being human. ✧



Growing Yourself as a Parent

"Grown-ups never understand anything for themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them."
—Antoine de Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince*

Imagine a baby shower where the guests bring a special kind of gift for the new parents.

Not baby clothes. Not strollers or cribs. Not even a single book on child-rearing.

The gifts for the new parents? Self-awareness, self-love and self-growth as a parent, as well as a parent.

The best parenting requires that we not only work to nurture and care for our children but that we nurture and care for ourselves.

Parenting is one of the—if not *the*—most challenging jobs on the planet. There is the awesome responsibility of raising and guiding another human being, of course. But it's the daily interactions between children and parents that can require almost super-human amounts of flexibility, patience and awareness. All the experts and all the books aren't there when it's your toddler who won't nap, your child who stole a valued toy from his best friend, your depressed teen who is desperately searching for answers, your adult child who can't hold down a job.

Successful—even joyful—parenting is about listening to ourselves as well as

listening to our children. It's a hands-off approach that brings the focus back to what we are feeling and experiencing, so that we don't unthinkingly rain anger and fear down upon our children. Being aware of ourselves helps us develop a strong "inner authority" or an intuitive sense of knowing what is best for us and our children in any moment. (And accepting that sometimes we really don't know yet!)

"We guide (our children) not because they have basically shabby motives, but because they lack the one strength most of us have: awareness of the world," write authors Hugh and Gayle Prather in their book, *Spiritual Parenting: A Guide to Understanding and Nurturing the Heart in Your Child*.

Their book calls parenting a spiritual path that helps us grow as people while we are helping our children grow into adults. Our children challenge us and if we can truly listen, we can grow.



One of the first challenges is to understand that old patterns—often formed in our own childhoods—can often rule our behavior as parents right now.

For example, if our own parents tried to fix everything that went wrong, we may try to do the same with our children. But our children may need us just to listen to their fears and not jump in with our own fears and try to "fix" it all.

In the process, we allow our kids to make mistakes, and that means we can, too. And if we can forgive our kids and accept them in all their flawed glory, it can't be too big a jump to do this for ourselves.

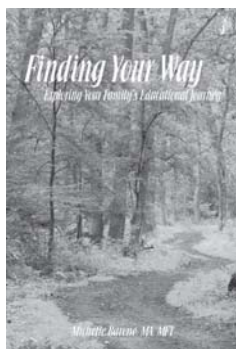
As author Joyce Maynard writes, "It's not only children who grow. Parents do, too. As much as we watch to see what our children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours. I can't tell my children to reach for the sun. All I can do is reach for it myself." ✨

Michelle Barone, MA MFT
Sunland, CA

Phone: 818-951-7744

Website: www.michellebarone.net

E-mail: Michelle@michellebarone.net



Michelle's new book, *Finding Your Way*,

Exploring Your Family's Educational

Journey, is now available through lulu.com.

You can go directly to lulu.com or access

the ordering page on my website:

www.michellebarone.net.