

THE POST
INSTITUTE

A Love Based Family-Centered Approach for
Helping Children with Challenging Behaviors

B. Bryan Post, One of America's Foremost Child Behavior Experts



How to Turn Holiday Stress into Peaceful Family Time

Don't let the Holidays sneak up on you—they come every year around the same time. Many of our children have great difficulty staying regulated during this time—as do their parents. Be prepared. Plan ahead. Don't let your frustration, fear or anger ruin the season. Use the Stress Model™ to help bring calm and peace on earth and goodwill toward all—especially children and parents!

Let There Be
Peace On Earth
and
Goodwill Toward
All

How To Turn Holiday Stress Into Peaceful Family Time

By Bryan Post

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**Help us to bring peace on earth and goodwill toward all—
Especially children and parents**

Happy Holidays



**Let There Be
Peace On Earth
and
Goodwill Toward
All**

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BOOKS:

Beyond Consequences, Logic, and Control: A Love-Based Approach for Helping Children with Severe Behaviors
(Co-authored with Heather Forbes)

From Fear to Love: Parenting Difficult Adopted Children

For All Things a Season

Going Home: A Survival Toolkit for Parents (Co-authored with Sue Grantham)

Healing Adult Attachment Handbook Vol. 1

How to End Lying Now!

How to Heal the Attachment Challenged, Angry and Defiant Child: When Behavior Modification and Consequences Don't Work (Workbook)

How to Turn Holiday Stress into Peaceful Family Time

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Prologue

Gobble, gobble, gobble... Do you hear the sounds of the holidays? Sound familiar? The holiday season is on its way. It's turkey time. It's Santa time. For some, it's the most stressful time of the year. How can the stressful holidays be turned into peaceful family time together? Seem impossible?

Hello. I am Bryan Post. Welcome to my program on ways to create the kind of holiday season you deserve. The six-letter word that usually comes to mind when you think about the holidays is

S-T-R-E-S-S

Yes....stress and more stress. The closer we approach the holiday season, the more it seems to intensify. Right? What comes to mind when you start thinking about the holiday season?

Seasonal madness. People driving back and forth to shop for Walmart specials and 'limited time' only's. Text messages and phone calls announce additional tasks for your to-do list. Family visitors will soon arrive to juggle for limited space. More mouths to feed. Decorating jobs. The kids and pets running around like crazy. And then there's cleaning. Yes, lots of cleaning.

Shopping is sheer madness hysteria when there are 'must get' items to find. Meanwhile, holiday music in stores cheerfully remind us that everyone else seems to be enjoying the season. Why aren't you?

Have we forgotten something? The plays. Extra rehearsals. Kids need costumes. How many of us learn that a particular costume is needed the night before the big performance? (The kind that should be so easy to make...if you were into making things!) Any other school-related stressors? Testing. The last week in school before winter break means finishing projects, performing plays, giving gifts and taking tests. After that, students are released to parents for the LONG holiday season!

They are looking forward to Party Central for the rest of the holidays. They're out of their routine by the time they reach the door. We're out of OUR routine. Work, work, work, work. Collapse. Up again for more work. Repeat each year. We sometimes feel out of our minds with madness.

Once holiday prep time is complete and decorations adorn your home, you sigh in relief...briefly.

If entertaining at home, meal-planning begins and then more shopping. What if you're not cooking at home? That probably means a long drive to visit relatives. A two-hour drive or longer with squirming kids asking, "Are we there, yet?" Just as stressful, you fly. You drive to the airport two hours early praying no one packed liquids, gels or aerosols over three ounces and that you get through security without delays.

“Arguing from the backseat of the car or at airport gate areas is a red flag that madness is stirring within them”

Whether you drive or fly, travel challenges are stressful on the family. It's also the longest time many spend together as a family in months. Being cramped together in a moving capsule for two, three, four or more hours with restless kids recently released from school can be stressful.

The family, work and school routines established over the year are gone. Everyone is out of their routine. We aren't at work so we're out of our routine. The kids weren't in their school routine for at least two weeks. Now we're spending hours together while in stress mode. Other triggers increase stress levels. If you're in a car or minivan, kids yell to be heard. You thought that DVD/CD players would be a blessing for modern families. Sound overload. The greatest DVD's in the world can't entertain tired, stressed, out of routine kids forever. What happens after the kids have watched DVD's for hours? Arguing from the backseat of the car or at airport gate areas is a red flag that madness is stirring within them.

Finally, you near your destination. Feel the energy shift of anticipation. The moment you arrive, there's a whirling dervish exit. A Tasmanian devil is seen ripping out of the van, charging into the in-laws' house and transforming into a creature who appears oblivious to having had one single boundary set since birth. Glancing up, you see faces of your welcoming relatives suddenly change from glee to ... what's the word? Fear.

Stress and the holiday season! How can we rewrite that script. How do we turn stressful holidays into peaceful family time together?

This is a fast-paced, straight-forward, little book written with hopes of your peaceful holiday season in mind.

I'm sitting down talking to my wife. We're discussing our own stress during the holiday season. She says, "You know what? Last year you wrote a great article on helpful tips to survive the holidays. Parents loved it. Why not create an audio program or an e-book to help even more parents?"

That's how this program came about. We all need support during times when stress levels are especially high. I created this audio program to make the holidays more enjoyable for families who are out of their routine.

We'll discuss ways to make this your best holiday season ever. We'll go over some key hot button stressors. Simple tips can make a huge difference.

Chapter 1

Plan Ahead

First, start planning! You're going shopping. Get it over as quickly as possible. It is not turkey time yet. It's not Christmas season yet. Locate family recipes you like and create a shopping list. Take a day off from work and do your shopping. Get the turkey to put in the freezer. Buy cranberry sauce and non-perishables. Don't wait until the last minute when everyone else is shopping. Avoid long lines and short tempers.

Taking a day off from work to shop might not feel comfortable for many people in this economy. What's

the first thing that came to mind when I mentioned it? Money. Probably one of the single biggest stressor during the holiday season is financial stress. Money problems are difficult anytime. Financial stress can have a bigger impact during the holiday season. Let's face it. You feel pressure to buy something everywhere you turn. It's a racket. The jingles, Christmas carols and nonstop TV commercials are meant to build excitement so you buy. You have every member of the family to buy for. Credit card bills pile up. Hello. The bills don't go away just because it's Thanksgiving or Christmas. The post-holiday blues come quickly when the credit card bills arrive. Why do we often buy things we don't even need during the holidays? Excitement triggers from a tiny mechanism in the brain. It pumps out the stress. We see a shiny red ornament. Because of the distortion of our mind from stress, we think that the shiny red ornament is THE ornament that's going to look perfect on our Christmas tree. We purchase it for twenty bucks knowing full well that as soon as Christmas is over, the same ornament will drop to two dollars. Why do we purchase it anyway? The moment we purchase it, a chemical interaction within our body/mind system comes up that makes us feel good. The excitement doesn't last long but it's strong enough to make us want more little highs from buying the 'perfect' gifts.

“Excitement triggers from a tiny mechanism in the brain. It pumps out the stress”

This is why so many families go into debt during the holidays. Financial stress from holiday over-spending is a problem that can be reduced. What should you do BEFORE you buy the shiny red ornament, or expensive watch or tons of toys the kids will break or soon lose interest in?

Before you ever walk into a store, sit down and decide how much money you can comfortably spend during the holiday season. Make this year different. Say what you'll spend and stick to it. The holiday season is no different than going to Vegas. If you go to Vegas with your credit card in hand and your wallet wide open, you'll return home broke. It's almost guaranteed. Holiday spending is like that. This holiday season, take only the cash you feel comfortable spending with you instead of using credit cards. Make a gift list. Purchase only the items listed or equal substitutes. In a separate pocket, put your grocery list, coupons and cash. Buy only what's listed and nothing extra. Like Vegas, decide what you can afford to lose/spend. Don't go over your limit. No one will know the difference in how much you spend. However, they can feel when you're happier and less stressed.

Now let's talk about your children. All things considered, adults can handle stress better than children. Well, in most situations, you can at least laugh. Children have a much more difficult time. Here at the Post Institute, we specialize in children who are easily stressed out and extremely sensitive. Many of these children have had significant traumas in their lives, whether they're biological, adopted, or foster children. That experience creates an impairment in their ability to handle significant bursts of stress.

What's that going to do? It's going to set them up almost every time for failure. The holiday seasons are S-T-R-E-S-S-F-U-L-L. This stress is going to make your children almost impossible to deal with because they can't handle it. They can't take too much stress. That's why I mentioned pre-planning for yourself. I mentioned finances and setting a holiday budget you can stick to. Those help you handle stress better.

What about your children? Here's what you can do to help them. Get out a piece of paper and pen. Sit back and think about the way the last two years of Christmas and Thanksgiving have worked out with your child. Think all the way back to getting up in morning, the long drive/flight to your destination, interacting with family with the friends. Think about mealtimes, the drive home or spending the night away from home, if you did. Think about the night time and events the day after. Heck, throw in the dog chasing the cat and knocking down the Christmas tree if it happened. Think about all those things. Walk your mind through everything that happened over the last two holiday seasons.

Albert Einstein said, "To do the same thing over and over again and to expect a different result is the definition of insanity." The holiday seasons are insane enough to begin with. You must do something differently if you want a different outcome from what you experienced the last two years.

Chapter 2

The 4 Point Plan

I especially want you to think about those two years because you and your child are now conditioned to do the exact same thing over and over again in the future. When children start thinking about their holiday seasons, they go right back to their cellular memory system. They start thinking about the same things they did their previous years. They are not thinking about the problems they had. Remember that stress causes confused and distorted thinking and suppresses the short-term memory. So in the midst of stress, they're not thinking about what's coming up Thanksgiving this year. They're thinking about last year. They're not thinking about the getting yelled at or being sent into their room for a period of time or being put outside. They're not thinking about those things. They're thinking about the excitement. You're not thinking about those things either. If you had, you would have made sure you took special steps to prevent those things from happening again. But we don't and they don't.

The Stress Model™ says that, "All behavior arises from a state of stress."

That's why this year is going to be different. This year you have the Post Stress Model™ to show you how to make changes for a different outcome. The stress model says that, "All behavior arises from a state of stress." What that means is that when your child was running through your mother's house and knocked over a family heirloom last year...and it shattered to the floor right in the middle of everyone laughing and talking...and then suddenly everything went silent and everyone looked at your child...and then they looked at you... that behavior arose from a state of stress.

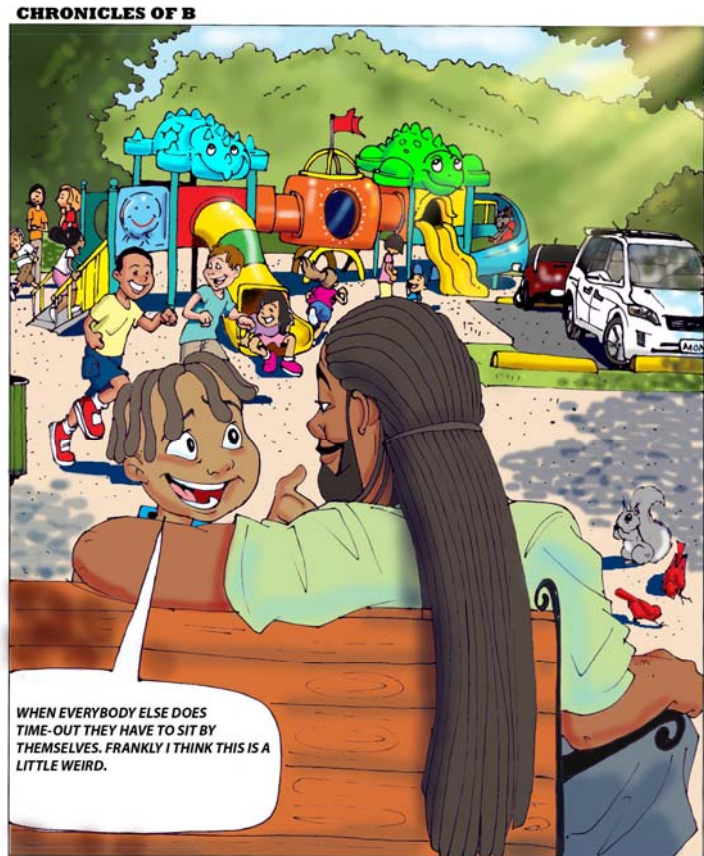
Between behavior and stress is the presence of a primary emotion, love or fear. Love and fear are our only two primary emotions. Love and fear are the only two emotions you need worry about and concern yourself with during this holiday season. There is either love or there is fear...and we know what that fear is like. What we want to do during this program is create a foundation for understanding your child's stress and their fear so you can own that fear. You can honor that fear. You can validate that fear. You can understand it and then take the steps necessary to help your child manage their own stress, their own window of tolerance. I will talk about their window of tolerance and handling their own stress in a more effective way so that it then correlates to a more successful holiday experience.

#1 — Window of Tolerance

Are you excited? We're excited, aren't we? Yes! Our first consideration for handling stress is to know that we all have a window of tolerance for how much stress we can manage. How much stress can you handle? Your child has a window of tolerance. Start thinking about this right now. Your child can handle only so much stress before he surpasses his window of tolerance and begins to act out. That can be five minutes. Perhaps ten minutes. Sometimes fifteen minutes. Your child has a window of tolerance and you have a window of tolerance. I want you to think about what that window of tolerance is and keep it in mind. We'll come back to it.

#2 —Time-In

There are four considerations I want you to keep them in mind. We covered number one. Number two is when your child's window of tolerance runs out, somebody better be there to help reset that mechanism within their body/mind system that helps them come back inside their window of tolerance. This means that you're going to do some 'time-in' during the holiday season. Keep that in mind, 'time-in' instead of time-out. If you've ever heard me talk about 'time in' before, you know I don't do time-outs. Time-out comes from an old school of thought, an old paradigm of thought that says children act out for attention. Time-in comes from knowing children act out because they NEED attention, not for attention. If we come from the paradigm that a child is acting for attention, we're not going to give the child attention. Right? That has been how we've always looked at children. We're going to stop that. That gives the child too much responsibility for what he doesn't fully have the ability to be responsible for. Don't do time-out. Do time-in. Children will act for attention. They act out because they need attention. Big difference.



By: Bryan Post Illustrated By: Mark Trotter

#3 —Proactive

“By being proactive, we’re going to take the steps to make sure something different happens.”

Number three is next. This is the main reason why you're even listening to this program. It's about being proactive! What Einstein said isn't going to apply to you and me. By being proactive, we're going to take the steps to make sure something different happens. These are the steps to help our holiday season go better this year than ever before.

How can we be proactive? You couldn't be proactive before. You didn't know about the window of tolerance. You didn't know about the need to do time-in. Now you can take the steps necessary to help your child and yourself be successful this holiday season.

Perhaps some of you are thinking that maybe you shouldn't have to do this. Perhaps you're asking, "Why won't my child just act right during the holiday season?" You know what? I can't answer

those questions. I can tell you you're dad-gum right. You DON'T deserve to have struggles during the holiday season. You shouldn't have to do time in or have to be proactive. You don't deserve any of that. Unfortunately, the other way isn't working well. We can't change the past so we've got to do something different. That's what we're going to do this year. We're going to do something about it. We're going to make it different this year and better than any other time before. That's why you're going to be proactive.

#4 —You Can't Always Be There

Now for number four. I want you to keep something in mind. You can't always be there for your child. Your child is going to mess up at some point. He's going to mess up. His window of tolerance is going to be reached and passed. You will forget about doing time-in when you're right in the middle of a big-o-turkey leg. We can take all measures to be proactive that can possibly been taken. However, nothing you do is going to prevent something from happening. You've got to recognize that. Your child is doing the best he can. You're doing the best that you can. Unfortunately, life is not always going to be perfect. Put that out of your mind! Just know that you can't prevent every single thing from happening. You can't always be there. There will be times when things don't go right. Just relax and know that no one else is perfect either.

Okay, do you have those four things down?

- 1. Window of Tolerance**
- 2. Time-In**
- 3. Proactive.**
- 4. You can't always be there.**

Chapter 3 The Steps

Now let's examine your child's holiday schedule from beginning to end. The first thing is morning time. How does your child wake up? Did he have difficulty getting to sleep the night before. I'm talking about Thanksgiving, Christmas and also New Year's. He may have problems going to sleep the night before. The reason is because there is too much stress in his body due to the excitement of the next day's events. Make the evening as relaxing as possible. Take a deep breath. Breathe with me. Inhale through your nose. Exhale through your mouth. (four, seven, eight) When doing a relaxation breathing technique, start with a short exhale. You inhale for a count of four. (You hold your breath for a count of seven. (one, two, three, four, five, six, seven) You exhale for a count of eight. (one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight) You do this for three cycles: Four, seven, eight; four, seven, and eight; four, seven, eight. Breathing is the one way to interrupt your stress system so just breathe.

“Nothing you do is going to prevent something from happening. You've got to recognize that”

Even before you do the breathing technique, you are realizing something. You've been enlightened. You are acknowledging that your child has difficulties. You have accepted it. Now you're going to do what you can to help make this the best holiday season ever. Keep repeating the relaxation breathing technique to interrupt your stress system.

The Night Before

Before nighttime, turn off the television. Keep it off the entire evening and turn on some nice music. Let the family play a game. What we're doing now is setting ourselves up for success. As bedtime approaches, your child will feel tired. So read a nice story to your child. Turn the lights down. Sit with them for awhile. Maybe lay down with them. Rock them gently. Be there with them until they relax. When you're present and you're there and you're calm, then you can help your child be calm.

However, what happens if you're there and you're thinking that as soon as they go to sleep, you'll go to Wal-mart? You remember you need to buy another turkey and Wal-mart is open 24 hours a day. If you do that, then you're going to feel stressed. Your child will sense the stress. It's not what you say. It's not what you do. It is how you feel when you're saying and doing it. Your child feels when you are really being present or if you're going over your What's Left list.

“It's not what you do. It is how you feel when you're saying and doing it. Your child feels when you are really being present ”

I remember when I used to put my daughter to sleep. She was around three years old. I remember taking her into the bedroom and lying down on the bed. It would be around eight o'clock. My wife and I were still going to be up for awhile so I'd be laying there thinking about all of the things I was going to do as soon as she went to sleep. I'd open one eye just to make sure she was falling asleep and she'd have both eyes beaded in on me, watching me. Oh God! I suddenly realized that she was on to me. I've got to relax. Otherwise she's anxiously waiting for me to leave. So be still. Breathe. Calm down. Relax with your child, and help your child drift off into a relaxing sleep. You can do this because you did your pre planning. You don't have to go to Wal-mart for a turkey because you already did that.

You've already got the things you're going to need. It's already taken care of. So now you can relax and help your child fall asleep. Wonderful! Success! Congratulations! You've taken the first step in being proactive.

You've taken the first step towards having a great holiday season by just slowing down and helping your child rest. Now your child will get a good night's sleep. Before you go to bed, you're going to pick out clothes to wear, pack your bags, and you may even put them in the car. You already bought the food. Half of it is already cooked because you cooked it the day before. You're going to finish up the cooking that you need to cook and go to be bed by midnight. You're going to have at least seven hours of sleep the day before because remember...you've got a window of tolerance as well!

There is only so much stress that you can handle and there is only so much stress that your child can handle. I will promise you one thing. You may even hear my words in the middle of a really stressful situation during your holiday event or family gathering. You may hear my words say if you're stressed you're child is going to be stressed out as well. Your child can only be as calm as you are. You're going to hear those words but you're going to be proactive. You're going to take responsibility for your stress. So you're getting things done. You're getting to bed at midnight. You're going to get a

goodnight's rest. You're going to wake up early. You're going to wake up early and take a little quiet time just for yourself, and *then* you're going to go to your child's room. You're going to sit beside their bed, you're going to put your hand on their back or on their head and say good morning and say Happy Thanksgiving or Merry Christmas or whatever the situation may be. It's time to wake up. If it's Christmas time it's a lot more exciting. If it's Christmas, tell your children several days ahead of time what the schedule will be. Either they will wake up and open presents at home and have all day to play or they'll go to visit relatives and to open presents when they arrive. Be clear. Okay? Make sure they know ahead of time exactly what will happen. At Christmas, it's especially important to be clear because of all the presents and madness.

The Morning

All right you're going to get up. You're going to wake your children up slowly. This will help their Circadian rhythm, an area in their brain, a body/mind experience controlled by a little area in the brain. This helps their Circadian rhythms turn on slowly and wake up. After you've done that, you give them five or ten minutes. I teach a parenting technique called **Ten-Twenty-Ten**. It gives your child ten minutes of quality time and attention first thing in the morning before they wake up. They receive twenty minutes in the afternoon when they arrive home from school or you get home from work. Finally, give them ten minutes of quality time and attention in the evening. If you'll do that, it will have a significant impact on your child's behavior. It will have a significant positive impact.

“Your child can only be as calm as you are ”

Once we have our children fully awake, they start getting ready. They've been calmly awakened. They feel good. We're going to give them a nutritious breakfast. A tasty, nutritious breakfast will start their systems activated correctly. Then they are going to get dressed and we're going to be heading out the door early this time. We're not waiting until the last minute. We're leaving early. For some adoptive or foster parents, there might be additional considerations. They might be afraid to get into the car. What are you going to say to a child who is afraid. The child could be ten and under. They could even be twelve and under. Typically, teenagers can handle this transition a little easier. What you're going to say to your child is, “I know getting in

the car can feel scary but we'll be back and you'll be okay. We're going to have a good time, and everything is going to be alright.” Reassure your child that everything is going to be okay.

Travel

Now, here's the part about sacrifice. If you know anything about investing, you know sometimes you have to invest upfront to get a payoff on the back end. Too often people want the back end payoff but they don't want to spend time to invest upfront. Here's the first really significant investment in your child. If you're a two-parent household, one of the adults rides in the backseat. I know. I know. You want to spend this time with your spouse. You were hoping to be able to talk and hold hands and enjoy driving to Thanksgiving dinner...not be stuck in the back seat. Get over it. You did that last year and what happened? Ten minutes down the street you were pulling over.

We're going to do something different this year. One parent sits in the backseat. If you are a single parent, you've got one child, let your child sit in the front seat with you if they're old enough. If they're old enough, let them sit in front with you because that will allow you to have contact with them. Even if they're old enough to be in a car seat facing away from the airbag toward the seat, let them sit in front with you. That will allow you to have contact with them.

If you have two children, have one sit in the front and one sit in the back. The one sitting in the back should sit on the side behind you on the driver's side. Why? We don't want any kicking of the backseat bothering the child sitting up front. Because that's just more stress.

You've got one in the front and one in the back so now you're ready to drive. Have coloring books and other activities for them. I am not against the DVD players. I am not against the CD players. However, my opinion is if you're going to use those things, you have to cut them off at least a half an hour before you arrive at your destination. If it's a long drive, I'd say one movie tops. Otherwise you have to cut off at least a half an hour of the movie before your destination. That gives your child's brain an opportunity to regulate and prepare for the next transition. Keep that in mind. I think the DVD's and games can be lifesavers. Even so, the Game Boy's and iPods must turn off a half an hour before arriving. Just let your children know that at that point, you are going to play 'I Spy' or sing songs or something else together. By doing this, you are helping them transition and be calmer when you arrive.

The Arrival

Okay, you arrive at the in-laws house. You pull up into the driveway and stop. You tell everyone to take a deep breath. Breathe, breathe, breathe. Remember you've been breathing the entire drive so this is easy for you now. You're going to say to your child, "Okay, honey, I know it's going to be kind of stressful in here. I know there's going to be a lot of activity but we're going to be fine. If you find yourself becoming really stressed or really scared you come tell mommy, and we'll take a little break and we'll take a little walk. Mommy is going to do the same with you. If I start feeling myself really stressed, if I start feeling scared at all I'm going to come and get you and you can help me feel safe, okay? We'll take a little walk together and then we'll go back to doing what we were doing but we're going to need to take that little break."

“Give your child’s brain an opportunity to regulate and prepare for the next transition”

Have that communication with your child and then you're ready to go in.

Next is when the window of tolerance comes into play. Before you go inside and everyone starts to acclimate themselves with one another, even before you get out of the car, you're going to tell your child it's okay to stay with you as much as she wants. They can come and sit by you. They can come stand in the kitchen, sit in the kitchen close to you. They can do that at any point. You're going to make sure they understand that. I know, you may not like that thought. I understand that but you didn't like last year either. That's why you don't want to do the same thing you always do. Mr. T.D. Jakes says, "If you always do what you've always done, you will always be where you've already been."

We're going to do something different now. Let your child know its okay. It's your responsibility to keep them safe. As soon as you get in, your child, of course, will probably take off with all the other kids. You look at your watch. By now you have a real good idea what their window of tolerance is. You know their window of tolerance and how much they can handle. So look at your watch and start timing them. After about eight minutes, get up and you go check on your child. Call them over, look them in the eye, kiss them, pat them, ask if they're having fun and they will say, "Yea, mom."

Then say, "Okay, do you need anything?" They will say, "No mom."

Then say, "All right have a good time!"

Let them go back and play and you go back and continue doing what you were doing. It's going to take you ten seconds to check in with them, but look at it this way. It's a ten second investment, a ten second investment that's going to pay off for fifteen minutes. That's powerful. By investing that ten seconds, your child will be able to play approximately fifteen minutes without another contact.

Then start your timer again. Remember that what you're doing is you're recognizing, understanding, respecting and honoring the window of tolerance. You're not setting them up to go outside their window of tolerance. You're meeting them before their window of tolerance expires. As soon as you make contact and meet them before their window of tolerance expires, it resets itself and it adds another half of the existing window of tolerance.

Now you're up to fifteen minutes. Keep checking every fifteen minutes. What's going to happen if you let it go longer than fifteen minutes before checking in?

“You’re taking responsibility. Every time you go and make contact with your child, that’s going to have an influence on everyone else’s child too.”

Within sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen minutes, your child will be yelling. Another child will be yelling. There will be a fight breaking out. You're not just being proactive for your child, you're making this Holiday season better for the whole family by being proactive. You're taking responsibility. Every time you go and make contact with your child, that's going to have an influence on everyone else's child too.

I know this is a lot of information; take a deep breath.

Yes, you'll have an impact not only on your child, but on everyone else's child too. You're going to do this repeatedly. You're going to make another contact with your child. You're going to go and hit that window of tolerance again before its eclipsed and each time you do that you can buy yourself a little more time. What you're going to find is that you've gone through the entire morning and afternoon with no problems.

You're going to do this three times. On the third time, you're going to say to your child, "Honey, come here for a minute." Then say, "I'm feeling a little stressed right now. Would you mind if we took a little walk outside real quick. Then you can come back and play." Most times they are going say, "Sure." They may protest and you're going to tell them, "I really need it, I really need it. I'm feeling so stressed right now. I just need to spend some time with you. Give me five minutes." You're going to take those five minutes. You're going to go outside. You're going to walk down the driveway and you're going to come back. It's that simple.

Hey, Santa! We're not buying into stress this year! You're going to take those five minutes and then your child is going to back to play. You're feeling good right now. You're feeling good because you are having a successful Thanksgiving Day. You are having a successful Christmas, okay.

Now what happens if you're child begins to act out and the seeds of a problem begin to appear? Because you've been checking in regularly and honoring that window of tolerance, guess what? They don't blow up. If you walk in there, you're child is in the corner, arms crossed, angry look on their face, then you just walked in at the best time! Hooray for you. You just cut off a potentially bad situation. Now you can go in and sit down by your child and whisper, "What's up?"

"Well, Johnny took the toy from me and Johnny always does this every single year." Remember their kids do the same thing. They are conditioned. We've done a good job as parents of conditioning

children. So now you're going to say, "Let's go out for a little bit." Now, you're interrupting your child's stress.

Success, success, success! If your child begins to act out, then you do time-in. The only difference from time-out and time-in is that you bring your child into you in time-in. Time-in can be the walk down the driveway. Time-in can be bringing your child in while you're sitting down talking with the in-laws while watching the football game or while the turkey is basting or while you're digesting that last piece of pecan pie, which was probably not the last, but was actually the third piece, which point you finally decided was the last piece! But then not quite. You're going to have one more sliver before you retire for the night or head home. That's just the kind of thing we do during the holidays, right?

So you're going to bring your child in and you're going to have her sit with you for a while. This is what you say.

"Why don't you just hang out with me for a while? When you are feeling better you can go back and play."

Allow your child to own a little bit of what most children can handle..."when you are feeling better you can go back and play." Most children will sit by you for twice as long as they would if you would have given them the time-out requirement. Not only are you respecting and honoring the window of tolerance, you are practicing time-in. You're being proactive.

Even though you check the window of tolerance, you do time-in, you worked at being proactive, sometimes your child ends up running around screaming. Then the other little cousin is running and screaming right behind him. One of them is yelling, "He did it!" The other is saying, "He did it!" You know how that story goes. What happens now? You breathe.

You take a deep breath and you begin to breathe. You practice your four, seven, eight. You say to your child, "It's okay. Come here. Sit down. It's all right."

Your child is trying to defend himself because they are all in survival mode. This is an important to know. In times of stress, we constrict into survival. In times of stress, the cells of our body actually constrict into survival. The moment you become stressed out, you are in survival.

You're no longer present for your child because stress does three things:

- **Stress causes you to react out of the past.** Stress says, "Oh no. It's going to be just like last year!"
- **Stress causes you to obsess about the future.** You think, "Oh No! This year or next year will be the same. We're **NEVER** going to have a good holiday season ever, ever, ever and ever.
- **It takes you out of the present.** As soon as it takes you out of the present, you are officially no longer in the here and now. As long as that is happening, as long as you are not in the here or now, you're not anywhere. So breathe and stay present. Breathe and stay present.

"In times of stress, the cells of our body actually constrict into survival. The moment you become stressed out, you are in survival"

So far, what you've been able to do is ***honor the window of tolerance***. You've been able to ***do time-in***. You've been able to ***be proactive***. ***When you can't always be there, you're going to recognize that that's okay***. You're going to take some deep breaths. You're going to pull your child into you and you're going to say, "Son, just sit down here with dad for a little bit."

You know what? It may be time to actually take a break and spend some time with your child. Go outside, toss a ball around. Make sure you bring one with you, like a basketball. Go for a walk down the street. Take a drive to the store. Go to the park. Sometimes you're going to need to do that and I'm going to recommend you do that at least twice during the day.

Your child is going to need that one on one contact time with you because that helps them to regulate. Got that? If you can do these four things you *will* have a different result:

- 1. The window of tolerance.
- 2. The time-in.
- 3. Being proactive
- 4. Recognizing that you can't always be there and that's okay; and breathe using the four, seven, eight count when you can't be there and you are on your way to success!

Chapter 4

Mealtime

Let's also discuss mealtime. Mealtime is always an overwhelming time during the holidays. Why? Because we're stressed.

S-T-R-E-S-S, that little six letter word that causes so much havoc and so much chaos during the family season. But guess what? You can turn stressful holidays into peaceful family time. Mealtime *is* going to be different this year. This year, twenty minutes before it's time to eat, you're going to pull your child out the stress. You're going to pull yourself out of the stress too. You and your child are going to get out of that house. Whatever house you're in, it's likely stressful. You're going to get out of there. This is where you're going to get in some of that time together with your child. Spend some of that time together and you know what will happen? Your child might not like it! You have to honor that. You have to say, "I know honey. You are playing and you guys are having fun and you don't want to leave. I understand and I would be upset too, and it's okay for you to be upset. But I know that we're going to be getting ready to eat soon. I want you to be able to eat the food that you want to eat and then I want you to be able to play with your cousins after you've eaten."

You're going to honor that, you're going to recognize that, you're going to acknowledge it, twenty minutes before mealtime. You're going to pull your child out because when you're doing that you're creating regulation. You're creating an opportunity to be calm for yourself and for your child.

So that's mealtime. What about sweets? Let your children have sweets, but not too much. Talk with the rest of the family. After you've finished eating, put the food away, especially, the sweets and the soda.

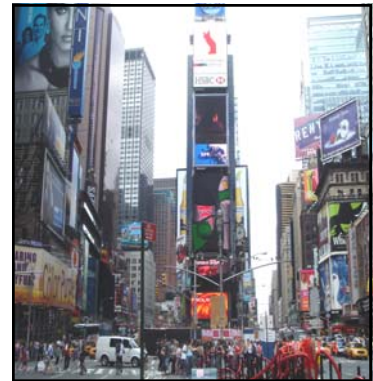
Have you ever noticed how kids go in and out of the kitchen all day long during the holidays? At the end of the day, you find little pieces of pie here, half glasses of soda there, and spilled cans of pop everywhere. Have you noticed that? Guess what we're going to do this year? We're going to put the

soda away and you're going to tell the kids that if they want more dessert after dinner, let an adult know. Better yet, come and let you know. Take responsibility for your child. You'll be setting an example for other family members to take responsibility for their children. You're really going to be regulating their sugar intake. Some sugar is good. It's helps them to actually feel a little better. But too much sugar sends them over the edge.

“Remember that Holidays Are Not Normal”

One point to keep in mind is that we are not conditioned for holidays. They are holidays. We call them holidays for a reason. It's a special occasion in the middle of the year, in the middle of the week, in the middle of the month. What happens is, we are conditioned to be going places like school or work. We're not conditioned to be spending all of that time together. You usually spend all that time apart. Now you're spending all that time together. Remember that window of tolerance? Keep that in mind.

Another thing to really keep in mind is all the stimulation. Sensory overload can be experienced by both you and your child. If you have been to Times Square in NY, recall the first time you were there—the huge buildings, the lights, the 250,000 people that cross through there every day—and the noises! For any first timers, this is an overwhelming experience. Or, seeing Disneyland for the first time as a five year old! This is what much of life is like for these children. And that is on a normal day. So you must be mindful of the jingles, the malls, the Wal-marts, the turkeys, the pumpkins, the Santa Claus and all of that stimulation. Be mindful of that. Be aware of over-stimulation. Be in tune with your child. That's the dance between the parent and the child. Be in tune with your child recognizing his internal



state. Recognize when they are starting to get out of their zone of comfort. When you do all of these things, you're honoring stress and fear. You're not denying it. You're not sticking your head inside the turkey. You're actually honoring the stress and the fear. You're honoring the fact that according to the stress model, all the negative behaviors you have seen over the years arise from stress and fear. You're going to acknowledge, you're going to understand, you're going to appreciate and you're going to feel enlightened by the fact that your child, God Bless his or her soul, has a very, very sensitive system. You're going to honor that. You're going to set your child up to be successful.

Epilogue

This holiday season, your family is going to experience more peace this holiday season than any of the other families you're going to be in contact with. This is going to be the most peaceful holiday season of any holiday season you've had up to this point because you are taking these necessary steps.

Number one, *you're honoring that window of tolerance*. Number two, *you're going to be checking in and doing time-in*. Number three, *you are being proactive*. Number four, *you're going to recognize that you can't always be there and that's okay...and when you're not there and you needed to be there, you're going back to time-in*. *You're going to go right back and recognize that window tolerance and that's being proactive*. You're not just doing it for yourself. You're doing it for the rest of your family. You're doing it for your children. You're doing it for your spouse. You're doing it for everyone.

You know what? You're going to do all these things because you are a great parent. You are a really

great parent. There's a little Biblical verse that says, "Let us love not in word or speech but in truth and action." This holiday season we're going to operate in truth and action. Remember, it's not what you say or do. It's how you feel when you're doing and saying it. Remember to breathe, four, seven, eight, four, seven, eight, four, seven, and eight. Stress, stressed, spelled backwards equals desserts. We're going to take being stressed out this holiday season and we're going to turn this holiday season into the dessert of our lifetime.

I want to say to you and to your family may God Bless You and wish you the happiest holiday season ever, ever, ever, and ever! You are a great parent. Thank you for joining us and caring enough to make a difference. Don't forget to visit us at www.postinstitute.com. After you've read this e-book or listened the audio program, send it to the rest of the family. You can make copies of it. You've got my permission. I want all of your family members to have peaceful holiday seasons. Thank you for reading *How to Turn Stressful Holidays into Peaceful Family Time*.

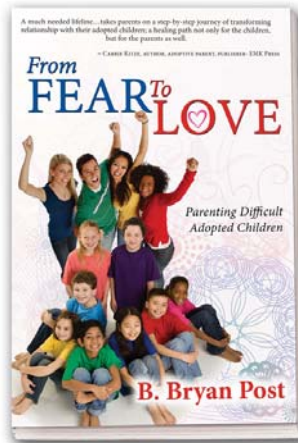
Choose Love,

B.

From Fear to Love

Parenting Difficult Adopted Children

By B. Bryan Post



- Provides new and highly effective techniques for parents dealing with behavioral challenges with their children.
- Those who can benefit most consists of parents, foster parents and caretakers of at-risk, ADD/ADHD, RAD, ODD, Aspergers, Autism, adopted and foster children and children with behavioral and emotional challenges.

ABOUT THE BOOK: Bryan Post speaks to parents about the challenges they face when dealing with behaviors that are often present for adopted children. He helps parents understand the impact of early life trauma and the impact of interruptions in the attachment process. In his compassion for parents and children he offers hope

and solutions for the challenges families face. Many parents of adopted children express their fear not only for their child's present behaviors, but for what will become of them in the future. Bryan's straightforward, clear-cut approach has created peace and healing for hundreds of families. Families who once operated in fear, are now experiencing love.

For more information and get a FREE 30 minute training video, go to www.postinstitute.com/feartholove

Praise for *From Fear to Love...*

From Fear to Love Book Review:

★★★★★ Parenting Must-have, September 13, 2010
By [Literary Litter](#) (Warsaw, IN USA)

From Fear To Love (Paperback)

"Honestly, it's the best parenting handbook I've seen for someone with a child that has difficult behaviors... Even if you aren't into reading, this book is a must have. Each chapter has a section over-viewing the key concepts of that chapter. If you just go through and read those key concepts, you'll gain a new understanding of your relationship with your child. If you are thinking of adopting a child, please read this book. If you have adopted a child, please read this book. If you yourself have been adopted, please read this book. If you're a parent and have nothing to do with adoption in any manner, please read this book."

Being a single mom of a child with special needs has it's difficulties. I've read mountains of books in search of answer to make things easier for both of us. That's right. I said 'mountains'. That may be a slight exaggeration, but it's slight. I want my child to feel safety and comfort because I love him. I'm not alone in this. Most parents feel that way. When you have a child that has autism, brain damage, rage issues, control issues or trauma, it can be difficult to figure out how to proceed with your child. When you adopt a child, you have no idea exactly what issues you're going to be facing until you face them. Although this book is geared towards parents of adopted children, I strongly urge every single parent to go buy this book. Most of the behaviors described in this book are not only found in adopted children. (I know you know that, Bryan! I'm just sayin!) Not only does this book explore how to handle the issues we have with our children, Bryan goes into detail to explain why these things occur. Through reading this book, we gain a better understanding of how our children work, how we work, and how we can work together to build a stronger family.

I love the way this book is put together. Honestly, it's the best parenting handbook I've seen for someone with a child that has difficult behaviors. Reading it through the first time, you gain a basic understanding for the principles based in the book. It's a lot like being at an inspirational seminar where you have a charismatic man urging you to find your parenting potential and reach it. Bryan is a cross between Emeril and the Shamwow guy. Well, in writing mannerisms he is. Add to that a genuine concern for families and it makes this book just amazing to read through. After the initial read, go back and reread the chapters that pertain to you. Underline behaviors and triggers that you find that are pertinent to your relationship with your child. Even if you aren't into reading, this book is a must have. Each chapter has a section over-viewing the key concepts of that chapter. If you just go through and read those key concepts, you'll gain a new understanding of your relationship with your child.

Again, I know this book is geared towards adopted children and families. If you are thinking of adopting a child, please read this book. If you have adopted a child, please read this book. If you yourself have been adopted, please read this book. If you're a parent and have nothing to do with adoption in any manner, please read this book. A greater understanding of our children and how to handle them can only help.

A much needed lifeline...takes parents on a step-by-step journey of transforming relationship with their adopted children; a healing path not only for the children, but for the parents as well. – Carrie Kitze, author, adoptive parent, publisher- EMK Press

My foster parent training has taken a drastic turn away from the traditional approach towards the Stress Model tm. As a result, our foster home disruptions have decreased dramatically. From Fear to Love is a clear blueprint for understanding traumatized children and helping them truly heal. – Georgia Phillips, LCSW, Foster Home Coordinator, Virginia

An exceptional resource for all parents, not just adoptive parents! – Kelly James, LPC Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor

Bryan Post has successfully translated neuroscience into language that anyone can understand and apply to the very challenging task of parenting (raising) an adopted child. His insights are unique because he speaks from 3 perspectives – the child's, the parent's and the therapist's. What valuable insight for those of us in child "caring" work! From Fear to Love should be standard equipment that comes with every adopted child and should be kept on the nightstand of every adoptive home. It deserves to be read and re-read as encouragement and confirmation on the good days and as guidance and direction for the others. Congratulations Bryan on this valuable resource for anyone, including teachers, in the care of difficult children. – Aletha McArthur, OCT, Teacher Specialist, Behaviour/Learning Disabilities, Founder of New Growth Family Centre Inc. Mount Forest, ON

I just read your new book. I currently supervise foster care and adoption and we are just starting to use love based parenting in training our resource parents. This book will be a great training tool for our families. It is easy to read and has so much information that is useful to families that we are trying to educate. I would highly recommend any foster or adoptive parent to read this book. I also like the articles for reference. I can't wait to use it with our parents. Your work helps us help our families help their children. — Patti Menow, Quakertown, PA

What great book! It's like all your lectures wrapped up in bright gift box! A thought provoking summary of all of your work to date. Nothing has been left out. It is easy and quick to read, with chapter summaries and highlights enabling the reader to return for jolts of inspiration. The truth that lies within revolutionizes the relationships between parents and children, building on the understanding of trauma and how it so deeply affects the human spirit. This book brings hope to the forefront, the one thing that stops us from quitting. --Marianne Ontario, Canada

Fast yet powerful read! I could have used this info before I became a parent of an adopted child; however, I may not have fully understood it until I lived through it. Once again, Bryan has offered a book that can help parents and children heal from early relational traumas with focus on the relationship verses the behaviors. – Holly Yingling, R.N. with focus on Neuroscience, mom to an adopted child with severe early traumas Apex, NC

This is a book I will recommended to anyone who has a child with severe behaviors. This is a book I wish I had when I met my son through foster care a few years ago. This book is such a powerful tool for all those parents who are struggling and do not know what to do. The book makes us understand why children react the way they do. This is the way to start the healing process . I really Love that book as it brings together all the elements a parent needs to know when parenting traumatized children. Bravo Post! Fanny Magier Beverly Hills, CA

There is hope. There is help.

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A Love Based Family-Centered Approach for Helping Children with Challenging Behaviors



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bryan Post is an internationally acclaimed therapist, speaker, and author. He lives in a small town in Oklahoma with his family where he enjoys sitting on the back porch watching the birds and the leaves dance in the wind.

