

Balance Your World

Healthy Focused People
Attaining Sustainable Results.

with Lynn Fraser

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How To Move Out Of Total Stress Paralysis (TSP) So You Can Still Enjoy Your Life

By Lynn Fraser, The Practical Life Balance Expert

We have two teenagers. (Need I say more?)

Our 17 year old son is pushing all the boundaries in his grade 12 year. It started with me adding his cell phone to my family plan earlier last year. Then I helped him to buy his first car at the beginning of last fall. (All you parents of older teens KNOW what's coming next...)

Having his own set of wheels seemed to open the flood gates to him feeling ENTITLED to do whatever HE LIKES: coming in during the wee hours of the morning, skipping meals, shrugging off any chores, sleeping in weekday mornings which not only makes him late for school but his younger sister, who catches a ride with him, as well.

I know, I know... it could be MUCH WORSE. He could be into drugs and illicit activities. Thankfully, he's not.

He could be failing his Grade 12 courses. He's nowhere near that. He's just a normal 17 year old guy who needs more room to grow the school counselor tells me.

And I'm a normal 40-something working mother who is losing sleep, losing control, losing brain cells to hormonal swings and basically, in **Total Stress Paralysis (TSP)**!

What to do? Ask questions and keep moving!

I discovered a powerful and simple way to move out of TSP.

Ask, "How?" How can I solve this?

Ask, "Who?" Who do I know who can help me?

Ask, "What?" What resources do I have on hand right now? In the public library?

The key to overcoming the paralysis is to keep moving. And to keep asking questions. Wow! How simple is that?

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Lynn's Total Stress Paralysis (TSP) Tool Kit

So I did just that. I phoned and booked an appointment with the school counselor (my second this month). I asked my husband to join me for the meeting. He did.

I searched my library for parenting resources and found an oldie, but goodie by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, "*How to Be the Parent You Always Wanted To Be.*" It's a workbook and 2 audiotapes. So I dusted off my Walkman and took the poodle for a brisk walk while I listened to sound strategies that worked with our preschoolers over a decade ago and now would work just as well with our teens. (*Paralysis is slowing letting go – I can breathe!*)

The next day, the counselor encouraged us to change the interaction with our son from parent-child to adult-to-adult. Don't wag my finger at him. Minimize how often I tell him what to do. Speak softly. Write a list of chores and tell him that I won't add anything more when he completes it.

And ask him to help solve the problems as they arise. Try questions like, "How can you help us to resolve this situation so we can give you more space? How can we handle this better? How does that sound to you?" Or, "How do you see that?" (This depends on his learning style: auditory vs. sight vs. kinesthetic). (My shoulders have now come unstuck from around my ears – it's amazing!)

One thing you know for sure – you won't be able to focus at home or at work with the current stress level between you and your teen. Choose to ask the questions in Lynn's TSP Tool Kit and start applying them in your family situation right away. Your stress will plummet and you can start breathing again ... at least until the next crisis hits! And when it does your new tools will come very handy! Oh, and remember to B-R-E-A-T-H-E! (It really helps those few remaining brain cells work better...)

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About the author: Lynn Fraser, The Practical Life Balance Expert, invites individuals within businesses and families to wholeheartedly lead enjoyable, healthy & focused lives. Visit her website at www.lynnfraser.ca

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