Leaving a Legacy, Episode 59

Power of Moms
A Gathering Place for Deliberate Mothers

Today April and Saren discuss the legacies we can leave as moms and women. Saren had an amazing experience attending the funeral of her grandma. Her grandma's last few years were hard on her and her family as her memory declined. After her release, her funeral was a huge celebration of the wonderful 91 years she lived and the many lives she touched in so many ways. The legacy she left was amazing. She had four boys and one girl, like Saren. She had 23 grandchildren who all made it to the funeral from all over the U.S.

As Saren listened to the beautiful tributes she pondered what legacy she is building and creating in her life. Her children and grandchildren had a chance to share memories about her. The things that people remembered were that she was very firm and she had her children follow the rules. However, she helped the grandchildren learn the rules in the most loving and kind way. She loved to keep her home beautiful. She taught her grandchildren how to learn tasks the right way in a fun way without being heavy handed. She understood what each individual needed.

She started a Joy School, which she collaborated on with Saren's parents and developed a themed curriculum for the Joy School which the Eyres have taught through their website and books. They teach socialization, creativity and pre-academic skills. This Joy School curriculum is now being used by hundreds of thousands of families who are running their own joy schools. The stories, activities and pictures are readily available and beautifully done.

Saren's grandma could look you right in the eye and pierce you right to the soul with her love. She did so many wonderful things in her life, but what

mattered the most is the way she made people feel. This came through in the talks and the music during the funeral.

Saren wants to add into her parenting a larger dose of that feeling that you are so loved and understood, which her grandma achieved. April agreed that we all want our children and grandchildren to feel special through our relationship with them. We want others to feel a special bond with us. When we assess how things are going, we can identify the ways we are distracted from these things we want to accomplish in our lives.

How can we help ourselves be less distracted and focus more on our loved ones? Saren's grandma was a working single mom who was very busy with huge responsibilities to care for five children. She felt guilty and sad that she couldn't be with her children as much as she wanted. She never expected that her husband would die at 39. Yes, there are distractions and we sometimes beat ourselves up thinking, "this is not what I planned on and this is not the mom I wanted to be." However, Saren believes her Grandma knows that everyone could see past those moments and know she was doing her very best. We're all going to fall short sometimes of our ideal, but we'll still make an impact.

April recalls being in an intense training seminar. She got a text from her daughter and quickly responded to the text. She realized that even though she was in a hurry this was an opportunity to let her daughter know that she loves her. April wants her to know at every opportunity she can. She tries intentionally to reach over and give a hug to her children or a pat on the back every time she walks by. These are easy ways to incorporate those little connections into a busy day.

Sometimes we put ourselves on guilt trips wishing we were an ideal. We can be that person through little things which add up to a lot. A little less time being grumpy and moody can go a long way too. So much of what we get grumpy about doesn't matter. A lot of moms are saying that when they get burned out, little things really bother them. Noticing the trigger – the little things that don't matter – can help us to avoid expressing grumpiness.

Taking 10 minutes to spend time with our kids is simple and creates beautiful memories people will treasure. Saren's grandma was remembered for having her say, "Remember who you are." Others might share scriptures or other important words which will sink into the hearts of those who love them.

April has learned from a book that repetition creates impressions. Even things you only did occasionally can be remembered as something you did many times and create powerful memories. We don't have to plan everything we do but recognize what is working.

Whatever it is we want our legacy to be, our legacy needs to be centered in our family relationships and be something our children really feel. Whether we have outside success writing books or being on Broadway, our greatest legacies need to ultimately be centered in our families. Every child can feel like they are number one to their mother. April took a parenting class in college and learned, "Every child in the world deserves at least one person who is absolutely crazy about them." This is really important for children who are struggling. Every child needs an adult who is absolutely crazy about them.

We don't want children to just feel tolerated. When we send them off to school, greet them and send them to bed, let's help them to feel that we're crazy about them. What can we do to help them feel this way? Saren went to a retreat and was impressed by the following quote/ question: "Do your eyes light up when your child walks into the room? We can work on looking up from the laundry or dinner making or computer and say, "I'm so excited to see you." When Saren tucks her kids in bed she tries to give them one last kiss and tell them something she appreciates about them. When she does this successfully, she feels great about herself and her kids. It takes maybe an extra 30 seconds per kid. No matter what happened during the day, it's wonderful to have them go to bed feeling special. It helps them to see you noticed good things they did during the day.

April's mom used to say, "You're home at last!" when they got home from school and gave them a hug. The first three minutes in the morning, the first three minutes they're home from school, and the last three minutes

before they go to sleep are a wonderful 9 minutes to focus on how you connect with your children.
Evaluate what the typical expression is you have with your family most of the time. Is it stern and annoyed? If we really want our homes to feel happy, we've got to look the part. We've got to match our disposition. We've got to work for it by getting our sleep, practicing positive discipline, and implementing family systems. All of the Power of Moms offerings are designed to give moms tools so they can create peace in their homes and have happier dispositions with their kids.

Final takeaways to make resolutions for developing our legacies as moms who are deliberately focused on building loving relationships and beautiful memories with our children:

- How do we individually show our kids we love them?
- Give our kids a compliment when we tuck them in?
- Utilize the 9 minutes-a-day principle of working on having meaningful connections with your children for three minutes after they first wake up, three minutes when you greet them after school, and three minutes at bedtime.
- Spend quality one-on-one time with our kids. Do what it takes to have a monthly date whether it's an errand or a lunch. This pays big dividends in our kids' emotional bank accounts.
- We're going to have bad days. We're not going to be perfect. We're going to misprioritize at times. However, they will forgive us and some of the bad will dissipate. Let's ramp up the really good parts where we help our children feel really special. When we do have bad times, it'll be made up for because we have invested in our kids with so many good deposits in their emotional bank accounts.

As we work to be more deliberate, our positive efforts will build up over time and they will bring purpose and meaning to our lives, our children and even future generations.