

“The Witching Hour,” Episode 63



Power of Moms A Gathering Place for Deliberate Mothers

You know that time of the day when there are a million things going on -- homework, tired “littles” who need attention and are starting to meltdown, dinner to cook -- and bed time is still far enough away? Well, it has been not-so-lovingly referred to as the “witching hour.”

Saren shares when she had five preschoolers at home and some days she would call her husband and ask him for help. At that point of the day, everyone had *had* it. Things do get better in some ways, but harder in other ways. As they get older there is more homework and extra-curricular activities, but it remains a crazy time.

April also shares how she started to master the “witching hour.” When she had younger children, April had some health issues and literally couldn’t stand up after 4 pm. This forced her to be deliberate. She gives two suggestions to make a priority:

1. Quiet time: Make quiet time in the afternoon a priority and include the whole family. Take a nap. Find the time during the day to prioritize a nap. But then don’t stay up late.
2. Cut down on the extras: If you can, limit the amount of extra-curricular activities and organize errands in the afternoon.

Husbands are also returning home about this hour. To make that transition smooth, discuss with your husband in a non-emotional way some of the following topics:

- How do you feel when you get home from work?
- How is this working? How is it not?
- What can we change?
- The more we discuss the more answers we get.

It’s an art to understand what each child needs to unwind. Look at that time of day and decide what the requirements are.

Plan dinner in the morning. Saren uses crock pot recipes and starts dinner when the kids have been dropped off at school. Involve the kids (especially younger kids) in the preparation of meals. Teach kids how to make simple meals. Make it fun. Make the kids part of the process with enticing opportunities

such as “chef of the day” or “Master Chef.” Involvement engages kids in something meaningful during a time that is typically stressful.

Plan time appropriately. Have a weekly planning session with your spouse. See what is going on during that week and find the times that will be busier and plan accordingly.

Don't get caught up in “should-be.” There is no rule that says if a child is mostly clean that they need to have a bath every night. Change it up! Be creative. Step back. Assess the situation. Find out of the box solutions.

Don't be afraid to allow someone into your home, like a baby-sitter. April had a darling teenager who would help Thursday afternoons. Teenagers would love to earn a little extra money by starting dinner, loading the dishwasher, etc. We don't have to do everything ourselves. We might have help inside our own homes: Enlist older kids to entertain the younger kids.

Take a look at your resources. Children thrive on routines.

Be fully available. It can be a beautiful time of the day, full of conversations, and quality family time. Be unplugged. Everything outside our home is put on hold. There are times we just want to be focused on the people we are with. Your solution won't look the same as Saren's or April's.

The process is beautiful. Enjoy it more. It's not about getting through dinner or getting through the day; rather, about the process. We are not moms so that we can put our kids to bed at 8 o'clock every day. We want to live our lives where we enjoy helping them with homework, enjoy the tuck-in time, and enjoy the dinner. Cherish the beauty.

Happiness is being where you are and not wanting to be anywhere else.

Wrap up:

- Quiet time. Sleep and rest.
- Discuss with your spouse. Plan.
- Cut down on extras. Decide what really matters.
- Involve your kids with cooking, games, and taking care of the house.
- Think outside the box.
- Be fully available.

Transcribed by Rosie Liljenquist