



Proud Aspy Mom Newsletter
February 2024



My Current Mood- POSITIVE!

Most people have heard of the famous rabbit from Alice in Wonderland. The Rabbit smoothly appears and disappears as he makes his way to the very important date, THE TEA. Well, the sound is a true reflection of My Current Mood - for good reason. As mothers we are truly NEVER done. We are constantly worrying about how our children will thrive, how they will transition and what will life look for us after they are gone. If we are honest the job is never ending. It is a true calling!

I recently attended a conference with families, which was enlightening. Some of the families had been taking care of their adult loved ones with Autism Spectrum Disorder for three decades. Many of the participants identified that they always felt LATE. Quite frankly they felt behind in all regards. In their personal, professional and with overall balance. When I asked what is on their WISH LIST this is what they had to say.

- **We need housing, housing and more housing options!**
- **Transportation and Social Engagement is the biggest issue we face.**
- **We need support with Workforce and**
- **We need Respite.**

I can of course relate to the constant feeling of catching up - I think we all can. But what took me by surprise is their willingness to talk about the journey of being a parent with special needs. Amid the many challenges, there was a

sense of tremendous pride of being given the privilege to care for someone that requires more. I am always researching. As I was preparing for this newsletter, I ran across this YouTube Video on the Beauty of Raising An Autistic Child. It is nice to know that I am not the only Mom that has come through challenges and AMID the journey -stopped to appreciate the gift I received. **My Current Mood- POSITIVE!**



The Beauty of Raising an Autistic Child | Sally Deitch |

[Watch Video](#)



Lyrics to the song I'm Late from Disney's Alice in Wonderland.

[Get The Lyrics](#)

Create Your Village- Ask for Help!

I must stop saying I am from the Midwest at this point because I have lived in Pinellas County, Florida for nearly 27 years. What I value most about my upbringing is that I was surrounded by a diverse village of amazing human beings who cared about their community. I am often asked why I do so much in the community and that is why- because it is what we are supposed to do as the keepers of the village.

After nearly three decades I am grateful for the village we created here. Many people - and I hope they all know who they are - poured wisdom and provided support to our family but specifically to our girls when we were navigating difficult waters. In hindsight I wish I had asked for more help. When you are going through LIFE it is hard to identify your needs or open up about them. Many women just plow through and get the job done. But as I look back - I now know it is important to Ask for Help or Accept Help when offered.



There is one mother that comes to mind that offered to help when we were in deep waters. I could not balance work, handling our older daughter's robust schedule and taking our younger daughter to appointments at All Children's Hospital. This mother was a true BLESSING! I remember not really wanting to take the help and I remember her refusal to take no for an answer. I needed her and her family. They stepped in the gap! This mother - like many other angels, allowed us to stay above water.

You cannot do this alone- **Create the VILLAGE!**

Camera Hog!

We are on the COUNT Down! No more teachers, no more books, No more...well you know the rest. Our daughter took her senior photos and like most parents it was surreal for us. Not so much for her though! As we watched our favorite photographer take those money shots we kept wondering if we were going to have the opportunity to jump in a frame or two. The answer was a resounding NO. When asked why - our daughter stated clearly that is NOT our day and she DID not think we should be in the photos with her. Although it admittedly rubbed both of us the wrong way we had to chuckle and think back to a time when our daughter would not even look into the camera. For many years we had to sneak photos of her-or- for family shots, we would have taken triple the ordinary amount in hopes of securing one good photo! Well times have changed, and this teen loves the camera! Very grateful for our Camera Hog - and for the photographer, Sarah McDonald - who knows how to get the job done!



So, What's Next... Balance!

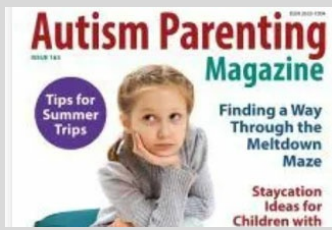


I am blessed to have a strong sister circle. Many of my sisters are checking in more these days because I have become more transparent about the stress of Next Steps. I receive this question all the time and because of it I am writing more about it! I have sticky notes everywhere, I am writing on cups and napkins for goodness'

sake. Whenever a thought comes to mind on how to support our daughter I get to work. Our older daughter gives a lot of good advice on the subject and then that adds more to the list. Back to my sister circle - one sister said be overly selfish to yourself, another sister said take-off time and travel, my other sister said, which was most valuable, I cannot imagine what you have gone through or have been through on a daily basis for so long. I would recommend balance - however you define that. I agree! So, What's Next? Balance!

Before I can begin a new journey, I must take time to reflect. Stay with me here- Really and truly reflect. I want to pause here.....

To my sister moms - **TIME to TAKE MORE TIME TO SMELL THE ROSES!**



Finding Balance As a Special Needs Parent

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