

## Volume 3 Number 4

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*This Genesis Gem has an article you will want to read about if you have children.*

#### **SLOWING DOWN THE FAST-TRACK CHILD**

One of the most frightening aspects of childhood stress is how much *earlier* in life children are exhibiting signs of stress disease. Being subjected to excessive stressful pressures can lead to problems such as headaches, fatigue, insomnia and gastrointestinal problems, to name a few. Constant bombardment of our children's senses and instant gratification has led to a new class of child – a child *who always has to be in a hurry*. Most children today are so rushed that their manners are atrocious, they cannot tolerate boredom, and their most common complaint is "I've got a headache" or "I'm too tired." The level of stimulation being experienced by children has increased dramatically. From the educational world to the entertainment world, from a greater variety of extracurricular activities to music that rattles our adrenaline with heavy rhythmic beats, I am convinced that kids today are experiencing too much of a good thing. Add this to the fact that childhood is becoming increasingly dangerous as violence becomes more common in our schools, and the future doesn't look bright for babies growing up in today's world!

##### **The Stress No One Talks About**

Much of the research probing the causes of childhood stress has focused on the effects of *traumatic or unpleasant events in life*. For instance, I have long been interested in the damaging effects of divorce on children. But the unpleasant experiences of life are not the only

sources we should be concerned about. The major sources of stress in today's children seem to come from the overstimulation we unwittingly impose on our children. It is not earthquakes, tornadoes, divorce, school violence, or schoolyard bullies, bad as these may be, but the stress that comes from *apparently enjoyable activities that go too far*. Kids need time to be kids, and not have every spare second scheduled with structured activities. Parents need to be concerned about dangerously overstimulating their children. This is the stress no one talks about – The stress that comes from too much of a good thing. It has created a special breed of children: *fast-tracked children*. And most kids have to be on a fast track just to keep up. After all, who wants their kids to come in last in the game of life?

##### **The Dangers of Creating Fast-Track Children**

What this often means is that the quality of life we offer our children is less than desirable. They are so pressured that they cannot get a good night's sleep or do something relaxing without feeling guilty. What happens to fast-track kids? *Fast-track kids suffer from double jeopardy-too much pressure and too little quality family time*. Many parents are themselves on a fast track, especially if both are working, so they cannot pay attention to building a quality home life or teaching such essentials as good manners. *Fast-track children are often overindulged*. They are given *things* instead of love, and lack solid values because their parents feel too guilty to set boundaries. *Fast-track children cannot tolerate boredom*. They

need constant stimulation and instant gratification. *Fast-track children cannot entertain themselves; they have to be entertained*. They require ongoing high-strung activity to keep them interested, and we have run out of healthy, high-stimulation activities! *Fast-track children lose their capacity to experience God*. Children who are being pushed too hard and too fast invariably turn away from God. Time is the key to developing relationship. "Be still and know that I am God," Psalm 46:10. With no down time allowed to pause, reflect and feel genuine emotions, how can we expect children to truly be in touch with themselves or their heavenly Father?

##### **Achieving a Balance**

We all want the best for our children. Some children have to be pushed in order to achieve and not everything about our modern life, including the internet and modern day entertainment, is detrimental. But we must seek a balance between stimulation and relaxation, between excitement and boredom, between the hard work of achievement and the tranquility of stepping out of the fast track. How?

- Pay attention to the stress symptoms your child is exhibiting
- Build in regular relaxation time for the whole family
- Have fun together as a family
- Listen to your child's complaints
- Model a balanced life to your children

Unless your children can enjoy their road to achievement, the final destination will be hollow and unrewarding.

*This article was written by Archibald D. Hart, Ph.D. and produced by the American Association of Christian Counselors.*

# Genesis Gems

Trouble dealing with your children, their attitudes, their school behavior? Contact Genesis Counseling of Fort Myers. Our trained counselors who deal with children and families can help.  
239-939-5504.

## **Another goal met!**

Fall of 2013 has had its challenges already! One of our finest counselors has moved away, her husband having been transferred out-of-state. On the other hand, one of our primary 2013 goals was to be more involved in the Christian community. We have been visible at the last Bridal Bash at the Germain Arena to market our faith-based pre-marital counseling classes. Several counselors are now working collaboratively to arrange for the next series of groups. Be sure to check our website at [www.gcformyers.com](http://www.gcformyers.com) occasionally for the latest updates.



## **Why Are We Here?**

Genesis Counseling of Fort Myers once again, can offer counseling at no cost or for a small donation. A new intern from Florida Gulf Coast University has joined our ranks! Do you need counseling or know someone else who would benefit from therapy? Interns can offer free sessions. Call Genesis at (239) 939-5504 to set up an appointment with our newest intern. She has openings right away.

## **A testimonial...**

*Finally, after years of suffering from anxiety, then panic attacks and literally thinking I was having a heart attack, I was encouraged to see a therapist. I really didn't think it would help. I resisted for quite a while but things just didn't change. So, I booked an appointment.*

*Right from the very first visit, the counselor challenged me to keep a log and account for my behaviors and attitudes from day to day. She simplified what seemed like an impossible undertaking. In no time, I was shocked and amazed to see the pattern of events in my daily life and how predictable it all was. With the help of the counselor from Genesis, we put together a plan and a set of strategies to begin the slow process of changing my lifestyle habits. They definitely had an impact on my stress level. With some changes, it brought my anxiety to manageable proportions. It took 6 months but it was well worth the investment of time and I am grateful that my counselor stuck it out with me. Is this what she meant when she attributed my changing to how "God works miracles in our lives, we just have to expect it!"*

*- I now believe in miracles!*



## **Who Does God Want You To Be?**

All too often we know that it would be a good idea to take time for ourselves, to really look at God's will for our lives. A counselor can explore that with you. Through the help of knowing your strengths, your God-given gifts and your passions in life, He may just show you a purpose you never dreamed possible.

**Check out the article for this quarter on the previous page**



This quarter's feature is all about carefully helping your children to reach their full potential without pushing them too fast or too far. Take a minute to read the first page of this newsletter and talk to your spouse and family about adjustments that can be made.

## **A Recipe for You!**

Apple Crisp

8 cooking apples (Rome, McIntosh, etc.)  
6 T. butter or margarine  
1 1/3 c. brown sugar  
1 c. flour  
1 c. oats (quick or old fashioned)  
1 1/2 t. cinnamon  
1 1/2 t. nutmeg

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Peel, core and slice the apples into an oblong pan 9 x 13". You don't need to grease it.

Mix the rest of the ingredients together. For some reason, mixing the butter in with your hands makes the crunchy texture of the topping more....

crunchy! Evenly distribute the topping over the apples and pop it in the oven. Bake for about 30-35 minutes. Apples should be tender and topping should be nicely browned. Enjoy with vanilla ice cream!

