

If Today's 'Bigger Is Better' Parenting Mindset Overwhelms You, Take This Wise Advice

Many of today's parents, perhaps even more than in generations past, are consumed with doing big things for their children. They often buy into the mindset that says they need the best and brightest educational experiences, the most luxurious home, the most fabulous vacation and of course the most lavish holidays to provide their kids with the most perfect memories. The pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic only add to the stress because parents feel they must get so many more big things right to avoid doing something wrong.

So how do parents and even grandparents avoid this stressful mindset? Award-winning author Julie Lavender has a positive, faith-filled answer. Often, she says, it's the little things that count the most.

"I just feel like a lot of times, we feel like we need to plan something big for our children so that they'll remember it and it will be special," Lavender tells host Marti Pieper on a recent episode of the *Family Matters* podcast on Charisma News. "And those are wonderful too, because we've had some grand vacations like that and some special events. But I think it's important to remember that it's sometimes the little things that our kids enjoy and remember the most; those are some of the memories that they treasure."

Lavender shares some examples from her years of parenting four children on the podcast and in her new book, *365 Ways to Love Your Child: Turning Little Moments into Lasting Memories*. Her husband spent 20 years in the Navy, and their frequent moves left the family in special need of unity, she says. "I just wanted the children to feel that sense of belonging, that

sense of love, that sense of connection. And I but I also wanted them to feel the heavenly Father's love expressed through us.

"At one of the places we lived when my husband was in the military, we had a long walk to the mailbox," Lavender says. "And there were a couple of times where I remember, the first thing I did when the youngest son went down for a nap was to go to the mailbox, but then there were several days I just decided, *I'm going to take the kids with me*. Well, one day we would hop to the mailbox. The next day we would jump to the mailbox. The next day we would walk backward; some days we would walk zigzag. So we just made a big deal out of it. And some of that was when my husband was deployed, and they might be expecting a letter from their grandparents or from their dad or something like that."

Lavender's book, she says, is filled with those "little ideas like that to make those intentional moments that are going to make a child feel loved and valued and kind of have a common bond of a common language, of shared experiences within the family."

✖ To hear more of Julie Lavender's little tips that can make a big difference in your family, listen to the entire *Family Matters* podcast here, and be sure to check out her most recent book, *365 Ways to Love Your Child*. {eo}