



How to Get More Patience

By Judy Arnall

Like a good marriage, it really helps to ignore a lot of daily irritations. Anger is like a fish-hook. We can choose to bite or swim on by. Sometimes, we just keep on swimming! Sometimes, we have to ignore the wet towels on the bed, clothes on the floor, and books strewn about, or we will be constantly criticizing someone for it.

Patience is a learned skill. We all have varying levels of patience, but we need to learn how to extend it for longer periods and how to loan it to our children. Part of increasing our patience is to learn child development and understand that much of what our child does is normal behavior. Learning to handle things that set us off is part of developing that patience muscle. Ask any parent home full time, and they will wonder why they have so much patience and then hand the children over to the spouse who has only been home half an hour and they are losing it all ready. They don't have the same patience level because they haven't had practice developing and using it all day.

Here are some simple steps to gain more patience. Start with one and add more.

- Breathe often!
- Set aside a time limit. Say, "For the next half hour, I will be patient." Extend your time limit as you get better at it.
- See the good intent of others. They are not trying to bug you. It's not about you. It's all about them. Children are born egocentric and learn about others as they grow.
- Live in the present. Forget about the future and all that needs to be done. Relish what is happening now. When you are distressed and more patient, things get done more efficiently, even if it's later.
- Prepare for delay. Carry around a good book or something to do when waiting for others.
- Keep perspective. Has anyone died because of this roadblock? Will it really matter a year from now?
- Be grateful. When you are delayed, think of all the people you are grateful for. Carry around a notebook in your purse and write a short note to tell them what you appreciate about them. This helps put you in a way better mood.
- Have quiet time every day – ten minutes on the front step admiring nature, or five minutes in the shower. Even for school aged children, remove yourself for a half-hour and savor the quietness. Be sure younger children are engaged in an activity and safe. You can have a few minutes alone. Hooray for the DVD player.
- Have a time-out room for you! Make it inviting, soothing, calming. A bedroom with crystals, a water feature, stereo with spa or massage music, candles, calming artwork,

plants, books, and cozy pillows. A welcoming, relaxing room to have a peaceful moment. If you have a TV or computer in your bedroom, cover it with a white sheet, so it doesn't remind you of work to be done.

- Avoid multi-tasking. Living a more peaceful, patient life means taking one thing at a time. Doing multiple things causes stress and hurriedness, which feeds itself in the frenzy.

We are taking on an adult role. Part of the adult role in parenting is leadership. Good leaders model appropriate skills. Yes, we are human, but being parents, we try to be better at patience every day that we wake up. How we deal with anger is a direct model to our children on how to deal with anger. They are watching us. Keep at it and pat yourself on the back for every minute of success!

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