

## JOURNAL PROMPTS

What were my biggest takeaways from this audio on Preventive Maintenance?

1.

2.

3.

What is a realistic action step for me to take to support my child with preventive maintenance?

What support do I need, and can I give myself, so my preventive maintenance is more likely to be successful?

## GOING DEEPER

Consider the five basic Preventive Maintenance practices. What can you do to increase their effectiveness in your family life?

Below is an example of a completed chart. On the next page, you'll find a blank chart for you to use.

| <b>Preventive Maintenance</b>      | <b>What is the next step for you to do more of this practice?</b>   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Empathy</b>                     | When I get annoyed, remember to stop, drop, breathe and restate what I heard her say.   |
| <b>Routines</b>                    | Instead of getting mad when the toys are all over, I want to start working with the kids to clean up every night after dinner and before bath. Also, we need a better evening routine to settle them down. Try a short massage?   |
| <b>Special Time</b>                | Order an audio book to keep the little one busy while I do special time with his sister. On weekends, alternate the kids so we each get an hour with each child.  |
| <b>Laughter &amp; Roughhousing</b> | We're pretty good about this but it would help to come up with a list of games to post for when I run out of ideas. Be sure to do this every day after school and snack and before homework.  |
| <b>Welcoming Emotions</b>          | When she is acting up, get her laughing. If that doesn't work, then get the little guy busy with a sensory box. Then stop and get really calm and empathic with her, so she feels my connection. Then set a limit as kindly as I can and help her feel safe so she can cry. |

| Preventive Maintenance  | What is the next step for you to do more of this practice? |
|-------------------------|--|
| Empathy                 |  |
| Routines                |  |
| Special Time            |  |
| Laughter & Roughhousing |  |
| Welcoming Emotions      |  |

## PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD

### Print out and post on your refrigerator

Preventive maintenance is about meeting emotional needs. Most parents have a hard time welcoming their child's strong emotions. Partly, that's because they're inconvenient. But it's also because they scare us. In fact, our own emotions often scare us.

But emotions aren't dangerous. In fact, it's when we stuff our emotions down out of conscious control that they pop out and hijack us. So once we accept emotions, we're more able to regulate them.

This week, notice the big emotions in your family that you usually think of as negative: anger, fear, sadness, disappointment, annoyance, frustration...

### When your child gets emotional:

1. **Acknowledge:** *"You seem really upset about this...you wish that...you don't like that...."*
2. **Allow the emotions, even when you need to limit behavior.** *"It's okay to be mad. It's not okay to hit."*
3. **Let yourself feel a little of what your child is feeling, while you still stay centered.** (e.g., if you are saying *"You're saying that I love your sister more....Sweetie, that must feel so awful, to feel that"* then you may get tears in your eyes at how heartbreaking this must be for your child.)

### When you feel emotional:

1. **When you feel angry, resist acting until you calm down.** Instead, breathe. Notice the sensations in your body. Breathe into them. Notice if there are any other feelings, like hurt or sadness or fear, under the anger.
2. **Love yourself through all your emotions.** When you're sad or hurt, hold yourself with compassion and let yourself cry. Treat yourself with as much tenderness as you can.

## REFLECTION AFTER PRACTICE

### 1. What did you notice this week about your reactions to your child's emotions?

When your child gets emotional, how do you feel inside?

Can you just acknowledge your child's emotions?

Are you able to empathize even while you limit behavior?

Are you able to feel a little of what your child is feeling?

How does your child react to that?

Have you noticed that you're becoming more empathic?

**2. What did you notice this week about your own emotions?**

Do you notice your emotions as they begin to build?

Can you let yourself feel sad?

When you feel angry, can you just breathe and not act on it?

What do you notice in your body when you're angry?

When you got angry this week, were you able to see once you calmed down that there might be other feelings under the anger, like hurt, or fear, or sadness?

Were you able to be tender with yourself?