

Parenting Matters VOL 5

The “back to school season” is my New Year’s! I make a lot of promises to myself to be better organized in the home and the office, to make healthy lunches for the kids, to spend more time with friends and to start a new physical activity! And just like other resolutions, they begin to dissolve away as school and activity schedules take over and I narrow my scope of tidiness to the basics such as clean laundry and clean toilets!

The summer has flown by. The rainy weather has made me feel like our summer was shorter than usual. Our family is in the midst of a kitchen renovation, and I have been trying to use my deep breathing techniques to calm my nerves!

I will be busy this Fall with speaking engagements, writing a monthly parenting column for a community paper called the North Shore Outlook, and working with children and their families in my private practice. For those of you who may be interested in parenting tips about various child matters, I will be posting the articles from the North Shore Outlook on my website in the near future.

I attended a great workshop with Dr. David Burns in July, focusing on working with clients who are dealing with anxiety or depression. In this newsletter, I would like to share with you some insightful ideas it gave me.

The main message in Dr. Burns workshop is understanding that “You feel the way you think!” The way that we feel about a situation or about ourselves, is created by our thoughts. This remains true for both our negative and positive thoughts. The textbooks call this the cognitive behaviour model. Thoughts that make us feel depressed or anxious or angry are frequently distorted or illogical, but seem so true when we are upset. The “cure” is to **take charge of the way you think, so you can change the way you feel!** If a person can isolate their distorted thoughts or beliefs about themselves, they can free themselves from the daunting “I should, I must and other expectations. Examples of negative thinking are:

- “I should be a better parent, wife, colleague”
- “My life should be all together by now”
- “I must not make mistakes!”

The “shoulds” cause a person to feel:

Guilt	shame
Inadequate	fear
Anger	frustration
Discouraged	depressed

Addressing these negative beliefs and irrational thoughts is done by finding ways to untwist a person’s thinking and then teaching the person to keep a daily mood log of their negative thoughts. Dr. Burns has proven that writing out our thoughts helps us to see and challenge those thoughts that keep us stuck. It may sound simple enough, but as Dr. Burns points out, “We yearn for change, but cling to the familiar!” Change isn’t as easy

as one might think. In the next *Parenting Matters*, I will go into more detail about some common self-defeating beliefs that keep us trapped in a certain pattern of behaviour.