

Mommy Magic: 450 Ways to Nurture Your Child

Adria Manary

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Children don't come with instructions. Parents and those who interact daily with children may lose sight of the magical view kids have of the world. Manary points out this magic with personal anecdotes, stories from friends, poetry and famous quotations. She lists ways to put this "magic" into action and tap the wellspring of wonder often overlooked in the grind of living the adult life.

Manary, creator of The Washington Fun Times newspaper, author of *Touched by a Rainbow* and co-author of *Kennedys—The Next Generation*, tells readers to take advantage of one's physical surroundings. Whether it's the beach, the city or the mall, she notes ways children and parents can grow closer, mentally and spiritually. A simple walk to the mailbox becomes a scientific adventure or search for fairies if approached with childlike sensibilities.

Visualization helps children overcome fears and win competitions so Manary suggests children keep dream journals listing the goals they wish to attain. To cope with the loss of loved ones, she encourages children to write letters to the departed, giving the child a chance to say something he or she didn't say in life. Having survived the deaths of several close relatives in a short period of time, the author speaks with the authority of experience on these matters. Even cooking for one's children or caring for a sick child can have "magic" moments, the author says, if certain foods are always associated with certain events. Many of her ideas or suggestions can be helpful to the typical parent or family.

Some suggestions, however, are less realistic or attainable for a family of average or below average resources.

Volumes have been written about how to discipline children, communicate with them, medicate, psychoanalyze and conform their behavior to the ways of adults. Although some of the author's ideas may seem somewhat excessive to the scores of overworked and underpaid parents of the world, her attitude of recognizing their magic should appeal to some. It offers a very child-centered, adult-effacing, get-down-on-the-floor-and-play kind of approach that many parents or caregivers may find refreshing.

MARY SPIRO (May / June 2000)

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