

Mrs Dowdell's Parenting Pointer

New Year New You???

A new year can be a great opportunity to assess our lives and make a few changes **but** let's be kind to ourselves. Here are some ideas to consider ...

We're great at putting our children first. Many parents go without, in order to provide for their children's needs. What if this year we decided to put ourselves first? Not because we don't care about our children but because we really **do** care about them. Our children need us to be the best possible version of ourselves that we can be. If we don't take care of ourselves, who will take care of our children if something happens to us? Look at it this way - If you are on an aeroplane with your children and the oxygen masks come down, the instructions are to put your own mask on **first** and **then** your children's otherwise you will pass out before you can help them.



Whether we like it or not, we are the biggest influence on our children's lives. We all want our children to be fit and healthy, both physically and emotionally. How are we doing at modelling that to our children? Without paralysing ourselves with guilt, are there areas we can work on that model to our children that taking care of ourselves is important? Maybe focus on just one thing?

Can we look for more opportunities to exercise? Not necessarily joining a gym but walking a bit more, going to the park after school, going puddle jumping on a wet day or cycling to work sometimes. Can we think a bit more carefully about what we're eating? Not going on a faddy diet but thinking about our portion sizes, trying to reduce unhealthy snacks, drinking more water or making sure we cook some meals from scratch. We want our children to get enough sleep but are we good at going to bed at a sensible time?



Our mental health is just as important. Are we in touch with our emotions and how we're really feeling? Do we have people we can turn to and talk about our worries and concerns? Do we choose to focus on our strengths and our successes, however small, or do we always look for the negative in any situation? One idea is at the end of each day, write down one or two things you are thankful for in a notebook, or put the bits of paper in a jar. These don't have to be huge things, maybe you're thankful that the rain held off until after the school run, or that you cooked a new recipe that you enjoyed, or you had a good chat with a friend. Whatever you write down, you'll be creating a record of positive things that you can look back on when you're having a bad day or that you can celebrate at the end of the year.

For some of us our worries may be overwhelming. For the sake of your children, will you make this the year that you try and find some help? If you are concerned about finances or have unmanageable debt, if you are struggling in your relationships, if you are worried about your health or the health of a loved one, or dealing with grief, please get in touch. I can't always fix things but I can always listen and often signpost to other support if needed. Let this be the year when you make one or two changes that put **you** first so you can continue to be all that your children need you to be.

Got any questions? Need any help or advice? Please e-mail me at parenting@foundrylanepimary.co.uk