

This Holiday, Shift from 'Naughty or Nice' for 'Kind & Connection'

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Hey, Parents!

It's officially that time of year. Twinkle lights, sugar highs, and the race to remember where you hid that one present. 🥰 The holidays bring magic and mayhem, and I'm here to help you keep the calm and connection at the center of it all.

Before the season gets too busy, I want to pause and look at how some common traditions impact our kids in ways we may not expect. A simple shift can **turn holiday pressure into purposeful kindness**.

Be sure to read both the *Hot Topic* and *Parenting Hack* below before the holiday rush takes over.

Wishing You Well,

Nicole ❤️ 🌱

This Month's 🔥 Hot 🔥 Topic...

From Fear-Based to Heart-Based Motivation

Many holiday traditions were meant to be fun, but they often end up adding pressure on our kids. Phrases like:

"Santa is watching."

"You better be good, or else..."

"The elf is reporting back."

These messages can create fear instead of excitement. Fear might lead to **short-term compliance**, but research shows it does not build the skills children truly need. Research by psychologists **Dr. Edward Deci** and **Dr. Richard Ryan** (Self-Determination Theory) shows that **children thrive** when they feel:

- **Autonomy:** "I have a choice."
- **Competence:** "I can do this."
- **Relatedness:** "I belong."

Fear-based motivators, like being ***watched or judged***, can lower all three. This often creates short-term compliance instead of long-term growth. When kids feel stressed but do not have the skills to handle those feelings, you may see:

- **tantrums**
- **clinginess**
- **aggressive behaviors**
- **withdrawal.**

The child is not misbehaving on purpose. Their stress is rising and their regulation skills cannot keep up.

Kindness-focused traditions do the opposite. They teach children their actions matter all year long. The focus shifts from performing for Santa to building skills that last far beyond December.

Kindness- focused approaches can:

- ♥ Encourage empathy and compassion
- ♥ Support emotional regulation
- ♥ Strengthen family connection



With all of this in mind, let's look at one simple way to bring more kindness and less pressure into your home this season.

Parenting Hack 🌟

The “Kindness Elf Challenge”

You have probably heard of *Elf on the Shelf*, or *Mensch on a Bench*. For some families it is fun, but for many, the nightly elf missions end up causing more stress than smiles.

So this year, I invite families to try the **Kindness Elf** instead.

This shift is simple:

Replace fear-based messages (“Be good, or else”) with value-based ones (“Let’s spread kindness together”).



Here is the simple shift:

Instead of *watching and reporting* behavior.

The Kindness Elf *notices and celebrates* small acts of kindness. Your elf can leave short notes when your child:

- helps clean up
- shares a toy
- comforts a sibling
- does something thoughtful for a neighbor

If you want an easy way to introduce this idea:

- The book *The Story of the Kindness Elves*, [linked here](#).
- Due to the holiday, the Amazon price is high right now, so I also linked a YouTube read-aloud [here](#).

Use whichever works best and let this be the start of a calmer, kinder tradition.

Dates to Grow & Know 🌱 🌳



Dec 14: Hanukkah Begins

Dec 11 : Blog: Why Saying "No" Is a Parenting Must

Dec 22 - Jan 5 - SDPBC Holiday

Dec 25: Christmas Day

 **Let's Connect** 



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Let's tackle your parenting challenges together!

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