



## Keep Your Bucket Full Series (Part 2 of 3) from Parenting Continuum

Last week, we talked about your mental-emotional well-being as a bucket that gets filled when you focus on positivity (empathy, gratitude, curiosity, joyful creativity, calm, etc.) and depleted with negativity (stress, anxiety, frustration, anger, disappointment, shame, guilt, etc.). We explored why your bucket may feel lower than usual and you got a baseline with [Positive Intelligence \(PQ\) assessment](#).

This week, we dig into strategies to drain less and fill more.

### *Drain Less*

- **[Focus on your Circle of Influence.](#)** Notice whether you are investing your time and energy on things *within your control and influence* or outside of them. For example, worrying about climate change or economic stability will not bring about change. Instead look for ways that you can take personal action or influence change. And then make peace with things outside your control knowing that you have done what you can.
- **[Choose a healthy relationship with social media.](#)** Catching up on life events from close friends and family can bring great joy. Reading a recent article on a passion area can spark critical thinking. [Limit your COVID-19 related news to 10 minutes or less](#), says a neurologist focused on leadership development. The same could be said for any other issue from natural disasters to political news to social justice. Focus your news on any *new facts or perspectives* and *what actions you can take*.
- **[Reframe your self-talk.](#)** Remove SHOULD from your vocabulary - either do or do not and make peace with it. The word “should” is a clear sign of your inner critic messing

with you. If it is important to you, try a reframe like “I *get* to workout”, “I *get* to learn something new”, or “I *get* to spend more time with my family”.

### *Fill More*

- **Quarantine-innovate kudos!** High five to all the new trial hikers, social distance picnickers, car parade celebrators, and businesses re-imagining work. Give yourself credit for all the things that you and your family have re-imagined and innovated this year!
- **Find the silver lining**. This can be a great shift when running low on innovation and needing to find the good in what is.
- **Boost your happiness chemicals** in your brain with simple activities like petting your dog or 1 minute of sunshine. One of my favorites is the laugh challenge. Find 1 or 2 other people (kids are amazing at this challenge). Set a timer for 60 minutes and at the same time each do the goofiest laugh you can. It starts out a bit contrived and before you know it you are cracking yourselves up.
- **Replace “I’ll be happy when” with “3 things I am grateful for today are”**. Share your gratitude with others. It is contagious. My family likes to share what we are grateful for before dinner each night. This focus on gratitude shifts your brain chemistry.
- **Spark positive conversation**. Acknowledge something about another person. Share something cool you are reading, watching, or making. Ask “what’s been your best quarantine hack?” Positive focus shifts our mind into curiosity, empathy, possibilities, and activation.

**Ask yourself. “What do I need to do,  
so that within one year I can say this current situation  
is the best thing that could have ever happened to me?”**

About the Author: Erin McAuley is a leadership expert and change coach trained in neuroscience and positive intelligence (PQ). She coaches working parents, leaders, and teams to thrive in the now and achieve their “what’s next”. She and her husband Jeff live in Monte Sereno with their 2nd and 3rd grader who are attending virtual school at home. “Our kids are constantly teaching us lessons in self-discovery and change agility.” [www.bechange.coach](http://www.bechange.coach)