

Making Life Better

Five Hacks To Help You Have An Easier Time

by Kristen Howerton

(NAPS)—You can get the best out of life if you heed these smart suggestions:

1. Keep it simple. You don't have to "do it all." Opt out of obligations that make you feel frazzled instead of joyful. Prioritize what's important to you and give yourself permission to say no.

2. Start early. Make deadlines for yourself whether your gearing up for hol-



A tiny spray that fits in your purse can be a big help in avoiding unpleasant odors in other people's bathrooms.

idays, a vacation, the new school year or a special occasion. Set a time to write lists, cards, invitations and so on. Get the kids to help. Let them try their hand at creating cards and gifts. It may not be perfect, but it makes them feel important.



Such tasks as making and sending cards and gifts can be a chance for family fun.

3. Be prepared for parties. Keep a couple of bottles of wine on hand for hostess gifts or impromptu get-togethers. Grab some coloring books to take along for when the kids get bored. Don't forget a secret weapon for when nature



"Rage Against the Minivan" blogger Kristen Howerton says your house doesn't have to be picture perfect to be wonderful for your family.

calls while you are out and about: Air Wick's V.I.Poo can be stashed in your purse and is an excellent foul-odor preventer. Just a few sprays in the toilet before you go and you can avoid the embarrassment of a smelly bathroom at someone else's house. It comes in fruity, rosy, lemon and lavender scents. Learn more at www.airwick.us/vipoo.

4. Prioritize quality family time over perfection. Try to cultivate a lifestyle that is less about spending and more about making memories and giving presence as well as presents. Give your kids family traditions to remember. Let go of the pressure to do everything perfectly. Your house doesn't have to look like a magazine illustration. You don't need to change your pillows or plates every season. It's okay to bring pre-made food to the class party. Let yourself off the hook.

5. Clean out the closets. Look through your old clothes and ask your children to find 10 toys to donate and do an audit of their closets. Give away anything you don't wear or they don't play with but is still in good condition.

• *Ms. Howerton, a marriage and family therapist, is known for her popular blog about negotiating the indignities of motherhood, "Rage Against The Minivan."*