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# WORK-IT MAMA

Traveling Milk Truck  
Monthly Newsletter

## I think we can all agree,

That 2020 will certainly a year to remember. It has been more than 264 days since the U.S. began lock down—then opened up again—then locked down again. We have witnessed a devastating wild fire season, the stock market crash, the surprise visit of murder hornets, plagued squirrels, the postponement of the summer Olympics and so much more.

Despite the feeling of loss that we've experienced this year, I want to take a moment and highlight just a few of the good things we can reflect on. For one, the BLM movement has helped us come to terms with the deep rooted racism in America. Change is happening. And with this change, we have the opportunity to learn and listen from each other and uplift our diverse and cultural stories. I also want to point out that we are going to see the first women and person of color to be the Vice President of the US. I couldn't be more excited.

In this month's newsletter, I am going to talk about the importance of connectedness, the Holidays, New Years resolutions and more! Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanza, Happy Hanukkah and Happy New Year! There is so much to celebrate. May you and your family stay safe and healthy. I look forward to connecting in 2021.



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## WHY CONNECTION MATTERS

There is no denying that the pandemic has placed some strict parameters on how we interact with other humans.

This year we've kept our distance, hidden our faces, engaged our kids in remote learning, cancelled plans, closed businesses, stopped traveling, eat our quarantine snacks in record time, hoard toilet paper, etc. You get the point.

As silly as these COVID restrictions have felt at times, they have been necessary—and needed—to keep each other safe. But, it doesn't make it any less difficult.

Like so many parents, I have been working from home trying to maintain a (non-existent) balance between meetings, meals, distance learning and keeping my kids safe. It's been really tough. There are days that I feel so incredibly alone even when the people I love the most are standing right in front of me. Feeling alone is easy to do as a parent and then add the weight of the pandemic and those feelings become even more heightened.

Humans are social creatures. They need connection to survive and thrive. I think the lack of connection this year has been one of the most significant reasons why the pandemic has been such a challenge for emotional stability.

According to an article on Psychology Today, "Social connection strengthens our immune system (research by Steve Cole shows that genes impacted by social connection also code for immune function and inflammation), helps us recover from disease faster, and may even lengthen our life. People who feel more connected to others have lower rates of anxiety and depression."

In other words, it's a lot easier to take care of our well being when we are able to connect with other humans. So, as we plop ourselves on the couch and dig into the reserves of our snack bank, what are some ways that we can find that connection we crave?

Interestingly, "researchers agree that the benefits of connection are actually linked to your subjective sense of connection. In other words, if you feel connected to others on the inside, you reap the benefits thereof! That is good news. While many of us cannot always control the number of friends we have, one thing we can take responsibility for is the state of our mind." —Emma Seppälä Ph.D., Psychology Today.

To maintain, build and create a foundation of connection with other humans, start small. Put down the bag of chips. Be kind to yourself. Smile at yourself in the mirror.

“  
Unexpected  
kindness is the most  
powerful, least  
costly, and most  
underrated agent of  
human change.”

— BOB KERNEY

The internal voice you harbor is powerful. To spend even just five minutes investing on your inner strength will have a powerful and lasting effect on your health. So, as we look forward into 2021, remember that meaningful connections start with you.

Have you seen or experienced a random act of kindness lately? I want to know. Send me a message at [karlee@travelingmilktruck.com](mailto:karlee@travelingmilktruck.com).



\*Image Source: northstatesind.com

## FIVE THINGS I LEARNED AS A NEW PARENT DURING THE HOLIDAYS

- **Block the tree.** The second our daughter was mobile she went after our tree like a cat. So, we opted to hoist the Doug Fir onto the table. The next year we put a fence around it. If you want to keep your sanity (and your ornaments) make protecting your tree the top priority.
- **Don't put presents out** unless you want an early Christmas. The tiny humans take it upon themselves to unwrap whatever is in reach.
- **Don't forget: Santa loves you too.** The year I forgot to ask Santa for a gift, my daughter noticed immediately. Put a gift out for yourself, even if you are rewrapping the white elephant gift you received from the office party two years ago.
- **It's okay to be specific** when someone asks you what your little one(s) need. If you have an infant, think about what will help you on your parenting journey as new milestones are reached.
- **It's easy to get carried away during the holiday season.** Make a list of the top activities you would like to do. Do one or two activities per week and save anything you don't have a chance to do for next year!

Did you learn something important during the holiday's you would like to share? Send me an email: [karlee@travelingmilktruck.com](mailto:karlee@travelingmilktruck.com).



## WHAT'S YOUR RESOLUTION?

I don't commit to a resolution every year and I am not afraid to admit that some years my resolution is in the garbage with our Christmas tree on January 2nd.

When I get sidetracked from my goal, It's often because I feel like I've failed in some way. But, I find that when I resolve to do something small, and forgive myself if I sidestep my mission for even a day or two, my odds for success increase dramatically.

Resolutions have allowed for me to embrace my successes and failures while keeping myself accountable.

This new year, I will resolve to create consistent active habits to better my physical health by doing a small activity each day.

Interested in starting a resolution this year? [The Resolution Handbook](#) is a great resource for keeping your goals top of mind.



## Creative Corner: Salt Dough Ornaments

Looking for a simple holiday activity to do with your kids during quarantine? Salt dough ornaments take minimal effort and they're relatively easy to clean up—just don't mistake them for sugar cookies.

### STEP 1

Preheat oven to 250 degrees F (120 degrees C).

### STEP 2

Stir together the flour and salt together in a bowl. The dough will get sticky quick, so stir in the water slowly until dough becomes smooth and easy to handle.

### STEP 3

Roll dough into desired shapes and arrange on a baking sheet. If you are making ornaments, use a straw or small round object to poke a hole in the dough for hanging on the tree.

### STEP 4

Bake to dry your cookies, about 2 hours. Allow to cool completely.

### STEP 5

Decorate! You can save the decorating for the next day or maybe as a rainy day project. It's completely up to you.

**Insider Tip:** If you have cookie cut outs, you can make fun, festive shapes. The dough does not rise like a normal cookie so roll the dough more thinly—this will help them dry more quickly.

**On a budget and need a gift?** For a number of years, salt dough ornaments were our go-to gift to send out to friends and family. We did handprint salt dough ornaments, when the girls were little. The great news is that the family still hangs them up every year because they preserve so well.

**Prep:** 10 mins

**Cook:** 2 hr

**Total:** 3 hr 10 mins

### Ingredients

- 2 cup flower
- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup cold water

\*\*Inspired by All Recipes

## Kiddo Product Shoutout! Patrick Bamboo Plates



Do you know what gets old really fast?

- 1.) your kids screaming at each other to be awarded a specifically colored plate for dinner and...
- 2.) running out of cabinet space because none of your kids cups and plates fit due to their inconsistent shapes and sizes.

Kidly is great because their designs are eco-friendly and they are made with function in mind.

Check out their website here: <https://www.kidly.com/>

## MEET MAPLE & LUCY

My husband and I agreed that we weren't going to welcome an elf into our lives because it was another thing to remember during the holiday season.

But a few years ago, a friend gave me an idea to transform an elf into a Canadian Mountie and I couldn't help myself. We adopted one immediately. My husband and his family are from Canada and it seemed like a fun way to honor his home land (or the "Mother Land" as he would call it). Naturally, we named her Maple. Lucy the Moosie showed up one day after her initial arrival. I know. I know. It's a little bit crazy and any realistic holiday boundary we had initially had about the elf has been eaten along with the syrup on the Vincent breakfast pancakes.

I applaud the parents that get super creative with their Elf on the Shelf. It's a lot of work to keep up with those scenes. Truthfully, you wouldn't catch me making an elaborate elf scene because I'd rather be sitting on the couch with a glass of wine. Despite our efforts we've still forgotten to move her and had to come up with some elaborate story to justify why she didn't move the next morning. Regardless, Maple and Lucy are here to stay. Well, at least for the remainder of December anyways.

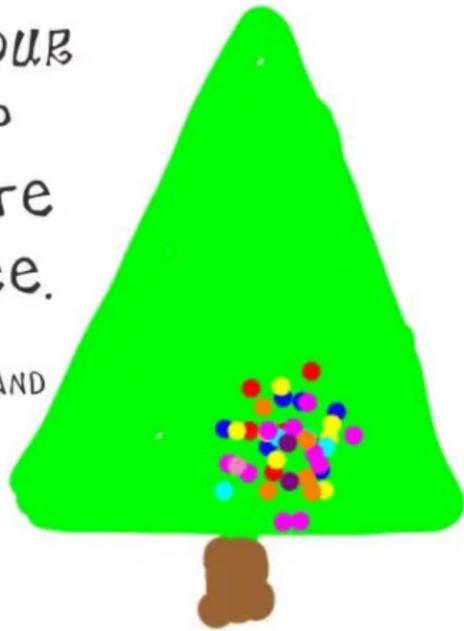


## THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTIONS FROM A SIX-YEAR-OLD

*"Who decided that words should be spelled the way that they are?"*

WHEN YOUR  
KIDS HELP  
DECORATE  
THE TREE.

@SIMONCHOLLAND



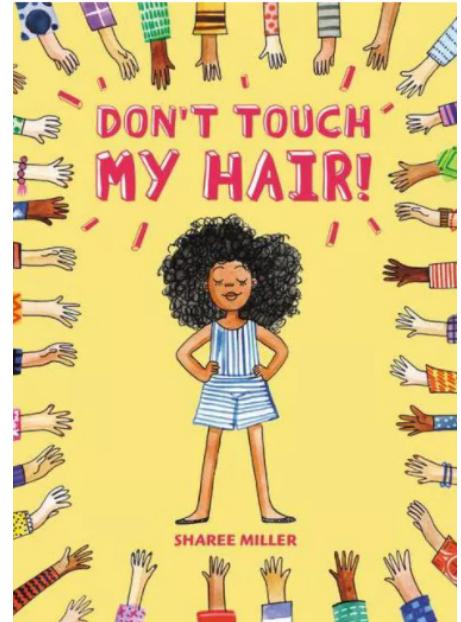
## MEME OF THE MONTH

So far, we've only broken three ornaments this year. To help prevent more of a mess (and save our tree), we purchased a tiny, reusable tree for the girls to decorate. You can catch them decorating and redecorating the tree in their bedroom. It's a win-win.

## BOOK OF THE MONTH

Representation matters. I was challenged earlier this year to go and count the number of kids books that we had on our shelves that represented people of color —we didn't have many.

My girls love "Don't Touch My Hair!" by Sharee Miller. It teaches you about respecting boundaries and the importance of asking permission! Need a gift idea for this holiday season? It's a fun family favorite in the Vincent house and it's great for kids ages 3-7.



Hey Friends,

Have a children's book you love? A parenting hack you want others to know? Care to share how you have made your workplace more parent-friendly? Shoot me an email. I would love to feature your story in a future newsletter.

And follow me on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for updates and progress on my book.

I look forward to sharing with you next month!

XO

-Mama Kar

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