

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

—Galatians 5:22-23, NRSV

## HEART

### Relationships

Our wellness in this area depends on our ability to build healthy relationships. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul writes of the fruits of the Spirit. These qualities serve as a compass to guide our habits and decisions as parents as we balance our emotions and build healthy relationships.

### Emotions

It is quite normal that at times our emotions are the exact opposite of the fruits of the Spirit! So it is helpful to remember that another gift of the Spirit is “do-overs.” When it comes to our emotional wellness as parents, it’s a matter of progress, not perfection.

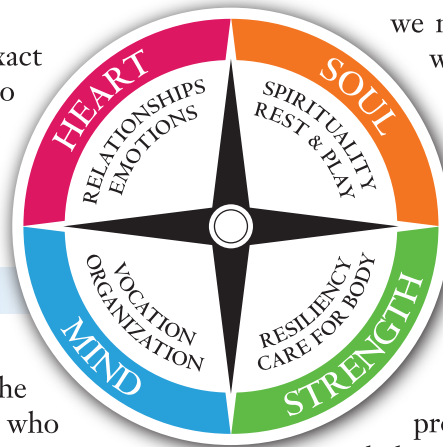
## MIND

### Vocation

The word *vocation*, from the Latin *vocare*, is related to the word *voice*. As parents, we respond to the voice of the One who gives life to us and to our children. We also work on cultivating a confident voice as parents, a voice that aligns with the loving voice of the One who is our guide, our compass in all matters of parenting. Can we do this? Yes, we can, with God’s help.

### Organization

The decisions we make as parents regarding how we organize our schedules, money, possessions, and priorities are critical to our personal and family wellness. We need to make time for family meetings with our children when they are old enough. Discuss these matters. Talk about what’s working well, what’s not, and what needs to be changed.



## SOUL

### Spirituality

Many parents report that they never prayed so much as when they became a parent. Both the sacredness and the vulnerability of parenting leads us to want to connect more deeply with God. One daily prayer practice we highly recommend is a gratitude practice. At some point in the day, simply pause and offer three expressions of gratitude to God for what you have experienced as a parent.

### Rest & Play

“All work and no play ...” As overworked, overcommitted parents, it is important to remember the unbridled joy and ease of unstructured time we experienced as children. Studies confirm that when we move and play, we gain energy, energy we’ll have to share with our children. As an investment in your well-being, choose an enjoyable activity and make a plan to add it to your life.

## STRENGTH

### Resiliency

When we practice good habits regarding the foods we eat, how much sleep we get, and how we move and exercise, we experience a two-fold benefit as parents. First, it provides our bodies with energy and stamina; and second, it helps us to be more resilient. We are simply better able to bounce back from the inevitable stressful moments of parenting. Another, equally important, benefit is that we are modeling healthy behavior for our children as they begin to form habits around how they care for their bodies, habits that can last a lifetime.

### Care for the Body

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is positive, loving messages about their bodies and their sexuality. As with other aspects of wellness, the best way to impart positive messages about our bodies is to practice good self-care when it comes to caring for our own bodies and our own physical well-being.