

# ASIA Reader's digest

MOST TRUSTED  
&  
MOST READ

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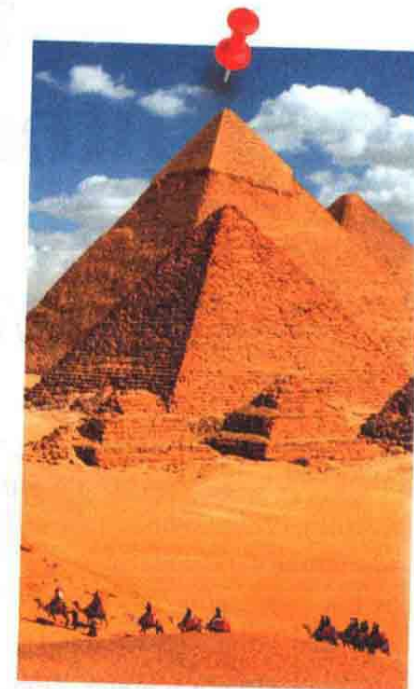
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# Many Hands Make Light Work

Escaping the mayhem is as close as your own backyard

BY WENDY  
CHIAPPARO

FROM COUNTRY  
WOMAN

**MY GARDEN IS MY REFUGE;** I find reflective solitude in it. I have seven children, so our house is a scene of lively chaos. I spend my days cajoling, encouraging and attempting to keep mayhem at bay. Sometimes I succeed. Other times I fail. But my garden always helps me relax and recharge.

It's a rejuvenating place. Early morning sunlight glistens on dewdrops that dangle from a spider's web in a tomato plant in my garden. The squash lifts its yellow trumpets to celebrate the morning, and busy bees work deep in their recesses. Here and there I spot a watermelon above the vines. For a long time, I guarded this place of peace and quiet. When the children followed me into the garden, I would hand out chores.

PHOTO: ISTOCK



"Here: you weed the beans, you water the onions and you mulch the capsicums." Soon they would be hot or their backs would hurt from bending over, and they would leave me to myself.

But during a recent spring, while thumbing through seed catalogues, I noticed my nine-year-old daughter, Hope, cutting pictures from one of my copies and pasting the images on a piece of paper. She had a whole list going. We put our lists together and ordered twice as many seeds as we usually needed.

A few days later I was trying to prepare the soil, and I honestly wasn't enjoying my time of peace and solitude. My 13-year-old son, Josiah, picked up a spare spade and began helping. Working as a team, we had the pea patch dug up and composted in no time at all. I thanked Josiah, realising that I'd enjoyed his company.

The same thing happened with picking up rocks and planting the seeds – one or two of the children would appear to watch and then participate. Each time, I would



# Batman Meets the Fisherman

How a chance encounter brightened a difficult day for a single parent

BY NOELEEN GINNANE

*A Reader's Digest Field Editor, Noeleen Ginnane lives in Melbourne in the same suburb as her son Daniel. She has recently started her memoir, finding that her passion for writing has begun to fire again.*

IT WAS THE YEAR 2000 AND I WAS A SINGLE PARENT, raising my four-year-old son Daniel in Perth with all my family based on the other side of the country. Without the support of my siblings, aunts, uncles or grandparents, being on my own was terribly hard. Because my son's father lived in Perth, I couldn't relocate to be with my family. Although Daniel's father didn't see him often, it was important for him to be geographically close to his dad. Money was tight, and with almost no support network, I often felt depressed.

One night, after a busy, long day at work, I raced to Daniel's childcare centre to collect him on time. After arriving home, I made dinner for the two of us, before heading outside so Daniel could ride his tricycle. Wearing his Batman costume, he was full of energy as he rode proudly through Claremont towards the river, his cape flying behind him. Meanwhile I walked alongside feeling weighed down. I tried to keep a cheerful facade so I didn't upset Daniel, but inside



Young Daniel in his superhero costume

I was broken, exhausted and lonely. When we got to the river we walked down the pier. There was an older man fishing at the end and I was anxious Daniel would disturb his peace and quiet by making noise, so told him to hush. As we approached, the man turned, smiled and asked, "How's Batman this evening?"

Daniel proudly informed the man that Batman was good, thanks, before casually asking about the fish. I value good manners, and had been afraid we might be bothering the man. Yet I couldn't have been

“  
The man turned, smiled and asked, “How's Batman this evening?”

more wrong. The kind man engaged with my son – or should I say, Batman – and watching their exchanges brought a tear to my eye. This lovely old gentleman was so kind, friendly and genuinely interested in Batman,

my little boy, that I just wanted to cry.

It was just unforgettable how this man gave my son the time of day. I will always be grateful for that.

Share your story about a small act of kindness that made a huge impact. Turn to page 5 for details on how to contribute and earn cash.

PHOTO: J. HIBEL / GETTY IMAGES / COURTESY OF THE WRITER



# THE DIGEST

## Feel Tired All the Time?

The cause could be a medical condition, such as ...

BY DIANA KELLY

**... YOU'RE ANAEMIC** When you visit your doctor and complain of feeling tired all the time, one of the first things they'll check for is anaemia or thyroid disorder, says Dr Amy Shah. "If someone says 'I'm tired and feeling a little more short of breath,' or 'I'm having trouble exercising,' that tends to be anaemia." Anaemia is when your blood doesn't carry enough oxygen to the rest of your body and the most common cause of anaemia is iron deficiency. People with anaemia may also experience feeling cold, dizzy or irritable, or have headaches in addition to feeling tired.

### ... YOU HAVE A THYROID PROBLEM

If you have a thyroid issue, such as an underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism), in addition to feeling

tired, you might also feel like your skin is really dry and you're constipated a lot, says Shah. Hypothyroidism is a condition that occurs when your thyroid gland doesn't produce enough of certain important hormones. Women are more likely to suffer from hypothyroidism. A thyroid function test can diagnose hypothyroidism easily and if you have an issue, your doctor may prescribe a synthetic thyroid hormone.

### ... YOU MAY HAVE PREDIABETES OR DIABETES

When you have high blood-glucose, your blood circulation may be impaired so cells can't get the oxygen and nutrients they need and you feel tired, according to registered nurse David Spero. Low

blood-glucose levels also result in feeling fatigued, because there is not enough fuel for the cells to work well, he says. If your high blood-glucose is causing blood vessels to get inflamed, that chronic inflammation can also make you feel fatigued, according to research.

### ... YOU'RE DEPRESSED

If you feel like you're tired all the time, don't want to get out of bed in the morning, and/or have trouble sleeping, you could be suffering from depression. Your doctor can use a screening tool to determine if you're experiencing an ongoing depressive disorder, or whether a life stressor or alcohol affects your emotional state. "Depression, alcohol abuse and fatigue are very tightly knit," says Shah.

### ... YOU HAVE A LEAKY GUT OR FOOD SENSITIVITY

"If you're eating poorly, especially a lot of processed foods, the gut cells can become a looser, net-like structure instead of a tight structure, and proteins that aren't supposed to be in our bloodstream leak into



### Diabetes can directly cause fatigue with high or low blood-glucose levels

our bloodstream, which creates an inflammatory response," says Shah. The inflammatory response can manifest as bloating, fatigue, moodiness, headaches or weight gain. If you have food sensitivities (to foods such as wheat and dairy) you can feel fatigued, get rashes and experience bloating or brain fog. Following

an elimination diet of possible food culprits and then slowly introducing them back in may help you identify what you're sensitive to.

### ... YOU HAVE SLEEP APNOEA

If you have sleep apnoea, your throat starts to close when you're asleep, which is why people with the condition tend to snore. Not getting enough oxygen sounds scary, but your brain won't let you suffocate. "The brain notices you're not getting rid of your carbon dioxide, and it wakes up really briefly in an alarmed state," says sleep expert Dr Lisa Shives. Even though you keep waking up, those wakeful moments are too short for you to notice, so you won't understand why you're so exhausted the next day.

*Science is showing that how you feel isn't just about what you eat or do or think. It's about what you believe*

# THE HEALING POWER OF YOU

BY ERIK VANCE  
FROM NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC