



## The Gift of Every Child

I have always loved the metaphor that children enter the world as beautiful gifts and as they are nurtured and loved and accepted those beautiful packages open into unique twinkles of awesomeness. Though each package may be delivered a bit differently, the magic is real, and the gift is a celebration of love. Some gifts require more care and delicateness in the opening process. For some, the bows and wrapping are disorganized and the unwrapping takes more planning and curiosity. For some who's delivery was difficult and maybe even painful, the tape and wrapping has become a barrier of survival. No matter how the gift came to be, the treasure of what is inside is there and real. How then do we unwrap those gifts when the delivery was unexpected or difficult? I have discovered in the past 20 plus years a few things that may be helpful.

1. Acceptance.
2. Connection.
3. Perseverance.
4. Community.

### **Acceptance:**

The acceptance that I am speaking to is really the honoring that this is my child or the child/client that I get to serve and support. The mindset is not about how do I change who this child is but rather how do I support this child toward joy and fulfillment. Joy is defined as a feeling of great pleasure. Joy is finding meaning in exploring and engaging in the world and with others. The first step toward unwrapping is acknowledging that my gift of this child is exactly the gift that is needed in the world.

### **Connection:**

Connection is the state of being related to someone or to something else. How do we connect with our child or client? Connection communicates I am here with you. It communicates, I am with you. We can connect by slowing down and listening and observing. We can connect with acknowledging and allowing feelings with empathy. We can connect with physical affection and words of affirmation. Savor the moments of one on one time. When connection is difficult, think about what brings joy or what brings meaning to the child in this moment in time? Let that be your starting point of connection.

### **Perseverance:**

Never give up on the discovery of what's inside. It can be a process. Celebrate when there is an opening in the packaging. Celebrate the steps that move your child or client toward the illuminations of joy and the engagement in meaningful and functional "occupation." Perseverance is possible when we as caregivers or therapists have our own meaningful moments of joy and fulfillment. Don't forget to keep your own twinkle alive and well.

### **Community:**

We need community. No one has all the answers. Who is your tribe? Who is there to support you? We need others to help us. At times, we need professional support or a team of professionals for our child. We as professionals also need a support network of other professionals as well as our own inner circle of support. We too don't have all of the answers and that is ok. Find your community of resources and supporters. I have learned that it often takes an entire community to open our delicate packages called children. Let us celebrate the coming together to do so.

My name is Lisa Haverly, Occupational Therapist and owner of Rainbow Tree Therapies, LLC and I am passionate about serving children in ways that work best for them. I consider natural spaces to encourage meaningful engagement and development of skills. I have grown my business because of my support network and because of the commitment of my professional team. It continues to be a process of creation and keeping the twinkle alive and well.

Thank you for reading my blog. Thank you for sharing your gifts. Lisa