



Beat the cranky pants syndrome

Are you a mum with the best of intentions, yet some days the cranky pants syndrome grips you before you know it and you find yourself reacting to a small thing, way out of proportion to the event? Maybe someone drops something on the floor and you quickly fly into overwhelm? We all have moments like that. If we keep having them though, we can really start to hurt the relationships and people we care about the most.

How to reduce the cranky pants episodes...

1. **Catch it early.** What are your first signs of being out of balance? Do you feel irritable, tired, overwhelmed or get a headache? Know your own tell tale signs. (If you're not sure, ask your children or partner – they'll probably know.) Practise taking a breath before answering when you feel like this and while you're doing that, let's get to tip number two...
2. While you're taking a deep breath, before replying to what someone said or did, **think about their intent**, e.g. a child drops a bowl on the floor while helping you make brownies. Their intention was to spend time with you, make something yummy and to be helpful. They might have made a mess but their intentions were not to make your life harder. Respond to the intentions and you'll find relationship building responses come more naturally.
3. **Ask for help.** Cranky pants are often worn by worn out mums. So ask for contribution. The more you ask, the more people will feel like they belong and are valued as part of the family. Even a toddler will respond to being given a task, shown how to do it and then being high-fived for their effort. They love it! So often we don't ask for help because we see it as failing or a burden to someone else. Ask clearly and specifically and say thank you when it's done and you'll inspire co-operation around you.
4. **Stay out of your red zone** – take a chill pill as soon as early warning signs start to appear. Remove yourself from harming others and do something that puts a smile on your dial, before you do anything more. Sometimes it only takes a five minute activity to rebalance and replenish. Keep a list on the fridge of 5 minute things you love to do, and go do one when you catch the signs. Involve your family in helping you, by suggesting that when they catch your early warning signs, to tell you to do one of your activities. "Hey mum, I think it's time you had a cuppa!" You can teach it to them too and you'll be modelling self-management and emotional intelligence. Double bonus!

- ✓ **What are your early warning signs? Make a list and share them.**
- ✓ **Have a contingency plan in place – write a list of your favourite 5 minute activities to recharge your batteries.**
- ✓ **Ask for contribution – it adds value and belonging to the people you ask.**

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Maya Angelou

Roxy loves helping women develop emotional resilience so that they can enjoy fulfilling and contented relationships, which survive the ups and downs of life. Having experienced the challenges of being a single parent, juggling being a mum and a practitioner, building a business or two and overcoming anxiety and post-natal depression, she has a vast knowledge of how to minimise the struggle and use practical strategies that really work!



Roxy Lebsanft Co-founder Bare Hands, Mother, G.Dip, Couns, B.HSc, Cert.IV TAE, Strategic Psychotherapist

Bare Hands is run by allied health professionals committed to helping women embrace positive change by providing access to practical education. To find out more give us a call, email us or visit www.barehands.com.au.