

Dancing In The Kitchen

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When supper is over, my kids head immediately for the small CD player sitting on the mitten chest. You see, we have a funny family tradition of dancing in the kitchen.

We are not good dancers. In fact, if someone came up to our kitchen door at the wrong moment, they might think we needed the paramedics. There we are, four kids and two adults jumping about and singing at the top of our lungs to *YMCA* or FFH's song *You Found Me*.

Mike and I love to dance as much as the kids do. We started the tradition even before we had kids, dancing in the kitchen as we did the dishes. I always felt that no matter how our days went at work, if we could dance together and sing in the kitchen after supper, we could end up having a wonderful evening. It usually worked.

Then we became parents, and dancing became a necessity. The night we brought Hannah (our first child) home from the hospital, she decided that she did not like to sleep, so we danced all night. We waltzed around the house, bouncing and singing to her. That's probably why she loves music so much now.

Three more kids later, we are still dancing. Well, most nights, at least. There are days when the rush of work, kids, cooking, diapers, and paying bills overwhelm me. I sometimes feel like I have to excuse myself from the dinner table and head immediately for the laundry room. Then bath time and homework sneak up on us, my temper flares, and our evening is shot. (Everyone knows if mamma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy.)

That's when I need to be reminded of the joy of the little things. Like dancing in the kitchen.

One of my kids says, "Mommy, play *YMCA*."

My first reaction is to think, "Not tonight; we have so much to do, and it is already seven o'clock." But the looks on four little faces make me take a deep breath and head for the CD player.

As the music starts, the kids run in and out of the room, singing and dancing. Mike and I start cleaning up from supper, dancing a bit as we carry dishes to the sink. We all get goofier as the music goes on.

When the music stops, the joy stays. Once the kitchen is cleaned up, our baby is ready for the bath, and the older kids settle in to start their homework.

Later, as we head up to read *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie* for the hundredth time, I look down and see smiles on everyone. My heart is warm, my stress is gone, and joy fills the air.

You see, joy is as contagious as stress. Every day will be filled with a to-do list. Some days, you will get it all done. Other days, you will not.

But every day can be filled with joy, whether you have done what you set out to do or not, if you take time to enjoy the little pleasures of life, like dancing in the kitchen.