

Soul Caffeine

Written by Gayle Nobel

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Recently, my husband Neil and I had a morning date. We went out to participate in a sport/hobby we both enjoy. He gets to play often. I haven't had the opportunity for a long time. Even though it had been quite awhile for me, it was as if I had been playing/practicing all along. I must say, I surprised myself. I felt good. I felt competent. As I felt competent, my confidence grew. As my confidence grew, the fun factor multiplied.

Experiencing competence is empowering. It is a quick dose of feel good booster, particularly if it's something I really enjoy. Feeling competent can be a tremendous shot in the arm.

I think of my son, Kyle. As is sometimes or maybe, often, true for many people on the autism spectrum, he does not get to experience competence on a regular basis. This is something we have been focusing on a lot over the last few years. I have to break things down into the tiniest pieces and offer just enough support without offering too much to help him get to a place of competence. Once again, it's complicated. In fact, it's more of an art than a skill. As he feels competent, he gains confidence. He is less likely to want to flee the scene of an activity. (He's a competent flee-er :-)) When he knows he's competent, he responds more quickly.

Experiencing that feeling of competence gave me a boost of energy. It was "feel good fuel" for the rest of the day.

The soul's caffeine, perhaps? Ummm, feels so good. Have you had any lately?

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