



## Real-Life Special Time Success Stories

1.

**“It changed the whole afternoon and set the tone for the rest of the weekend.”**

A few Fridays ago I was feeling really rotten after a long and stressful week at work and I really was not in the mood to be parenting!

It was just me and my daughter and it wasn't going terribly well. My daughter was cranky and I was restimulated and it was all I could do to stop myself from racing out the front door and running away (with the thought of the entire weekend looming ahead)!

Then my daughter suggested Special Time.

It hadn't even occurred to me to offer it (that was the kind of state I was in).

At first, I groaned inwardly but then I realised the genius of it and my whole attitude shifted. Then my daughter said, “I need Special Time right now because I’m feeling cross.” I was able to be present, offer her warm and loving attention and she was able to reconnect with me and herself. Initially, she was really grumpy in her Special Time, and because I could just be there and listen to her wholeheartedly for those few minutes, she was able to shrug that off and move into playing with delight and enthusiasm.

By the time we had done 20 minutes of Special Time we were both feeling bright, happy and connected! It changed the whole afternoon and set the tone for the rest of the weekend.

That weekend we did an hour of Special Time both on Saturday and Sunday. **I have never been able to manage that amount of time before with such ease.** And since then we have made those longer weekend Special Times a tradition.

What a difference it makes to the weekend.

As a single parent, I get pretty worn out when it’s just me and my daughter for long stretches of time. These long Special Time sessions counter the heaviness of the days stretching ahead when all I feel like doing is curling up and taking a break.

***It's counter-intuitive that putting more energy and love into parenting when you're feeling exhausted can turn things around – but that's exactly what it did!*** Hooray for Special Time!

I cannot praise the genius of Special Time enough. It's clear that it makes a difference in my child's life but what is equally rewarding is noticing how it makes my life as a parent so much lighter and more fun!

When we are doing Special Time consistently, our relationship is more intimate, loving and co-operative.

What I have discovered more recently is the profound effect that Special Time has on me. I feel happier, more relaxed *and* I feel good about myself! The consistent practice of Special Time has made more of an impact on me emotionally than I could have imagined.

I had always thought that Listening Partnership time was the most important listening tool for me as a parent, and I have certainly gained tremendously from it. But I am now convinced that Special Time deserves credit for freeing me of feelings of guilt and regret as a parent, and bringing back a childlike zestfulness into my life and my family!

Special Time has done more to re-energise me than any amount of rest could have done!

~ Liesl Orr, Johannesburg, South Africa

## 2.

**“I am absolutely amazed at the powerful effects that *Special Time* has on my relationship with my daughter.”**

For our third *Special Time*, my 6-year-old daughter said she wanted to start jumping on her bed. I kept thinking that she was going to either break the bed or fall off and get hurt, but I contained my worries and let her do it exactly as she wanted. I patiently sat on the side of her bed and watched.

It was amazing how much fun she was having jumping up in the air and trying to touch her toes like a cheerleader.

After a while, I asked her if she wanted me to jump with her. She said, “No,” that she just wanted me to watch her, so I sat back and watched and made silly comments to make us laugh.

She jumped for almost 15 minutes before getting tired and falling down on the bed in exhaustion. She caught her breath and then began to tickle me until I laughed so hard and “pleaded” for mercy.

She returned to jumping on the bed, and then we ended our *Special Time* with her “flying” on my legs in the airplane game.

Ending *Special Time* is always difficult for my daughter because she has so much fun and wants to stay connected to me, so she often resists, but once she had a chance to settle down and transition from playtime, she followed me upstairs to my room where I was putting laundry away.

Her mood changed to a serious one, and she told me how much she loved me, and how she never wanted anyone in our family to die unless we all died together at the same time.

She said she didn't want me to die early like my friend had done a couple of weeks earlier, and she broke down crying and sobbing in my arms. I listened.

I am absolutely amazed at the powerful effects that *Special Time* has on my relationship with my daughter, and also in helping her address things that are bothering her.

I have been telling everyone I know lately, who has kids, about this great activity and how powerful it can be in building relationships with children

### 3.

#### Teeth brushing is no longer an issue

My children and I do regular **Special Time** most days for at least three minutes. Sometimes they choose to work on their challenges during Special Time. Once my three-year-old son tackled his challenge of teeth brushing.

He didn't like brushing his teeth very much and barely let me brush either his upper or lower teeth. One day, he wanted to brush my teeth during Special Time.

"Okay," I said helplessly.

Then he scooped a lot of xylitol with someone's toothbrush, stuck it in my lopsided mouth, and brushed inside of my mouth in a three-year-old way.

My face was covered with saliva and my shirt was drooled on. I groaned and moaned, and my son was laughing. Whenever I caught a break from his rigorous brushing, I begged, "no more!" in vain.

He put more rigor into his brushing, laughing and really enjoyed this role reversal. It continued for most of our ten-minute Special Time.

Later, I noticed he was gradually more relaxed about teeth brushing. That night, he let me brush both upper and lower teeth!

After a couple of months now, teeth brushing is no longer an issue.

—Keiko Sato-Perry, Certified Parenting by Connection Instructor

Search “Special Time” at [www.handinhandparenting.org](http://www.handinhandparenting.org) for more real-life success stories and inspirations.