



# Raising Joyful Rebels

## A Guide for Moms

How to inspire girls to  
trust their own greatness,  
bounce back from hurt,  
and live exuberantly

FRAN HENDRICK, P.C.C.



*Parenting expert Fran Hendrick provides moms with a step-by-step approach for inspiring girls to think for themselves, bounce back from hurt, and become exactly who they're meant to be. Brimming with examples, this highly readable guide shows how to provide a relationship where girls know they will be heard, understood, accepted, championed, and given the leadership they need to bloom. Includes downloadable tools, and guided writings to lead moms on a journey of their own.*

# **Raising Joyful Rebels: A Guide for Moms**

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# Raising Joyful Rebels

## A Guide for Moms

**You can spot a joyful rebel in a crowd.** Her authenticity sparkles, and she knows her own value. She's the girl who throws herself into life, whether she's studying chemistry or building a treehouse. She's the one who smiles at the classmate who's being excluded and invites her in. She's the adolescent who bravely says no when her friends want to drink and drive.

**The “little things” are really the big things when it comes to building self-worth—or eroding it.** *Raising Joyful Rebels—A Guide for Moms* shows step by step, with an abundance of examples, how to provide a space where girls know that they will be heard, understood, accepted, championed for their efforts, validated, and given the leadership they need to bloom.

**It's your journey, too.** It takes a quiet, powerful certainty about yourself to allow your daughter the freedom to express and to be all that is within her. As you learn how to use the magic of small moments to elicit, amplify, and nurture your daughter's unique voice, you will strengthen your own.

**Bonus:** The downloadable *Joyful Rebels Journal* brings the *Joyful Rebels* approach to life with a complete set of interactive tools and games to use with your daughter, and guided writings to lead you on a journey of your own.

### Fran Hendrick, P.C.C.



Professional clinical counselor, parenting columnist, and teacher Fran Hendrick has provided coaching and counseling for hundreds of women and girls for twenty-five years. She is a member of the International Association for Psychoanalytic Self Psychology. In addition to her therapy practice, Fran provides consultation online and by phone for moms participating in the *Joyful Rebels* process.

Fran divides her time among working with clients, kayaking with her husband, and scampering up jungle gyms with her granddaughters. Clients appreciate Fran's calm, empathic style, her practical strategies and solid advice, and her playful spirit. Wildflower House, Fran's cozy personal development studio in charming, historic Loveland, Ohio provides a space for women and girls to become exactly who they're meant to be.

Connect with Fran: [www.franhendrick.com](http://www.franhendrick.com) and [www.facebook.com/franhendrick](http://www.facebook.com/franhendrick)



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# Preface — Your Journey

I'd like to share with you the story of *Raising Joyful Rebels* so you can envision how it may fit with your own story.

A few years ago, while attending a three-day workshop in the midst of torrential downpours and tornado warnings, I caught a glimpse of a fascinating young woman across the meeting room. Dressed boldly and unconventionally, she stood out in the crowd. My curiosity piqued, I maneuvered my way to her side of the room to talk with her during a break. As we chatted, I learned that she hailed from Utah. Her upbringing, I gathered, had been laden with rigid rules and limitations. She had embarked on a mission to provide shelter and hope to adolescent girls in her community who had been abandoned to fend for themselves, perhaps because of a drug problem or a pregnancy.

"You've been something of a rebel, then?" I asked. She agreed.

As she talked, I was impressed by her determination to allow her singular voice to ring out clearly in support of these girls in the context of a culture that seemed to discourage this. The bright red shoes she wore with her conservative, longish dress seemed to convey that the spark of individuality that lies within us must not be lost in a gray sea of conformity.

Many women have had the experience of being quietly shushed. Maybe your mother or a friend or partner has hinted, subtly and just a little apologetically, that you should hold back a little on expressing yourself; that you shouldn't be too boisterous or opinionated; that you should avoid standing out. If you were taught to keep a little quiet, to err on the side of beige, or to subordinate your wishes and opinions to those of the men in your life, you're not alone by a long shot.

The young woman from Utah helped me realize that for many of the women I see in therapy and in my workshops, finding within themselves the power to rebel against cultural mandates has been a source of liberation and pure pleasure. They may love the family members and friends who have tried to keep them in check, but they will be kept in check no longer. Once unleashed, their delight has become contagious to everyone in their lives.

I think of these women as joyful rebels, and I imagine them sharing a spirit of vivaciousness in the lively time they spend with their daughters. Being a great mom, I'm convinced, really does start with having the guts to be yourself.

\* \* \*

Inspiration always strikes when there's no pen handy. *Joyful Rebels* moved forward that way—at seventy miles per hour in the dark.

A few years ago, my oldest daughter and I were returning from a pleasant day trip to Indianapolis. My daughter is very politically aware; she has thrown conformity to the wind in favor of the freedom to be outspoken about her beliefs. As often happens, our conversation drifted to the state of the world and the serious issues that face us.

“What can any one person do?” I wondered aloud.

My answer, shaped that night, is that we can throw ourselves into what we do best. For my daughter, it's writing for an international audience. For me, it's helping women reconnect with their essence, which so many have lost along the way in the process of trying to meet everybody else's needs and expectations. Change at any level begins with finding one's own voice. My part is to provide the insight, knowledge, and personal-development tools women need to be free to live with passion and purpose, and to raise their daughters with that same joyful freedom.

The *Joyful Rebels* challenge was born as an initiative to raise awareness of the vital connection between free self-expression and psychological well-being. The challenge is to open a conversation about why women lose their voices, how we can regain them, and how we can raise daughters who feel free to speak their minds and to be exactly who they're meant to be.

The *Joyful Rebels* conversation begins inside *you*. It is designed to support women who will not allow their daughters to be forced into a mold; who will be deeply committed to eliciting each child's voice, each child's self; who have the guts to know themselves and to be precisely who they are, quirks inclusive, without apology. Wherever you are on that path, the *Joyful Rebels* conversation is for you.

It's critical to be able to help your daughter be strong and resilient in an age fraught with negative influences, such as cyberbullying, depression, eating



disorders, substance abuse, and alienation. So, what are the ingredients for raising girls who grow up with a joyful sense of passion and purpose?

If anything has stood out to me over twenty-five years of coaching and counseling, it's that people have a poignant, urgent need for a space to be fully who they're meant to be. In both adults and children, depression often originates in the slow suffocation of a person's spark of identity, a person's core essence. It stems from feeling blocked from freely voicing thoughts, feelings, and beliefs—a reflex that children often develop out of their desire to please adults.

If you experienced this repression, you may have chosen, consciously or not, to be invisible—to keep hidden who you truly are, sometimes even from yourself. The first part of the *Joyful Rebels* mission is to prevent the need to retreat into invisibility through an intentional style of parenting and a way of being as a mom. The second part is to provide a remedy when it's needed.

Becoming visible means risking exposure of the treasure that lies within: the self who brings a unique light to the world. It's within *you* as well as within your daughters. And that, if you stop to consider it, is a heart-pounder. Paradoxically, as exciting as it is to become aware of the treasure that is within you, it may also bring tears. That deep, welled-up place longs to be tapped; it's painful to have it there, unreached by people who might embrace it; never understood by others who would resonate with it.

The essence of *Joyful Rebels* is to connect women with their inner being. Who's to say that there are boundaries between the spark of self and the divine, between the individual and the universe? Might it not truly be that the self is a meteorite—a fractal even—of the divine, of the universe?

I say this to make you draw a breath when you consider the importance of your own voice. In both concrete and spiritual terms, the loss of one voice isn't just a loss to one person. It is a loss to all—a lost opportunity for a precious piece of the universe to be shared. Seen from this perspective, where is the nobility in keeping your voice out of the mix?

The presence of *your* spark changes everything. Today's inklings—yours—are tomorrow's passions, the ones you're seeking. And today's irrepressible little girls and adolescents, if their voices are heard and celebrated, are tomorrow's vibrant, accomplished women.

FRAN HENDRICK

This is the message of *Joyful Rebels*.

I wish you all the best on your journey.

—Fran Hendrick, PCC

## 2.

### What Is a Joyful Rebel?

Imagine for a moment that someone just presented you with a seed and told you that it is one of a kind—the only such seed in existence—and extremely valuable. What do you do?

Most likely, you would try to discover as quickly as you could—through trial and error—how much light, how much water, and what kind of soil would allow the seed to thrive. As you experiment, it would not occur to you to accuse the seedling of being too sensitive to the elements or too demanding; rather you would assume responsibility for giving it what it uniquely needs in order to grow. Now, imagine that the seedling forms a bud, and a flower begins to show. Would you try to shape it into a flower that you are already familiar with? More likely, realizing its value, you would be too excited to discover a *new* flower, and you wouldn't want to risk destroying it. So, in tantalizing suspense, you would do your very best to nurture the flower by following its lead, so that it can become the flower that is within it to be.

Your daughter is this one-of-a-kind seed.

Parenting is one of the biggest self-development challenges in life. It takes a quiet, powerful certainty about yourself to allow your daughter the freedom to be and to express all that is within her. The desires to control, to protect, to cement your authority, and to produce a positive reflection of you—living proof that you're a great mom—are all persistent competitors to the goal of nurturing the person she uniquely is. But if you can resist those inner forces, you'll watch your daughter extend and bloom: a startling, leggy wildflower of a shape, color, and beauty that have never been experienced before.

And that is a joyful rebel: a girl who is *real*, who simply, comfortably, and constitutionally rejects the idea that others should dictate what she thinks and feels and chooses.

She's the sprite who wears sneakers with her tutu. She's the student who walks up to the bullied classmate in the lunchroom and sits down next to her. She's the girl who decides to build a bunk bed for her dogs instead of getting a pedicure with friends, just because she finds bunk-bed construction more

interesting. She's the one who chooses to be a platypus for Halloween just because the name sounds so cool.

Being a joyful rebel means having such a solid sense of self that your daughter is free to be nonconforming—in a joyful, not angry or reactionary, way. She is free to share her voice, to dress in her own style, to study what fascinates her, and to take a stand that differs from the majority. She's free to become the person she's meant to be.

\* \* \*

One long-ago wintry afternoon, the cover of a magazine left on the sofa caught my eye. In enticing contrast to the grayness outside, here was a photo of magnificent morning glories—along with the directions for creating an indoor window trellis, a veritable curtain of morning glories. I could create spring in my living room, right in the middle of December!

Ten years and one house later, I finally found the time to act on that idea. This time I had a garden window—perfect! Nothing more needed than to grab a couple of terra-cotta pots and some potting soil, to drop in the seeds, and to watch them grow.

Which they did, fantastically. In no time, the vines had blooms on them, and they climbed gently up the window toward the sun. Their name is no accident, I learned; the blooms greeted me for morning coffee and folded up by dusk. Nothing going wrong there—it's in their DNA to be morning people.

To state it gently, I'm not a reliable waterer of plants. Animals and children I am careful to keep hydrated, but plants I have always expected to adjust to my rhythm. This works well with, say, philodendrons and pothos. (I left a pothos in the garage for two months after we moved to house number three, and it did better there than when I was taking care of it.)

But morning glories do not flex to the preferences of their caregivers. Three times or more, I started the seeds (easy) and then . . . relaxed . . . on the watering, and three times the blooming vines turned up their toes and opted to become compost.

Despite these sad results, the mental image of a window alive with blooms persisted, and when I set out to transform house number three's eat-in kitchen into a French bistro complete with twinkle lights, I supplemented the plants in wrought-iron hangers on the walls with a soon-to-be-beautiful pot of morning glories in the window. And they grew right away—at least, the vines did. The

blooms, which took months rather than weeks to appear in the east-facing window, were few and far between. When I was sick for a few days and neglected them, the whole thing went all autumn on me and died. The next time around, the absolute jungle of vines that grew had only one bloom, and once again, perhaps overwatered this time, the plant suddenly expired.

But I'm not quitting. Morning glories, take eight. Taking it from the top. . . .

I share this with you because my morning-glory experiments provide some solid principles for raising a joyful rebel:

- **Don't blame the morning glories!** When my experiments failed, I didn't get irrationally irritated with the blameless seeds. Putting the responsibility where it belonged, my task was not to figure out what was wrong with those defiant morning glories, but rather to figure out what they actually needed in order to bloom. This is our task with our daughters.
- **Morning glories are what they are, and so it goes with people.** You can't change a morning person into a night person or vice versa, and there's no sense in trying. It's pointless and even harmful to expect a living thing to be something other than what it is and to need something other than what it needs.
- **Experimentation is necessary.** I was disappointed—with myself—and frustrated, and I really did feel that I had let the morning glories down. I understand that the learning curve is mine—not the morning glories'—and so I am continuing the experiment. Experiments are about formulating hypotheses and testing them out either to see what happens or to achieve a particular desired result. I call this process "first tries and next tries" when I explain it to children, who often think in self-critical, black-and-white terms of success and failure. So, experimentally, I have tried to determine what it takes for this favored flower to grow and to thrive.
- **When morning glories bloom, it's just amazing!** I have had a taste of the potential for such charm and beauty from these vivid blossoms, and I now want to learn how to facilitate an absolute riot of morning glories. In fact, I am so excited about what is possible that I know I will keep experimenting until I get it right.

Do you sometimes lament the fading of your daughter's infant and toddler days, of her gap-toothed elementary school pictures, of the passage from the

innocence of childhood to the complex world of adolescence? A close friend of mine experiences this very differently. "I am so excited to see who they will grow up to be!" he says of his granddaughters. He observes their development and champions it; he waits with fascination to learn who they are becoming.

Joyful rebels are an unpredictable mix of mathematicians, scientists, artisans, athletes, writers, and gymnasts. They range from neat and tidy to laissez-faire, tone deaf to musical, and serious to whimsical, each a seed of potential with infinite possible permutations. That is why it is such a sacred pursuit to experiment, with *first tries and next tries*, to create the environment that will uniquely nurture your daughter and allow her to bloom in ways you cannot now imagine.

## 4.

# The Three Crucial Roles Your Daughter Counts on You to Play

In this chapter, you'll gain an understanding of:

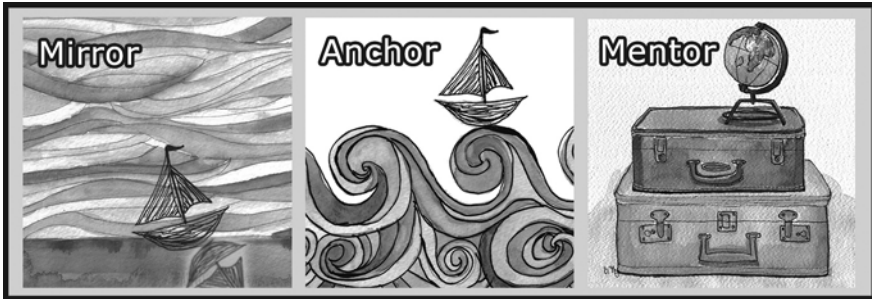
- ✓ What it means to be a mirror for your daughter.
- ✓ How you can anchor her when she's going through a tumultuous time.
- ✓ Your role as your daughter's mentor.
- ✓ How a strong visual image can help you keep these crucial roles in mind.

What does it take to raise a joyful rebel? That's the topic we'll explore in this chapter. It begins with this simple formula:

**Mirror + Anchor + Mentor = Mom**

Showing up for recitals and school conferences, being there in the midst of a crisis, celebrating birthdays—these are very important times for parents to be present. However—and *this is big*—it is your everyday interactions with your daughter that powerfully determine how she sees herself and the world. The potential for magic lies in these small moments. How you respond to your daughter when she's supercharged about getting an 89 percent on the math test, when she's jealous of her brother, when she's late for school, when she's considering a career in hunting for treasure at sea, and when she's mad *at you*—these are the bits of everyday life that teach her what to believe about herself, her potential, and her value. These not-so-small interactions determine how optimistic she is about the world, whether she's able to take on tough challenges and persist through a learning curve, how well she bounces back from hurt, how willing she is to trust other people, and how much joy she feels in life. The “little things” truly are the big things.

Understanding how to serve as mirror, anchor, and mentor for your daughter makes it possible for you to affect her psychological development in a positive way—every single day. In addition, to inspiring confidence, joy, and resilience in your daughter, handling these roles effectively is the best way to help prevent depression, anxiety, alienation, and all the painful things that follow from these conditions.



## The journey begins: A girl and a boat

Imagine your daughter sailing a friendly little boat on a looking-glass lake. The strong, practiced little boat keeps her safe and protected. It carries elements of you everywhere she goes.

The journey is hers—she powers and steers the boat—but you are there. All at one time, you are the looking glass (mirror); you are the anchor who stabilizes her when the water is rough; and you are her trusted guide (mentor). Your presence is implicit, not proclaimed. Your daughter can depend on this without ever giving it a thought. If you understand this and allow it to happen naturally, then slowly, silently, she will absorb these aspects of your presence through every interaction you have and, in the process, become emotionally independent.

In hundreds of small moments every day, parents have the opportunity to play the following critical roles in their children's lives:

### 1. Providing a mirror

- They reflect, with delight, the positive core and accomplishments of the child. They enjoy their children! To them, each child is a walking celebration. They are charmed by their kids.



- They offer accurate empathy. They are innately attuned to their children’s emotional experience. They accept and actively reflect those emotions—happy or sad; angry or glad—and do not deny, correct, or deflect them. Their acceptance feeds their children’s core sense of worth, a sense of rightness and self-acceptance: *How I feel is how I feel. I am not fundamentally Wrong for how I feel.*

## **2. Serving as an anchor**

- They provide a stable landing place when their children experience an emotional storm. This is how children ultimately integrate the ability to modulate their own emotions. They do not gain this ability from being ordered to calm down. Rather, drawing from the experience of their parents’ calm strength, they develop a core belief that they can handle whatever is happening.
- They provide a structure comprised of clear expectations, limits and boundaries that, like the sturdy little boat, make the journey safe.

## **3. Allowing themselves to be their children’s mentors—and heroes**

- Children grow by being around adults whom they can idealize. From these role models they learn skills, develop values, and gain a sense of power by feeling that they are part of a stronger person. As they grow up, their heroes become de-idealized. At that point, perhaps the most heroic parental gift of all is the willingness to be knocked off one’s pedestal and seen finally as a whole and fallible human being.

The metaphor of the little sailboat illustrates the core of the *Joyful Rebels* approach to raising girls with passion and purpose. Understanding the nuances of these three psychological functions—and then performing them well—is like providing emotional oxygen. Our daughters need to receive these gifts from us without having to ask. Ultimately, this approach fosters a deeply connected, lifelong mother-daughter relationship of communication and sharing.

When you’re able to provide these special forms of nurturing consistently, even if imperfectly, your daughter will develop a solid core and a clear sense of identity. Her confidence in her competence and in her value as a human being will free her up to set goals and to pursue her ambitions, instead of being crippled by self-doubt.

The life of a joyful rebel is exciting and engaging. And that's what we'll be working toward, as we move together through this book.

### **Heart Step: Looking back**

Pull out some old photo albums and spend a few minutes reconnecting with your child self.

Connecting to your own experiences as a child is a source of great energy and insight as you create the environment and relationships that are so powerful in the life of your daughter as she grows up. Today's Heart Step is about looking backward—in preparation for looking forward.

## ***Your Path, Your Voice—Guided Writing Topic***

Take a few minutes to think back on your own childhood and write about it in your journal.

Who in your life could be counted on to listen and understand you—no matter what?

Who was thrilled with your accomplishments—especially those little things that other people wouldn't have realized were so important?

Whom did you look up to and want to be like?

Who made you feel safer, just by being nearby?

Who stayed calm even when you were overwhelmed with fear or sadness or anxiety?

What impact did these people have on your life and on the person you are today?

If you weren't fortunate enough to have someone like this in your life, think back on the TV shows you made sure never to miss, and the books and movies that you read and watched again and again. Fictional characters are extremely powerful in allowing us to vicariously have our emotional needs met and in helping us shape our values and develop the abilities we want to have.



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