



## SCHOOL RE-ENTRY TUNE-UP TAKEAWAYS

### Debbie Reber's Key Takeaways

**Inner Work Over Action:** Instead of jumping into action mode with plans and to-do lists, focus on doing inner work to ground yourself.

**Set Intentions:** Be intentional about how you want to approach the school year—reflect on your values, priorities, goals, and boundaries, and use these as guideposts to stay calm and less reactive.

**Clarify Values and Priorities:** Take time to clarify your core values as a parent and your priorities, especially focusing on your child's well-being, emotional health, and connection with them.

**Redefine Success:** Define what success means for your family, separate from external pressures like social media or family expectations, and in alignment with your values and what truly matters to you.

**Create a Job Description:** Write a personal “job description” to stay focused on your primary role, such as being a calm, steady presence for your child.

**Have a (Loose) Contingency Plan:** Create a flexible plan to address potential challenges to ease anxiety and help you be more present (without trying to control every possible scenario).

**Embrace Curiosity and Openness:** Adopt a mindset of curiosity and openness, which will help you observe your child's behavior and your own emotions without judgment.

**Use Emotions as Information:** Pay attention to your emotions and use them as signals to reflect on what might be triggering you.

**Cope Strategies for Staying Grounded:** Develop coping strategies, such as using mantras or mindfulness, to stay calm and grounded in the moment, allowing you to navigate the school year with curiosity rather than fear.

**Empower Your Child:** Let your child know you believe in their ability to handle challenges, which fosters confidence and resilience in them.



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### Katherine Reynolds Lewis' Key Takeaways

#### Routines as a Foundation for Success:

- Establish routines for the entire family (meals, chores, bedtime, schoolwork) with child's involvement to give them a sense of ownership.
- Create personal routines for parents, focusing on self-care, sleep, exercise, and connection with others.
- Set boundaries around academics to avoid letting schoolwork dominate, allowing room for family time, learning, and activities beyond school.

#### Special Time with Children:

- Implement "special time," a designated period where one child gets one-on-one attention with a parent or caregiver. Special time should be planned, scheduled, and child-driven.
- Special time allows children to feel seen, heard, and valued, contributing to their emotional well-being and positive behavior.

#### Weekly Check-ins:

- Conduct weekly check-ins with children to review what's going on, giving them space to make mistakes, learn, and take responsibility to encourage independence and accountability while maintaining a supportive structure.
- This method is also applicable to parenting partners, helping maintain alignment on family responsibilities and expectations.

#### Long-Term Parenting Approach:

- Shift away from trying to control children's behavior toward teaching them self-regulation skills. Focus on connection, communication that supports learning, and fostering independence.

#### Co-Regulation with Children:

- Parents act as external regulators of children's emotions and behavior, helping them learn to self-regulate over time. The parent's ability to self-regulate is crucial for providing a calm environment that promotes children's development.

#### Broader Perspective on Parenting:

- Avoid catastrophic thinking and take a long-term view of raising children. Each moment, even challenging ones, is part of a bigger process.
- Keep in mind that children need the right environment and opportunities to develop the skills they need to become independent adults.



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### Questions for Exploration

What are your guiding principles for your family? Your core values? What are your priorities when it comes to your child's school and education? What really *matters*?

What would "success" look like for the school year (bearing in mind the aforementioned values and priorities)?

What kind of boundaries do you want to set (that reinforce the value and priorities you've identified)?

How do you want to do, be, and feel this year as you navigate all the ups and downs of the school year? How do you want *your child* to feel this year?

What is your simplest "job description" to help keep you focused on what really matters during this school re-entry season?

What are your primary worries / anxieties / concerns going into this back-to-school season?

How might you proactively plan for the worries / anxieties / concerns listed above? What contingency plans can you create that will allow you to go into this season with more clarity and calm?

What mantra or anchor word can you put in place to remind you of this commitment?

Are the routines in your family life clear, consistent, and flexible enough to meet everyone's needs while allowing room for self-care and personal time for both parents and children?

How often do you set aside focused, uninterrupted special time with each child, and how can you make this a regular and meaningful part of your schedule?

In your weekly check-ins, are you fostering an environment where your children can openly share, make mistakes, and take responsibility for their actions without fear of being micromanaged?



## **SCHOOL RE-ENTRY TUNE-UP TAKEAWAYS**

Are you managing your own emotions and self-regulation in a way that provides a calm, stable environment for your children to learn and grow emotionally?