

## WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

“Whenever people promise easy steps to a better anything, I grow suspicious. But author Judy Scharfenberg knows what she’s talking about. ‘I’m living proof!’ she states, then she goes about demonstrating she is exactly that. Her six steps are practical and workable, her writing clear and richly illustrated. Thank you, Judy, for the help and hope!”

—**Kay Marshall Strom**  
Author and Speaker

“Judy Scharfenberg tells a very personal and practical story that will bring insight, laughter, smiles, tears, and conviction to your heart. You will find [the book] helpful in these days. I wish I’d had many of these tools when I was raising my family. This book is a page-turner of hope. Read and be blessed. I was!”

—**Darlene Barber**  
Director of Women’s Ministries,  
Shadow Mountain Community Church,  
El Cajon, California

“Judy is a dynamic speaker—incredibly warm, funny, and Christ centered. She offers practical information and reaches women from all walks of life.”

—**Vicki Morago**  
Women’s Ministry team, Rancho Baptist Church,  
Temecula, California

“Judy’s message is amazing and powerful. Her excitement and passion for reaching the lost inspired me. Many lives were changed as she shared the joy God has given to her

even in the midst of difficult times. She is still reaching women in our community.”

—Debbie Smee

Director of Women’s Ministries  
Porterville Church of the Nazarene  
Porterville, California

Have you ever felt like you can’t make it? That you can’t do one more thing other than scream and run for the hills? Judy Scharfenberg knows exactly how you feel, and is ready and waiting to help you find your way out of frustration and into peace. *Secure Families in a Shaky World* is full of easy-to-do tips on how to stabilize yourself and your family in a hectic world. With time-tested suggestions, she offers six steps that will surprise and encourage you. Her book is guaranteed to leave you with that “I can do this!” inspiration.

—Davalynn Spencer

Columnist, Educator  
Speaker and Author of *Always Before Me*  
[www.davalynnspencer.com](http://www.davalynnspencer.com)

SECURE  
FAMILIES  
IN A  
SHAKY  
WORLD



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WORLD

SIX SIMPLE WAYS TO BRING HEALTH AND HOPE  
TO YOU, THE HEARTBEAT OF YOUR FAMILY

JUDY SCHARFENBERG



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First, I want to dedicate this book to my dear husband, Richard, and my six children: David, Melissa, Jennifer, Andrew, Sarah, and Amy. Without you there would have been no family, no reason to grow, learn, love, and give. You, dear ones, have given me reason for living and have helped me be the best, wife, mom, and grandma I know how to be.

To my prayer partners: Amy, Claudia, Connie, Debbie, Edna, Glenda, Jennifer, Julie, Kim, Lois, Melissa, Nancy, Sarah and Tracy. You have faithfully prayed for my ministry for over fifteen years. We are daughters, sisters, and friends—cogs in a wheel where one speaks, another writes, one prays, another advises, one encourages, another supports and inspires. We are one, and I would be nothing without you.





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# INTRODUCTION

**D**O YOU EVER feel insignificant? Maybe you think you don't matter to your family or friends? I know; it's easy to get down on yourself. You try and try to keep up. And when you can't, you tell yourself, *I'm a complete failure. Why can't I do better? I should be a pro by now.* You get in a rut, and you can't climb out. Days go by without a laugh, a giggle, or even a smile.

Well, let's stop that. I want you to realize that you matter—to your family, to your friends, and most importantly, to God.

Now, there's a reason for your low self-esteem. I've been teaching, counseling, and advising women for over twenty years, and I can tell you that many women are sleep-deprived, frustrated, fearful, frenzied, overcommitted, overwrought, overwhelmed, depressed, and discouraged. Often we feel helpless and resign ourselves to one thought; *It's no use. Life is hard and there's nothing I can do about it.* Some of you have serious difficulties, and the last thing on your mind is feeling important. It's easy to get discouraged.

## SECURE FAMILIES IN A SHAKY WORLD

I know. I've been there.

Sally Field recently said, "Motherhood is given the brush-off in our society. Being a mom is everything. It's mentorship, it's inspirational and it's our hope for the future. I want to applaud moms publicly."<sup>1</sup> I do too. In fact, I want you to applaud yourselves. That may require making a few changes, but I know you're interested. It's why you picked up this book.

Barbara Bush is a wise woman. She's been quoted many times, but the quote I like best is this one: "You have two choices in life. You can like it or not. I chose to like it." Dear one, I want you to like your life.

I spoke at a Mother's Day tea. Afterward a woman came up to me and said, "You know, when you began speaking I thought, *Yeah, right! Another lady born with a Bible in her hand whose life has been perfect, and she's going to tell me how to be happy.* But after I heard your story, I can see that you're just like the rest of us."

I am not a super mom, nor do I have a college degree. What I *do* have is a lifetime of experience. I have been a high school dropout; a pregnant teen; a teenage wife and mom; a single parent who worked full-time; a woman who struggled with alcohol, fear, and depression; a stay-at-home mom; a working mom; and a wife for thirty-eight years. Now I am caregiver for my husband, who suffered a stroke eleven years ago, and mother of six adult children, five of whom are married. I'm also a grandmother of thirteen beautiful darlings—and I'm still counting.

This book is not rocket science. It presents a back-to-basics approach, something we've lost touch with in our fast-paced world. From experience, I can tell you that there's a lot you can do to ensure that your home is fertile soil for a growing, happy, healthy family. I will share with you six simple ways you can begin today that will get you headed

## INTRODUCTION

in the right direction. These six techniques will create a secure foundation that will give you stability through your toughest trials.

Do you know what will happen? Along the way you're going to look better, feel better, and perhaps even live longer. You're going to find the joy, peace, and security that have eluded you for so long. I'm living proof that *a secure family begins with you and me*.

Before we begin, let me say this. You are always going to see and hear about others who look like they're doing great and lofty things. Don't dwell on their success and don't envy them. People let you see what they want you to see. You do your "stuff" each day, big and little, and I promise—you're going to be headed in the right direction.

Are you ready? Then dig in. This book is for you.



## CHAPTER 1

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# SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

**O**N A CURRENT TV ad an attractive woman tells us about her long commute to work each day. She says she struggles to take care of herself and her family. She tries to find the best ways to give them what they need—a healthy, energetic, and refreshed wife and mom. She endorses a certain product and with a big smile on her face tells us her world is OK now because of it.

I know she's just trying to sell someone's product, and a few women may be like this smiling lady on TV. But I can't help thinking about most of us who aren't at all like her.

You know what I'm talking about. It's one of those days. You just got home from work. Your husband is working late and won't be home for hours. Or perhaps you're a single parent, the head of your family. You're frantic to put dinner on the table, get your son to karate, and help your daughter with her math homework. The rest of the week looks the same. It's soccer season, and your son has practice twice a week while your daughter babysits regularly for a neighborhood family.

## SECURE FAMILIES IN A SHAKY WORLD

I know. All of you have full schedules. You wish you could just kick off your shoes and sit down for a cup of coffee.

Instead you shove in a load of wash and scribble a few checks for those bills that have been piling up. You don't know if there's enough money in the bank to cover them all. It's a helpless feeling, and you tell yourself, *This is too much. How on earth can we continue this pace? This is not what I planned for my family.*

It's a long night.

From the beginning God has always had the perfect plan for our peace, our contentment, our security—and yes, even our joy. He knows what is good for us. He says, “A joyful heart is good medicine” (Prov. 17:22). And you're thinking, *A joyful heart? Yeah, right.*

Do you remember David, the young boy with the slingshot who killed the giant, Goliath? He grew up to be King David, and along the way he experienced great tragedy and sorrow in his life. He was persecuted. He was hunted like an animal. He even hid in caves. Later, the death of his infant son brought an especially dark time in his life, yet do you know what he wrote about God in the Psalms? “You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever” (Ps. 16:11).

You see, the Lord is the Author of joy. He made a way so we would not despair. He knows that even in the midst of turmoil and sorrow we can experience great joy. If Jesus lives in our hearts, then He helps us cope, He helps us see life differently, and He helps us take our eyes off ourselves and focus on the important things. He gives us a plan that's worth following. Sometimes the things that burden us are weights God has placed in our lives so we won't miss Him.



## SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Now, how do we go through this busy life without missing Him? Well, I'm going to give you tools that will help you manage your time, show you what's important, and give you a fresh perspective. The result will be a boost in your confidence, your security, and your peace. Yes, you may even enjoy a laugh or two. You're going to be able to cope with things you never thought possible.

In the next few pages, I'm going to tell you how you can possess a secure family in this shaky world we live in. By definition, your family may be a husband and wife, a single-parent family, a blended family, or a multigenerational family (with grandparents living in the home). Whatever your family is, you'll learn important tips that will help you be a better parent, a better grandparent, or a better aunt, sister or friend.

I'm not perfect, and I'll be the first to say that I wish I could go back and do some things over again. But I don't have a head of gray hair for nothing. Let me share simple ways to help you keep your family secure in this shaky world.