

WFWP USA August HerTribe Thrive - From Summer to School Days

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Welcome to the August edition of *HerTribe Thrive*!

As summer begins to wind down and hints of autumn appear, August invites us to embrace change with intention—whether it’s preparing for a new season, stepping into fresh opportunities, or simply savoring the last golden days of summer.

In this issue, we open with **Leading with Love: A Woman Leader’s Journey of Healing and Empowerment**, an inspiring story from our new HerTribe Director, Mika Deshotel. Next, explore **Lunch Box Message Cards – For Kids and Grown-Ups!**, a fun, members-only resource to brighten anyone’s day. Then, make the seasonal shift smoother with **From Summer Mode to School Days: Tips to Tackle the Transition**. And don’t miss the newest episode of the **HerStory Podcast**, where women’s voices rise with courage and connection.

Let’s step into this season with open hearts, steady courage, and a spirit ready to grow.



MEMBER’S HUB

Lunch Box Message Cards – For Kids and Grown-Ups!

This month’s printable is all about spreading joy—one lunch box at a time! We’ve created **three sets of lunch box message cards** designed to brighten anyone’s day: filled with silly puns and playful humor, perfect for kids, and quotes with a dose of inspiration for a special someone.

Whether you’re tucking one into your child’s backpack or leaving a sweet surprise for a partner, friend, or coworker, these cards are a fun and thoughtful way to say “I’m thinking of you.”

**Available exclusively to members!**

**Check it out!**



**SPARK OF  
INSPIRATION**

## Leading with Love: A Woman Leader's Journey of Healing and Empowerment

When Mika Deshotel stepped away from the pulpit, she thought her chapter as a leader was over. But through the power of sisterhood, our new HerTribe Director discovered a new way to lead — from the heart, not the head.

Her journey is a testament to resilience, healing, and the strength found in community. Mika's story will inspire you to see how pain can become your greatest treasure—and how true leadership grows from love and collaboration.

**An Empowering Perspective: Leadership blossoms when guided by heart.**

**Read now!**



**TIPS & TITLES**

## From Summer Mode to School Days: Tips to Tackle the Transition

As summer starts winding down and fall is beginning to unfurl, many of us are also getting into “Back to School” season. Maybe you have young kids who are preparing to go back to school or little ones getting ready for their very first day of school. Or maybe you have older kids who are transitioning into a brand new high school or middle school.

Whatever the case may be, there are some great tips to help get back to school, either physically, emotionally, or mentally. Here are some recommendations from other families in similar situations.

**Check it out!**

**Helpful back to school tips!**



WISDOM IN ACTION

## HerStory Podcast Episode 12: Raising Hearts and Minds

*"I find that teaching is a parental role. You're almost like a second parent...some kids needed more mother and some kids needed more father...It was an extension of my parenting, my mothering instinct for my own children came into the classroom."*

— **Elizabeth Deshotel**

In this episode of the *HerStory Podcast*, **Adia Lancaster** sits down with **Elizabeth Deshotel**, an accomplished educator, mother, and grandmother, to explore her remarkable journey of faith, family, and leadership. Elizabeth reflects on her early life, her profound spiritual conversion, and how becoming a mother shaped her approach to teaching and nurturing young minds. She shares insights on feminine leadership, the balance of empathy and boundaries in education, and the importance of collaborating with men in professional settings.

Drawing from her experiences raising five children and now guiding seven grandchildren, Elizabeth offers wisdom on parenting, finding joy, and seeking a deeper connection with God. Throughout the conversation, she emphasizes the value of following intuition, embracing God's guidance, and living a life rooted in purpose, love, and service.

Learn more about New Hope School here:

[www.newhopeschoolnj.com](http://www.newhopeschoolnj.com)

Learn more about the Bridgeport Hope School here:

[www.bridgeporthopeschool.org](http://www.bridgeporthopeschool.org)

**Listen now!**

**Every conversation has the power to inspire.**

### **Our Contact Information**

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**WOMEN'S FEDERATION  
FOR WORLD PEACE USA**





# August Member’s Hub: Lunch Box Message Cards – For Kids and Grown-Ups!

This month’s printable is all about spreading joy—one lunch box at a time! We’ve created **three sets of lunch box message cards** designed to brighten anyone’s day: filled with silly puns and playful humor, perfect for kids, and quotes with a dose of inspiration for a special someone.

Whether you’re tucking one into your child’s backpack or leaving a sweet surprise for a partner, friend, or coworker, these cards are a fun and thoughtful way to say “I’m thinking of you.”

Once printed and cut, each card measures **4.25" x 5.5"** and is formatted four to a page, ready to print at home on a **letter size** sheet of paper. We recommend using **cardstock or perforated postcard paper (like Avery)** for the best results. Each card features **a thoughtful or funny design on the front and a colorful message space on the back**, making them perfect for lunch bags, briefcases, or even bathroom mirrors.



Print, cut, write a message, and share the love this August!

### Available exclusively to members!

Download your free copy from the Member’s Hub and gift yourself a moment to reconnect.

### HOW TO PRINT YOUR LUNCH BOX MESSAGE CARDS


1. **Download and open the file** on your computer.
2. **Select “Print on both sides – flip on long edge”** in your printer settings.
  - This ensures the front and back of each card line up correctly.
3. **Choose your paper option:**
  - **Regular cardstock paper** (8.5" x 11") – for a sturdy finish. After printing, use scissors or a paper cutter to trim along the lines.
  - **Perforated postcard paper** (such as Avery 8387 or similar) – for the easiest, most professional-looking results. Just print, fold along the perforations, and separate.
4. **Check your printer preview** before printing all pages to make sure alignment looks correct.
5. Print, cut (if needed), and enjoy sharing these cheerful lunch box messages!

## ARE YOU A MEMBER OF WFWP?

**The Reflection Journal is FREE for members!** Simply log in or create your account for the Members’ Portal. You can download the journal prompts in the Resources Library

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If you don’t already have an account, request a new one above. We will confirm your active membership and approve the request. Upon approval, you will be able to log in and access the portal. If you don’t remember your password, click “forgot password.” Please make sure to check your spam folder.

NOT A MEMBER OF WFWP?

Not a member of WFWP? [Join today](#) to access exclusive resources, including Mocktail recipes, and become part of a community of women empowering each other to be peacemakers in the world



## Leading with Love: A Woman Leader's Journey of Healing and Empowerment

Written by: Mika Deshotel, HerTribe Director

So many times when we look at successful people, especially in the world of health at least, we've heard the phrase, **"what begins as your pain, transforms into your passion."** There are countless stories of people who have faced adversity squarely in the eye and made the decision that their limitations do not define them. **Mother Moon has said herself that often our greatest struggles can one day transform into our greatest treasures, and to therefore, appreciate the challenges that inevitably come.** I would say I resonate with all of it. And it often seems to me that our ability to respond in a positive way is spurred on best when we take time to listen to that still, small voice inside of us, imploring us not to settle when we feel pained by this world's shortcomings.



**As a woman leader in a male-dominated world, it was easy to feel the need to "mirror" or try to replicate masculine leadership qualities in order to feel seen or socially accepted.** I definitely played the "power card"-wielding my title like a sword- when I needed to get my way on certain decisions or changes that I felt were right. It was easier for me to follow suit with aggressive tactics at times, than it was to work through an approach of seeking first to understand, listening or collaborating with others. **I served in the capacity of a woman pastor for nearly seven years before I made the painful decision to step down, as I had invariably put my family and my own needs on the "backburner" for far too long, and both desperately needed care and understanding.**

**To leave a role with so much love to give for your community and the families in it, and to realize that your investment was not fully understood or acknowledged, was truly a heartache for me.**

It took time for me to realize that while I felt a bit "steam-rolled" and in need of some tenderness and healing, I also needed to acknowledge my own mistakes, **most especially in the ways I led- not from my heart- but from my head.** I was able to discover these aspects of myself and release my pain in large part when I attended last year's Awaken Retreat, led by Women's Federation USA. By the end of it, I realized I didn't need the retribution or validation I was seeking from the men around me. Rather, it was through the support and understanding from my sisters that made all the difference and softened my heart towards surrender.

We live in a society that disregards our mothers' love and our sisters' contributions because we've been conditioned to believe that a man's efforts are worth more and worthy of recognition. **A woman's work tends to be quiet, in the background and unassuming, but her love is fierce, and her capacity to uplift and heal the broken-hearted is mighty.** This is the love I encountered as I took time to surrender to my pain and the healing I needed to move forward. It was in this quiet and loving space that I recognized I still had the capacity to love my community, and that I could turn my pain around toward something beautiful, this time collaboratively with others in a meaningful, intentional way. Before I knew it, the ability to give came more freely and without expectation of recognition from those in leadership.

**I would say it's important to remind ourselves that there is no reward greater than feeling that you are utilizing your gifts to match an even greater outward need from the world around you.** This is what can be called your ministry and the way you can enrich the lives of others in a substantial way. Each person is unique, endowed with strengths and gifts that are meant to be honed and developed for the purpose of uplifting and empowering the other. For women, we have an incredible gift of holding others, creating space, and nurturing growth. It is quiet, seemingly passive, and unintrusive, yet it is transformative. I personally have a ways to go in order to really let this wisdom shine brightly within me. Nevertheless, Women's Federation for World Peace has given me a space to come back to my true self, to continue to grow and develop into someone who can ultimately transform this world. One can imagine therefore, that to my surprise and pleasure, I was thrilled to take on the opportunity of working for Women's Fed USA, in large part to support other women in the ways I feel I have been supported. I am grateful to take this time to work within this organization, both for me, and for the many incredible women around me, who have so much to give and who may benefit from the encouragement I can give as a fellow sister.



## From Summer Mode to School Days: Tips to Tackle the Transition

Written by: Dr. Katarina Connery, President

As summer starts winding down and fall is beginning to unfurl, many of us are also getting into "Back to School" season. Maybe you have young kids who are preparing to go back to school or little ones getting ready for their very first day of school. Or maybe you have older kids who are transitioning into a brand new high school or middle school. Whatever the case may be, there are some great tips to help get back to school, either physically, emotionally, or mentally. Here are some recommendations from other families in similar situations.



### Establishing Routines

One of the more challenging things about going back to school is starting a new routine. Or getting back into the previous one! I know I speak for myself when I say that the summer schedule of waking and bedtime starts to get really loose. And it's hard to get back on track!

A smooth morning routine starts with a solid bedtime routine. A week or two before the first day of school, start making sure kids' bedtimes are moving closer and closer to the bedtime they will need to have during the school year. You can try moving it up by 5 minutes over a period of several nights. Discuss with them beforehand what will be happening and why to hopefully minimize tears and power struggles. Try doing a "practice run" one morning with a special treat afterwards!

Over at [Mother U](#), you can check out more great tips, like preparing for kids who get ready quickly versus slowly in the morning. There are also some fun printables to help with getting school routines back on track. And don't forget to give yourself some slack! The first week or so might be less than perfect. You can focus on congratulating and praising your kids (and yourself!) for what did go well.

### Getting Organized

A big part of getting ready for a new school year is getting all the things you need in order. Personally, I like to check in with my kids beforehand what they do and don't like for lunch. Their tastes seem to be constantly changing! It can be a great relationship building activity to listen to their desires while also discussing making balanced and healthy choices. Check out this guide from [Yummy Toddler Food](#) on school lunch ideas, both "typical" and creative.

Every school will provide a school supply list appropriate for their grade, but you can also involve your kids in picking out and organizing their school supplies for the year. The day or night before the first day of school can be a time to organize and label their supplies together. This also can help increase their excitement, decrease anxiety, as they feel empowered to be ready and prepared.

Our kids may want the newest—and most expensive—things but that doesn't always work for the family budget, especially if you have more than one kid. Consider getting your kids involved in the process of estimating the total cost, choosing where to go shopping to find good deals, and allowing them to pick out certain items within budget—such as a new pencil case or lunch box.

### Heart-to-Heart Conversations

Even if all the external things are taken care of, there can still be a sense of trepidation or anxiety about the first day of school. They are entering a new grade. Or maybe your child will be the new kid at school. Or there might be some worries about what a new school will be like. Open conversations about what they are thinking about or their concerns or questions will help to allay some of that fear. Fear of the unknown might not disappear, but from heart-to-heart dialogue with you, they can be reminded that they are loved and supported no matter what the future brings.

If your kids are like mine, they don't readily open up if I ask directly, "Are you worried about school?" My 9-year-old is most likely just to give me a one word answer. "No." However, I've found the conversations flow more readily over a book on the topic. I ask about what the characters in the story might be feeling. Or ask if he thinks he will experience something like that. There are a lot of great books for kids and parents on the topic!

[Brightly](#) provides an extensive list of books for kids and parents on preparing for school. Books focus not just on what to expect during the first day of school, for first-time school-goers, but also some of the social and emotional readiness skills. Such as being a good friend or dealing with separation anxiety.

You can also check out some conversation starters, for little ones or older kids entering high school, online such as this one from [Big Brothers, Big Sisters](#). Having a few questions in your "back pocket" can help with bringing

up the topic of school in an engaging way.

As the new school year approaches, remember that every family's journey looks a little different, and that's okay. Whether you're adjusting routines, organizing supplies, or navigating big emotions, what matters most is showing up with love, patience, and a little flexibility. Give yourself and your kids grace in the process. You're building not just good habits, but lasting connection and confidence that will carry them far beyond the first day of school. You've got this!



## HerStory Podcast Episode 12: Raising Hearts and Minds

*"I find that teaching is a parental role. You're almost like a second parent...some kids needed more mother and some kids needed more father...It was an extension of my parenting, my mothering instinct for my own children came into the classroom."*

In this episode of the *HerStory Podcast*, host **Adia Lancaster** sits down with **Elizabeth Deshotel**, an accomplished educator, administrator, and devoted mother and grandmother, to explore her inspiring journey of faith, family, and leadership. Elizabeth shares her early life growing up in a Roman Catholic family and her search for meaning as a young adult, culminating in a profound spiritual experience at the age of 22 that transformed her life. She reflects on how this encounter with God shaped her personal path, leading her to embrace parenting, education, and service to others as central elements of her life mission.

Elizabeth dives into her professional journey, discussing her long career as a teacher and principal, where she combined her mothering instincts with educational expertise to nurture students both academically and emotionally. She emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment, respecting boundaries, and investing in each child individually. Elizabeth also shares her perspective on feminine leadership, explaining how empathy, compassion, and collaboration with men in professional settings have been essential in her roles. Her approach highlights the balance between care and firmness, as well as the significance of grounding her work in faith and a sense of higher purpose.

Beyond her professional life, Elizabeth reflects on the joys and challenges of raising five children and now guiding seven grandchildren, describing grandparenting as a "whole other world" filled with love and fulfillment. She offers heartfelt advice to young women today, encouraging them to seek God's guidance in life decisions, including the choice to become a parent, and to recognize the profound joy that can come from nurturing others. Elizabeth's story underscores the transformative power of faith, intuition, and living a life rooted in love, service, and God-centered purpose, offering listeners both inspiration and practical wisdom for their own journeys.

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