



## Habit Seven: Sharpen the Saw

Sharpen the Saw means to have balance in your life. There is a story of a man who was sawing down a tree but was not making a lot of progress. When a neighbor asked him why he didn't stop sawing to sharpen his saw, he replied that he was too busy sawing. Had he stopped to sharpen the saw, the work would have been done much more quickly. Habit 7 reminds us that we are more productive when we are in balance—body, brain, heart, and soul. Just like the four tires on a car, if one area is being ignored or overused, the rest will feel the results. For young students, a car analogy is one they can understand; a car could not go on fewer than all four tires.

### Activities to Try at Home:

1. Discuss various ways to Sharpen the Saw in all areas. Ideas might include body (eating healthy, riding your bike), brain (balancing reading with TV watching or making smarter choices about what you watch), heart (laughing, spending time with people we care about), and soul (starting a journal, taking some quiet time).
2. Start a regular exercise program with your child.
3. Pick an organization to volunteer with together as a family.
4. Visit a new museum or try a new type of food—try new things.
5. Check out some of the following picture books at the library to use as a springboard for discussion about "sharpening the saw."
  - a. *Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!* By Mo Willems—This story is about a very persistent pigeon that tries to be allowed to stay up late. The story will make it easy to talk about how getting enough sleep is a very important part of being a leader and a successful student.
  - b. *Me, I Am!* By Jack Prelutsky—This book encourages children to find the special within themselves. The various poems help children realize that everyone is different.
  - c. *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen—The story of Owl Moon follows a young child and his father as they go into the woods to find an owl. The words and pictures are quiet and peaceful and lend themselves to discussing Sharpening the Saw by spending time in nature and with people we care about.
  - d. *Miss Bindergarten Stays Home From Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate—This story tells the tale of a kindergarten teacher who comes down sick. It emphasizes the importance of keeping ourselves healthy by sharpening the saw.

