The Online Parenting Newsletter Vol 7, #7 for July 5, 2006:

SUMMER STRESS?

We tend to think a summer vacation means getting away from it all which means less pressure and less stress, right?

Wrong!

The family vacation can be a surprisingly big source of stress. After all we?ve been waiting a whole year to get a vacation. We gotta make it a perfect one!

Planning the trip can be exciting unless you are a perfectionist. Travel perfectionism is tough to achieve these days. Why? Fewer flights and higher gas prices for starters. Pleasing everybody in the family is hard enough when deciding where to go out to supper, it gets harder when a two-week trip is on the agenda.

A big mistake families make, especially those with young children, is planning TOO MUCH. We plan on too many miles, too much to see, and too many relatives to visit. Hard to be happy when everybody is tired from the too-muches.

Another problem is having overly high expectations of the vacation trip which leads to the inevitable letdown if something goes wrong.

And something is bound to go wrong. A glitch-less trip is almost an oxymoron. But just the other week when I was in LA to visit my grown son he told me there is a Goddess of Travel that, mysteriously, makes MOST of what we want to happen on a trip happen. I started to pooh-pooh this notion as silly but then I remembered the miraculous mountains. My husband and I have traveled widely and on three occasions we have seen mountains that we thought were impossible to see that day. We have watched dense clouds part so we could see Mount Fuji from a train in Japan, the snows of Kilimanjaro from an airplane in Kenya, and Denali while we were hiking in the National Park in Alaska. For all of these mountains we humbly thank the Goddess of Travel and we will no longer doubt her supernatural powers.

My advice? Don?t plan more than you can comfortably chew especially if the kids are small. Pray to the Goddess of Travel but realize she is not infallible.

And have a great time!