

# FAMILY!

Fall 2013

## Shoes By the Door Traditions

by Dina Emser

In our family we keep our shoes on in the house. Sometimes when people visit, they automatically take their shoes off and leave them by the door, but it's not an issue for me. When we visit our friends Scott and Yuko, who now own a vineyard in Napa Valley, they insist that we take off our shoes and choose from the basket of many sized and shaped house slippers they have available for their guests. That is their tradition – to remove shoes and to provide comfort and hospitality in the way of cozy slippers, to any guest who enters their home.

Our traditions define who we are and what we value. Many  
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## Bossy Firstborn Dear Addy...

Guest author is Bryna Gamson

Dear Addy,  
We're working on applying Adlerian principles in our home with Fred, 5, and Charlie, 3, but Fred's new approach to "conflict resolution" with Charlie has us thrown. Fred has just started kindergarten. Lately, he has threatened to punch Charlie if he doesn't do what Fred wants; and sometimes, he follows a demand with counting to five "or else."

He certainly has not learned that sort of thing from us. Because we try to leave the room when this starts up, we don't know if he ever actually punches Charlie, but it concerns us that

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Excerpt From A New Book

## "Raising Great Parents"

by Doone Estey and Beverley Cathcart-Ross with Martin Nash of Parenting Network

### [A] Respect

What does respect mean? We define it a little differently than you might expect. Most of us are looking for mutual respect in relationships: I respect you and you respect me. While this is ideal, it has a flaw. You can respect someone, but you cannot control whether that person respects you back. You can respect your child, but you cannot force your child to respect you. So we advocate what we call Dual Respect. We are respectful of others, including our children, and at the same time we are respectful of ourselves.

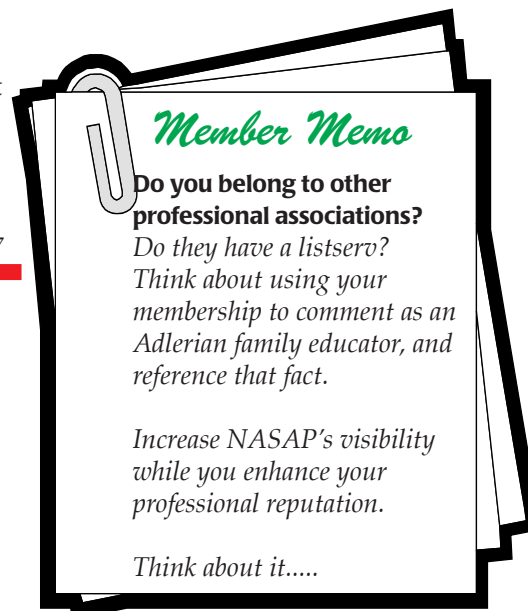
Let's talk about the respect for our children first. Every child is born with a strong natural desire to learn, explore and be creative. We respect this. We want this to flourish. We don't want to stamp it out. This means

we respect even a toddler's wonderful ability to learn, and therefore it's important that we give them opportunities to make decisions and judgments for themselves (as long as the situation isn't harmful or destructive).

- A 3-year-old can choose which cereal goes in her bowl
- A 6-year-old can decide what she wants to wear to school. Even if her clothing choice looks odd to our eyes, this is her choice.
- A 12-year-old can manage his own homework schedule.

We don't have to agree

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## FE Section Co-Chairs Report...



Dear Family Education Section Members,

This year our Fall COR meetings were held in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This was a move from Hershey, PA where they have been held for many years. Our Executive Director, John Newbauer lives in Fort Wayne so moving the

meetings there makes more sense. John was a wonderful host and made sure that we were well fed as we participated in two days of meetings.

We left the Fall COR meetings feeling inspired by the number and richness of proposals sent in for the NASAP 2014 conference in Chicago. It is so exciting to see so much interest in presenting as well as the diversity of topics and presenters. Our Section alone had 27 proposals, which was both wonderful and daunting as we tried to sort through them and find the best way to incorporate as many as possible into our conference. Mark your calendar for May 22 to 25, 2014 as this is one conference you'll want to attend. Look for session "teasers" in our next newsletter.

Also, at the COR table were discussions around retaining and increasing membership, marketing, future conference sites and themes, supporting emerging leaders, including more demonstrations in our conferences and our work, nominations for upcoming board positions, and reaching out to professionals who are presently not well represented in NASAP, e.g., social workers and school counselors.

There was lots of discussion around how to get members more involved in our Sections. Typically our Section meetings at the conference are not well attended (no matter when they hold them) and yet they can be such a wonderful way to meet, connect and exchange ideas with our Family Education members. We discussed some ways to make them more interesting and appealing. Out of the discussions came some new ideas that we will try out at the conference this year, such as having information about each Section on a poster, holding elections electronically ahead of time, sending out other business electronically and then freeing up more time to network and exchange ideas when we meet. We would love to hear any ideas you have that would draw more people and YOU to our Section meetings.

Going to the COR meetings wasn't all work. We did get the opportunity to go on a chocolate tour to the world renowned Debrand Chocolate Factory, including mouth watering samples. John Newbauer was determined to widen our repertoire of chocolate knowledge and tastes after being spoiled for so many years by yummy chocolate in Hershey. He did a good job and I'm sure that will be part of the COR "agenda" at upcoming Fall meetings.

We encourage you to put out a topic or get a discussion going on our E-list. Members are generous in sharing their ideas. Even if everyone doesn't participate in a discussion, there is always lots of learning from reading what others have written.

Enjoy your Fall season. ■

Your Co-Chairs,

Terry Lowe along with Marlene Goldstein

## Adlerian Wisdom

### Learning to be Self-Sufficient:

- Don't underestimate how interesting it is for children to learn ordinary adult skills, such as cooking and cleaning.
- Use playfulness and fun when teaching new skills. Children naturally enjoy making a game out of routine tasks.
- To maximize your chances of success, work on teaching one new skill at a time.
- Give your child many opportunities to practice a new skill. Mastering any skill takes time.
- Be encouraging. Mistakes are a normal part of the learning process. Expect burnt pancakes and shrunken clothing!

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*Dear Addy...continued from page 1*

he's becoming a bully. Charlie's response often is to cry, and we are working on that, too. We tell them "We know you can work this out." And of course, they do usually work it out. Charlie is in tears by the end and Fred gets what he wants, and then fifteen minutes later they're best friends again.

Here is an example that happened today. Charlie had a music class and came home with some new toys from the music class. After Fred got home and they were playing together downstairs, they both ran upstairs. Charlie was crying and Fred was holding the toy high above his head saying, "Charlie said I could use it today and he could use it all day tomorrow"..... followed by the normal threats from Fred, more tears from Charlie, and then the best part: "Charlie, if you don't stop crying or trying to get your toy back, I'm going to put it away so none of us can have it."

So, our question is: is there some kind of conversation to have with Fred or Charlie – at a different time, obviously, not in the heat of the moment – but when everybody is in good spirits? Also, obviously, Charlie could be instigating and we are unaware. What do you think?

*–Concerned Parents*

*Dear Concerned Parents,*  
I wonder where Fred learned those big brother rules? Sounds like not from you. I'd guess it's a world-widening thing: someone at school or at one of his activities is giving Fred a new idea on how to dominate or get his way. He's trying out a new model of behavior. But that model is not acceptable in your family.

Bottom line from what you're describing: you're doing exactly the right thing by removing yourselves as audience, not taking sides, not protecting one so he

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*Preview of Raising Great Parents....continued from page 1*

with the judgment of our 12-year-old or our 6-year-old. Lots of times we wouldn't make the choices they make. But when we show we respect their ability, as young human beings, to choose for themselves, our children can learn to manage many aspects of their daily lives, and enjoy that great feeling of self-reliance and independence.

### **[B] A Powerful Parental Endorsement**

When we respect our children's abilities to make a choice, we're not too concerned with the outcome; many of their choices won't work out very well because they haven't developed their judgment yet. But we want them to gain the experience and confidence to make choices. We feel that experience is the best teacher; it's much stronger than words. This attitude is a powerful endorsement from a parent.

Here's another way of looking at it. If a parent chooses to play Father Knows Best, and tells a child what to do, what the parent is really saying is this: "I know better. I have more experience and knowledge so you need to listen to me." On top of that the child may hear, You're not smart enough to handle this. That message, intentional or not, really hurts. It will make a child feel he's incapable, or trigger a retaliation of some sort. So the next time your child asks you what to do, you might consider turning it around: "What do you think would be best?" You can even ask for your child's help on a problem that you have!

As parents, we need to respect ourselves and remember we have a choice. Some parents forget this part of the deal, perhaps because they're worried that if they draw the line, their children will rebel or withdraw. We don't have to do what the child says. Being respectful, we can, instead, be leaders and say clearly what we're willing to do, and what we're not willing to do.

After all, there's only one person you can be 100% sure of controlling, and that's you. So the next time your child talks back to you in a way that you don't like, you have a quick option to create some space for yourself by saying, or just thinking, something like this: I respect you as a child, even if you don't respect me back. I will respect myself. So I'm going to go to my room for a few minutes, and when I get back we'll try again.

So when your child is badgering you while you're on the phone you might say "I'm unable to hear the person on the phone. Can you be patient and wait until I'm off, or do I need to take the call in another room?" If the behavior doesn't improve, you might go into another room to carve out some quiet time for yourself. This is what respecting yourself looks like, and when you deliver the message in a kind tone of voice, you're also showing respect for the child.

You're saying, in effect, 'I can't make you do it, so I will decide for myself what I will do in this situation. I'm not willing to be treated disrespectfully, and I am going to decide what's going to happen next – to me, not to you.' ■

*Congratulations and many thanks to the team from Parenting Network for sharing this excerpt from their new book, **Raising Great Parents**. It is being published by Bastian Publishing Services Ltd. and will be for sale at the NASAP conference in May for approximately \$20. It will be available for purchase on their website in February 2014 at <<http://parentingnetwork.ca>> for approximately \$25. It will also be an ebook. Contact co-author Doone Estey at Parenting Network in Toronto, Ontario, Canada; email <[doone@parentingnetwork.ca](mailto:doone@parentingnetwork.ca)>.*



## What If My Child Is the Bully?

By Katherine Reynolds Lewis

Perhaps you're asked to pick up your 3-year-old early from preschool because he's been biting his classmates. Or you hear through the grapevine that your first-grade daughter started a club at recess and is excluding some of the other girls in her class. Maybe you discover some cruel texts in the "sent" box on your middle school child's phone.

After years of focusing on how to protect your precious offspring from those other, rough children, a new scenario presents itself: "Could my child be a bully?"

The idea that your child is hurting others can unleash a flood of shame and shock for any parent. So, when responding, it's important to calm yourself down first, then take the following steps from a place of reason – not emotion.

### 1. Investigate the situation

Find a quiet time to speak with your child in an open and nonthreatening way. Resist the temptation to slip into "lecturing and scolding and shaming," advises Jane Nelsen, author of the *Positive Discipline* series. "You ask curiosity questions, like, 'What happened? What do you think caused this to happen? How do you feel about it? What was the result? What did you learn from it?' Explore with the child what he was trying to accomplish."

You might find that the situation is a one-time incident of your child experimenting with behavior he knows is over the line. Or perhaps it's a simple fight between peers, easily mended a day or two later. Consider your child's developmental stage when deciding how seriously to take the situation – preschool biting, for instance, doesn't make your child an outlier. "There's a lot of stuff that's called bullying these days that's not bullying," Nelsen says.

If you uncover a pattern of behavior, rather than labeling your child a bully, try to understand the situation from his perspective. That will help point the way toward a resolution while also encouraging your child by showing him that his parent cares enough to see it from his point of view.

Be aware that children with developmental delays or disorders can be especially susceptible to being manipulated into the role of bully. A typically developing child might instigate disputes and then disappear from the scene when adults come to investigate a ruckus.

When appropriate, also gather information from the school or other children and adults who witnessed the behavior. Don't be defensive or try to make excuses for your child; in the long run, sweeping the situation under the rug will just make things harder for him.

### 2. Help your child brainstorm a solution

Next, ask your child for ideas about solving whatever the underlying problem might be. It could be something tangible, such as replacing a torn shirt or repairing a broken bike. Or perhaps a heartfelt apology or letter to the wronged person. An older child might write a story about the impact of bullying or lead a class discussion about teamwork and cooperation. The key is that your child has a voice in determining the solution and that the process helps him understand the cost of bullying on another human being.

"The whole point is to help children feel validated and not humiliated," Nelsen says. "We need to train kids to be focused on solutions."

### Bully...continues

After having several conversations about what led to the bullying, you and your child can identify the situations that tend to trigger the behavior you both want to change. You can also help him to understand the feelings of anger or frustration that often spill over into aggressive behavior toward others. Ask where in his body he feels it: a tight chest, or hot face, or burning eyes?

Together, list some alternative actions your child can take when he feels the impulse to bully or act out. Maybe he can seek a safe friend or adult. Or take some time alone in a quiet place to count to 10, breathe slowly or even meditate. Remember that the most useful ideas will come from your child.

### 3. Build your child's sense of connection

Ultimately, you have to address the underlying insecurity or pain that drove your child to bullying behavior in the first place. Parents play an important role in building up their children's sense of belonging by spending dedicated one-on-one time with each child and by training children for social situations or tasks that genuinely build their self-respect.

A hard morning of work weeding the yard or an afternoon helping in a community food pantry will give your child a true sense of contribution. If your child acts out on the playground because he doesn't know other ways to engage playmates, you can play-act scenarios to help him practice getting friends' attention in a positive way.

So often, the children who are bullying others are actually doing so because of their own low self-esteem and feeling that they don't belong. When you show them their place in the family and community, and let them shoulder

*continues on page 5*

## Membership Matters

### Open Call: Canadian Co-Chair Position for Family Education

My term as Canadian Co-Chair for Family Education will be up after the May NASAP conference in Chicago. Marlene Goldstein will continue on as the USA Co-Chair of our Section. Over the next few months we are looking for Canadian Family Education members who would be good candidates for this position.

As the Canadian Family Ed Co-Chair, you would have the opportunity to influence what happens in our Section, as well as represent our Section as a member of the COR (Council of Representatives). The COR meets twice yearly: once in October and again at the annual NASAP conference. As part of the COR, you are able to gain an understanding of the bigger picture and workings of NASAP as well as be influential in keeping it a vibrant, growing, relevant organization as it moves forward. You would have the chance to contribute to NASAP in a very meaningful and relevant way.

You would also have the opportunity to make wonderful and inspiring connections with members of the COR and Board of NASAP, learn more about the other Sections and make sure we have a strong Family Ed voice at the table.

Some of your duties as Co-Chair would include giving input to the *FAMILY!* newsletter, overseeing the budget, selecting sessions for the annual conference, running the annual business meeting, and encouraging use of the E-list.

Because we stagger the term of the USA and Canadian Co-Chair positions, you will have the opportunity to work with and learn the ropes from our USA Co-Chair, Marlene Goldstein, who is an amazing and dynamic woman to work with.

To all the Canadian Family Education members – I would strongly encourage you to put your name forward to run for this exciting position. Forward your name to our Secretary/Treasurer Doone Estey (per By-Laws). Feel free to ask Marlene and me if you are interested but have questions. Another option would be to nominate someone you think would make a great Co-Chair. Email us right now, while you're thinking of it! (See page 2 contact info.) Nominee(s) will be announced in the next issue of *FAMILY!*, with final voting at the Chicago conference. ■

Looking forward to hearing from you,

*Terry Lowe*

#### Call for Nominations for Co-Chair:

Send by February 1 to Doone Estey <[doone@parentingnetwork.ca](mailto:doone@parentingnetwork.ca)>

From the By-Laws: ....Any Family Education Section member may nominate any other Family Education Section member, including him/herself. Those nominees who are willing and able to serve shall make the following preparations to be nominated for an office in the FES:

1. Write a short description of themselves and their goals, for the Family Education Section newsletter.
2. Submit two references/letters of recommendation, addressing both the nominee's qualifications and character.

☐ YES! I would be willing to serve as a Co-Chair of the Family Education Section beginning at the May 2014 conference. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ YES! I have a great person to nominate for Co-Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

*Bully...continued from page 4*

the chores and responsibilities that accompany it, you plant the seeds of character.

At the same time, make sure you're not part of the problem. Be a good role model of resolving conflicts with calm words and not threats. Show your child by the example of your interactions with the people around you.

#### 4. Communicate with other adults

As parents, we'd like to think we know everything about our child's life. But at schools or child care centers, our children exhibit an entirely different side that we might rarely see.

That's why it's important to communicate regularly with teachers, coaches, school administrators and guidance counselors to make sure the steps you're taking are effective in stopping your child's bullying behavior. Don't expect perfection, of course, but you should see a positive trend. Ask teachers to tell you specific details of any incidents, so you can review them with your child – again, in a curious and nonjudgmental way.

If your intervention and attention don't end your child's bullying behavior, you might want to consult your child's pediatrician or a counselor. ■

*Katherine Reynolds Lewis is a Washington D.C.-area journalist and parent educator-in-training with the Parent Encouragement Program/PEP.*

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## Carrots and Sticks

by Cheryl L. Erwin

Not long ago, a teacher friend of mine called to ask my opinion about something. “We’re having a school spirit week,” she told me. “All of the classes are making posters and wearing school colors. I thought it would be a good idea to make it a contest and offer incentives (her word, not mine) but some of the other teachers think that’s not a good idea. What do you think?”

Well, I think school spirit week could be a lot of fun. It could increase the students’ sense of community and help them feel pride in their school. All good stuff, right? Yep – until you get to the “incentives.” And then everything falls apart.

It seems pretty obvious that if you want to encourage a particular behavior, you reward it – and if you want to discourage a behavior you punish it. Right? Well, that is certainly how the world seems to work. Parents offer allowance and pay kids for grades, chores, and cooperation. Teachers offer tickets, stars, lunches, and trips to the prize box for good behavior. Managers give employees bonuses for profit and production. And in the short-term, it seems pretty effective. When you take a closer look, however, it doesn’t work at all. In fact, scientists and researchers have known for years that the carrot-and-stick approach is downright dangerous. Why has it taken so long for families and schools to catch on?

A guy by the name of Daniel Pink has written a fascinating book called **Drive** which examines the truth about rewards. It turns out that the science of rewards is pretty scary. In fact, the time-honored system of carrots-and-sticks promotes bad behavior, creates addiction, and encourages short-term thinking at the expense of long-term creativity and growth. If you take a task that someone enjoys doing – something called “intrinsic motivation”, by the way – and offer a reward for it, that person will do less and less of the thing they originally enjoyed. One study rewarded three-year-olds who loved to draw for drawing pictures – and over time, the three-year-olds drew less and less.

It turns out that rewards can be useful for repetitive or mechanical tasks. But if you’re trying to encourage creativity, learning, or commitment to something greater, the side-effects of rewards far outweigh the benefits. Goals imposed by other people, such as grades, sales targets, or standardized test scores often lead to cheating, short-cuts, and a decrease in ingenuity and creativity. Why? By offering a reward, you send a clear signal that the task must be undesirable. If it weren’t, you wouldn’t need a reward, right? And once you’ve offered a reward, you create an expectation that a reward should be forthcoming every time the task is done.

In fact, rewards trigger the exact same systems in the brain that addictions do. As Pink puts it, “cash rewards and shiny trophies can provide a delicious jolt of pleasure at first, but the feeling soon dissipates – and to keep it alive, the recipient requires ever larger and more frequent doses.” This is why the child who was thrilled with a quarter to take out the trash soon wants a dollar – and eventually won’t do the job at all.

Punishment isn’t so great, either, by the way. In one study, parents were told that they would be fined if they were late picking their children up from a child care center. The number of late pick-ups actually skyrocketed. Why? Before, parents made an effort to be on time out of consideration for their child’s teacher. When they were fined, they pushed back a bit – and

felt they were entitled to the extra time because they paid for it.

So what does this mean for my friend who wanted to “incentivize” her school spirit week? It means that if you really want to encourage hard work, learning, creativity, and commitment, don’t offer a reward. Invite the students to get involved for the sheer fun of it. See how creative they can be, and what ideas they have. They’ll actually be more motivated and have more fun if you leave the stickers and prizes out of it.

By the way, there is one sort of reward that does seem to work, according to the research. If you wait until after a task is completed and then offer connection and words of genuine encouragement and gratitude, people respond well. If that sounds familiar, it’s because Positive Discipline and other Adlerian approaches to behavior have been saying that for decades: connection comes before correction, and encouragement is more powerful than praise and rewards.

If you’re curious about this, I highly recommend Daniel Pink’s book, **Drive**. You can also search on YouTube for Pink’s name and you’ll turn up some great short videos explaining more on the science of carrots and sticks. If you’re a parent or you have a child in a local classroom, you owe it to yourself to learn more. ■

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*Dear Addy...continued from page 3*

thinks like a victim while labeling the other an aggressor.

Of course, it's important to be sure they understand where you're coming from ('I will not be an audience for this, and I'm confident you boys can work this out nicely. '); then disengage. If that is understood, Charlie may try to keep you involved and use tears to stoke "abandonment" feelings, but if you know he knows, you can disengage without guilt.

Do you know the principle of "putting them all in the same boat"? Fred was demonstrating that one in your example. ('I'm going to put it away so none of us can have it.' – He's been listening!) Except that he's not the parent, even though as a firstborn, he thinks he is at your level in some respects.

I agree that at times of no conflict, have a conversation. Family Meetings, of course, are an important way to approach a discussion of your values. As you review the week, behavior can easily come up.

You and Charlie can brainstorm ideas about how to manage if Fred (or "another kid") takes something he wanted or had first. End of day conversation can start with 'What did you like about today? What did you not like so much? Would you like to hear about something I noticed?'

Part of a solution for Fred is similar (1:1 talk), but I also suggest that if the boys haven't started playing much with other kids in your home, Fred could use 5-year-olds to play with in increasing amounts, while Charlie plays with more 3-year-olds. Boredom can drive Fred to just be mean and/or he wants to reassert himself as First when he comes back home each day. (And that's very perceptive that Charlie could be instigating trouble out of your sight.)

Also, do they each get one of you

*Traditions...continued from page 1*

times our traditions are handed down to us by our families, and some point to cultural differences attributed to our country of origin or our religious faith. Traditions have the power to connect us, one to another, like invisible strings. We share them which gives us common experiences that bind us and promote feelings of belonging.

Traditions also have the power to train us about how to be members of our particular families and communities. Think about how happy we are to share our traditions with our new babies. We dress them up in the costumes or uniforms that come straight from our history. We train their taste buds for the special treats that are enjoyed by members of our community. We teach them the stories of the sacred days. We look forward to their joy, their wonder, and their participation in the times and events that we treasure.

A sense of belonging is a powerful motivator for all of us, and we learn it first in our families. Think about this for yourself – did you grow up knowing, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that you belonged in your family of origin; that you were a person of value, who had something important to contribute to the well being of your family? If you can say "yes" to that question, chances are you feel lucky to know just how powerful that piece of training and experience was in your development as a capable human being. We are social beings, hard wired to connect with one another. We all want and need to experience a sense of belonging.

Allow this to serve as a little reminder about the importance of the traditions we foster in our families and communities, and the power they have in helping us feel connected. We may experience comfort in the predictability of our holiday practices. We like looking forward to the sameness of the menu, the routines, and the locations of our gatherings. These traditions hold richness for us that can bring us joy in the moment as well as happiness in anticipation and remembering.

What do the traditions that you hold dear say about you, your family and the things you value? When we do the same things over and over again with each passing year, it may be easy to forget the big picture tapestry that is being woven. Watch for those intimate moments to connect, for the shared smiles, the shared meals and the sacred stories. No small things....

May your traditions live on. ■

*Dina Emser is an author, speaker and leadership coach who works with companies of all sizes from Fortune 100 to small businesses to train and coach key employees on how to develop and lead good team members. A recovering elementary and middle school principal and mother of two successful children, Dina brings humor and grace as she guides her clients to become better leaders at work and at home. <<http://www.dinaemser.com>>*

alone for some period every day, even if it's only a solid/non-interrupted 10 minutes? That's very important. Then you get to be out of the equation and it is only a simple matter of the boys learning how to share/negotiate/problem solve. How lucky they are to have one another to learn from.

Have fun with your lively boys. You're on the right track!

–Addy ■

*Contributor Bryna Gamson, editor of our newsletter, was a parent educator for many years in the suburban Chicago area. This letter is adapted from her archives. Bryna was Family Education Director at the Alfred Adler Institute of Chicago (now Adler School), and at retirement was their VP of Marketing & Development.*

## Why Tweens Get Embarrassed by Their Parents

by Bill Corbett

My stepdaughter Olivia is a tween and her mom and I are watching her out the window as she provides us with proof of the characteristics of this age group. The classic tween is an interesting species of the human race, still hanging on to childlike behaviors and yet, demonstrating some signs of maturity. At this moment, Olivia has two friends over to the house and they are standing by the side of the road, dancing. She is wearing a turquoise colored winter ski cap with a cartoon character on the front, pulled down over her ears, and her female best friend is wearing a brown furry hat, complete with horns, resembling a buffalo head. Standing alongside of the two girls is a mutual male friend from down the street. He is wearing a comically oversized pair of sunglasses and a bright blue wig from a Dr. Seuss Thing 1 costume. Standing on the sidewalk, they are each doing their own dance routine, attracting the attention of motorists passing by and receiving frequent horn honks of approval. With each blast of a horn, they shout out with glee over their reward for their comical behavior. While the three of them could easily pass physically for a young teenager, their behavior indicates otherwise.

### The Power of the Peer

This sometimes fragile and transitional time for the older child begins a critical phase in development of relationships with peers. In his book **Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall?**, Anthony Wolf, Ph.D. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux Publishing, 2002) tells us that two relationships are most critical to the development of the child: the parent and the peer. But beginning around the age of 10, peers take on a greater role in the tween's and teen's development of their self-image. Their true happiness, he tells us, begins and ends with friends.

### Where Did My Sweet Child Go?

What becomes hard for many parents and other caregivers of tweens is the disconnect they start to feel and observe. The tween begins to take the parent for granted, sees adults in general as flawed and annoying, becomes easily embarrassed by the parents, and if they do seem to look up to any adults, it is never their own parents. As a result, adults oftentimes feel hurt and angry, feeling the pain of "losing their baby" to the alien that seems to have suddenly inhabited their sweet child's body. The parents become defensive and then accuse their child of being ungrateful for all that the parents have done for them up to this point. But as experts like Wolf tell us, this disconnect must occur and it must be successful for the evolving child-adult to blossom. The secret is that tweens and teens begin to see themselves as flawed and far from perfect. They then begin to look for the flaws in the adults around them and if they are able to see them in their parents and other adults, they will believe that they too can fit into their new world. The result will be a successful transition to eventual adulthood. But if the child sees all of the adults as perfect and unblemished, their own self image will be flawed and they will not adapt in a healthy manner.

### What You Can Do To Help Your Tween Adapt and Grow

As I revealed in my own example with Olivia above, we take the measures to provide her with a safe environment within our own home where she can invite her friends to come and "hang out." Immediately following

### *Tweens...continues*

their episode of roadside antics on this one particular day, the three of them retreated to the backyard deck with an FM radio, sodas, and a fresh pizza. We were sure to close the glass patio doors to provide them with the feeling of privacy, yet we made frequent walks past the glass doors to check on them. This is the important job of any good parent of tweens and teens, creating the environment that is conducive to social development with peers and yet far enough away from the parents to give them their own space. We set up clear boundaries and check in often.

### Creating Safety for Tweens

Clear boundaries and limits to the media and electronics that tweens have access to is also critical to creating safety. It is my opinion that too many parents allow their children to have access to dangerous and useless things for three reasons: just because they exist, because everyone else is doing it, or just because they fall victim to their tweens wearing them down. For example, in our home, all tween visitors are asked to turn in their cell phones, PDAs, and laptops. It is important that Olivia's mother and I know who they are communicating with while in our care. Some of the parents of Olivia's friends were outraged with our decision, while others adapted and have their children leave the devices at home. Olivia does not have a cell phone and won't have one until she's at least 15 or 16 years of age. And when it comes to the Internet, we know it is no longer the fun and limited novelty that many of us remember. Today it offers unbridled access to things tweens just don't need to see. The increase in cyberbullying has created more danger than good with social media tools such as Facebook and MySpace. Olivia has access to the

*concludes on page 9*



*Tweens...continued from page 8*

Internet for any academic purposes that come up in her school work, but entertainment access is limited and controlled. I can't tell you the number of parents who have contacted me for help on this topic. So many of them gave their children unsupervised access to the Internet, a cell phone, or social media tools as tweens or younger, saying back then, "I know my daughter (or son) wouldn't do anything that I wouldn't want them to do." This halo effect in some families creates blindness that is hard to undo when bad things happen. One mother contacted me for help because her daughter was 15 and setting up secret rendezvous with boys after the mother went to bed.

The tween of today feels more empowered than any generation before them. Without the right frame of mind for the caregiver adult, this empowerment can appear to be mouthy, ungrateful and obnoxious. To be successful with this modern day tween, be open to new ideas and relax. Know that the behavior you see is their way of growing into the strong adolescent you want them to be. It all requires you to give them room, create respectful boundaries, and remain close by to keep them safe. ■

*Bill Corbett is the author of the award winning book **Love, Limits, & Lessons: A Parent's Guide to Raising Cooperative Kids** in English and in Spanish, and the founder and president of Cooperative Kids. Website <<http://www.CooperativeKids.com>> for further information and parenting advice.*

*He has three grown children, two grandchildren, and lives with his wife, Elizabeth, near Hartford, Connecticut.*

## Conference Chicago! May 22-25, 2014

Family Education Section members will have an especially productive conference experience in Chicago this May! One of the keynote presentations will be a traditional Adlerian public family counseling demonstration. Veteran family educator and Adler School of Professional Psychology faculty member Jay Colker – one of our own FES members – will be conducting the demonstration. Trained by Manford Sonstegard and Bronia Grunwald, Colker is admired for his classical Open Forum style. The program takes place as the kick-off event in Chicago on Thursday evening, May 22.

You can get a preview of Jay's approach and how he has applied the principles to business leader coaching in the next issue of the *Journal of Individual Psychology* and his website, <<http://crowdsourcedcoaching.com>>. How great is that for our members? ■



Celebrating the *Original* Positive Psychology:  
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*The Chicago Host Committee of the  
North American Society of Adlerian Psychology/NASAP*  
invites you to make plans now to join us in Chicago in May!

*Counselors ~ Educators ~ Students ~ Parents*

Watch for announcements of a wide set of  
practical presentations lined up for NASAP 2014!

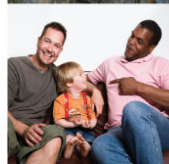
While Fall is turning into chilly Winter, our excitement over the May 22-25  
conference will be keeping us warm throughout the planning process.

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*We're looking forward to welcoming you!*



62<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
Conference  Chicago  
May 22-25, 2014

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Do you participate in subgroup  
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communicate with one another via  
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Help us reach as wide an audience  
as possible by offering to be a link.  
Pass along the Chicago conference  
committee's announcements to  
any listservs you might be on  
whose members could benefit from  
knowing about NASAP 2014.

Your colleagues in other organiza-  
tions will be able to earn CEs at  
this conference, and of course, they  
will depart with an enhanced set

of skills and insights from our out-  
standing Adlerian presenters.

Contact *FAMILY!* editor Bryna  
Gamson to volunteer.

Thank you! ■

NASAP is approved by the American Psychological  
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Many State Boards of Social Work will accept APA CEs.  
Social workers are encouraged to check with their State  
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In addition, NASAP will apply to the Canadian Counsel-  
ing and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) for approval  
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The mission of the North American Society of Adlerian Psychology is to promote growth and understanding of Adlerian (Individual) Psychology, the work of Alfred Adler, and effective approaches to living based on his philosophy. NASAP membership includes educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, parents, business people, community organizations and other interested people. The **Family Education Section** applies Adlerian principles to the home. Members are professionals and nonprofessionals dedicated to understanding and improving family relationships between children and adults, with couples, and among individuals.

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