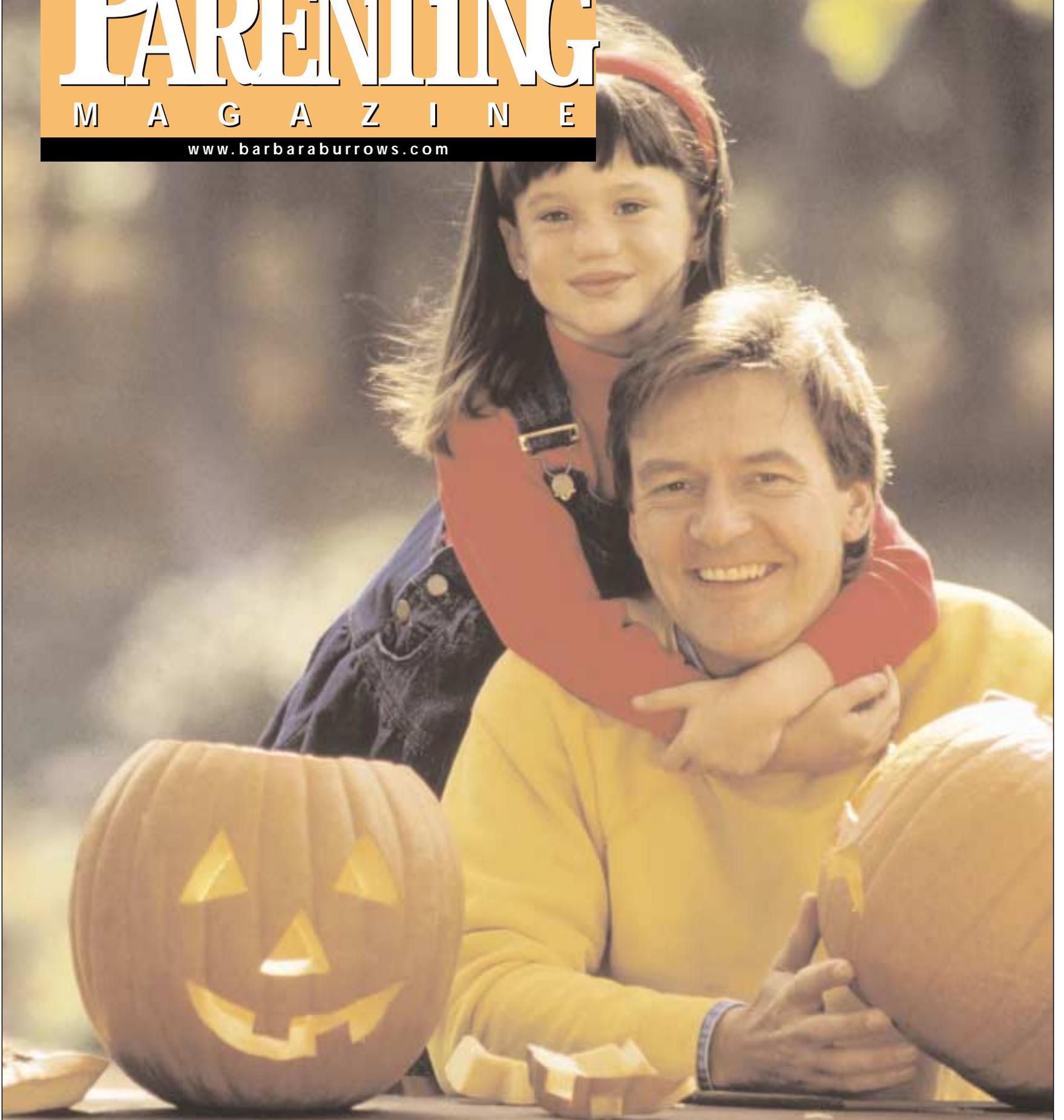


PARENTING

BARBARA BURROWS

M A G A Z I N E

www.barbaraburrows.com



Taming the wicked witches • Helping older babies sleep through the night (Part 2)
Toddler holds breath from anger • Apply yourself! • Yes, you CAN do It!
The flirtatious 4-year-old! • Adoption • "Self Respect" • Fatherneed • Teen talk?

CANADA'S LEADING PARENT EDUCATION SERVICE • OCTOBER 2002

BARBARA BURROWS
PARENTING
 M A G A Z I N E
 (formerly Parent to Parent Magazine)
 Canada's leading parent education service

Publisher

Barbara Burrows

Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine is published 6 times per year in conjunction with the Newspaper partners across Ontario in April, June, August, October, December and February.

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Readers are encouraged to submit parenting questions, their own stories or experiences to "Our Readers Share" and of course comment on anything in Letters to the Editor.

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 October 2002

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Taming the wicked witches

The theme song in Munchkin Land goes something like: ding-dong the witch is dead, which old witch, the wicked witch, ding-dong the wicked witch is dead. Of course, we don't live in the Land of Oz and the wicked witch is long dead, except on Halloween – that awful, dreadful night where there are lot of little witches running around. I must be one of those wicked witch mothers because I really dislike everything about Halloween, and I mean everything.

Halloween stuff has been front and centre in the stores since August. Makes me shudder. I just can't get excited about hopping up and down all night, filling too large bags with too small candy nuggets (bars were *much* bigger when I was young). There's the costume to fret about, the pumpkin to carve, when and where to trick or treat, who to go with, how late to stay out and the biggest challenge of all - how to keep the candy safely tucked away long enough to devour the best of the bag before the dogs find it. All of this and that awful orange colour as well.

Our kids are now teenagers and with this new stage comes many opportunities to reminisce about what we miss the most about their youth. We miss cuddles on the couch and warm little bodies climbing into bed with us. There's the excitement of Christmas morning and the chaos of Easter egg hunts. There are countless more special moments to cherish but in our house, not one of them involves pumpkins, candy or costumes, even though my dress-up box in the basement is full of ninjas, magicians and fairies. I recall the year I painstakingly sewed the most beautiful princess gown but it was too cold and wet to wear it. A few years later, when the pink princess became the cave girl temptress we had the same problem. Last year I tried to ignore Halloween altogether and bought the (last one standing) pumpkin on October 30. How about the year I decorated the front door with ghosts and goblins only to find the paint peeling off underneath on the morning after. Then there's the

smashed pumpkins on the front path, the handfuls of chocolate I eat *before* the night begins, bags that break, masks that don't work, dogs that bark every time the bell rings, makeup that causes rashes, and lots of little ones too young, scared and overwhelmed crying at the door.

To tell you the truth, I would much rather go and buy some decent size chocolate bars and give them to the kids I know in my neighbourhood than spend the evening smiling at strange little children who look at you oddly when the candy in your hand doesn't seem really worth all the effort. I agree - it isn't.

On top of that, we (at Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine) have come to understand from our advisors, that although Halloween can *seem* like fun to children, in fact, they can become easily overwhelmed and frightened – especially younger children. This seems to be one time of the year that

it may be hard for parents to measure exactly how their children are taking in all of the "Halloween" hype. So this year maybe you'll think about doing what I intend to do – tone things down. Arrange with a small number of neighbours and friends to do a reciprocal Halloween. Provide special

Halloween treats for children who are special to you. Have the children pay a Halloween visit to people they like, who will invite them in, take the time to notice what they have chosen to wear, admire their costumes, and give the children a special Halloween treat.

Up to 7, 8 and maybe 9 years old, a small number of stops to see people who will share in the child's Halloween experience will be more enjoyable than trudging around the neighbourhood greedily collecting bags full of candy too heavy to carry.

I'm betting that if you tone down "the wicked witches" this Halloween as I intend to do, your whole family will enjoy it more. b

What's Up?



ANGELA GREENWAY
 Managing Editor

...although Halloween can seem like fun to children, in fact, they can become easily overwhelmed and frightened...

Angela

OCTOBER 2002

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About Barbara Burrows

Barbara Burrows is a psycho-therapist in private practice. She is founder of Parent to Parent Magazine and Positive Parenting. In 1999, these companies merged to form Barbara Burrows Parenting. Her syndicated column runs in newspapers across Canada.

Barbara helps parents raise emotionally healthy children and experience joy in parenting. After graduating from McMaster University in sociology and psychology, she worked to help parents with children's behaviour in Hamilton at Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals before developing her own parent education program.

She and her husband have two daughters and a son, and live in Burlington Ontario. b

Barbara Burrows Parenting International Advisory Board

Advisors to Barbara Burrows are professionals with extensive experience in both clinical work and research in child development. They are committed to helping families resolve the underlying difficulties that lead to psychological symptoms in children, without the use of medication wherever possible.

The members of the advisory board contribute articles to the magazine on a regular basis, and oversee the professional integrity of articles published in the magazine.

This advisory board insures that material printed in Barbara Burrows' publication reflects the body of knowledge developed by child psychoanalysts, together with developmentalists (attachment theory, developmental neurobiology and infant research).

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GOOD BOOKS - MORE THAN A REVIEW

Fatherneed

Why Father care is as essential as Mother care for your child

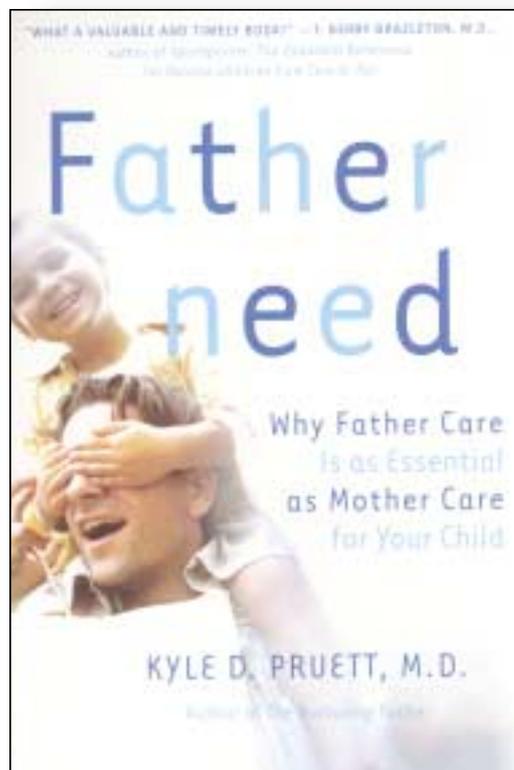
Kyle D. Pruett M.D.
Published by Broadway
Books New York
Distributed by
Random House Canada
ISBN 0-7679-0737-1
\$19.95 Canadian

by Barbara Burrows

A deep need for the father is something that people of all ages have, in a private, internal place, says Kyle Pruett, in his third book "Fatherneed". Some of us may think that we have outgrown this need, especially if our fathers were not very available to us growing up. We may only become aware at the time of death of an unexpected painful longing for our father. When a child's relationship with his or her father is severed or impaired, the child will experience "a certain yearning, a sense of something lost, an incompleteness" (P. 161) which will likely last a lifetime.

This holds true even for a child who has never known her father. Pruett explains, "A child's fatherneed is a very deep emotion, and it is not responsive to much rational influence. It hurts, even devastates, to lose a father and that is what most fatherless kids feel happens to them." (P. 161) Pruett gives the example of four-and-a-half-year-old Sarah, daughter of a single mother. Sarah tells her cousin, "My mom had me in her body, and we weren't looking for my daddy when I was coming out, so we lost him. I look for him every time we go by the hospital because I know that's where he got lost."

Fathers are not mothers and "Fatherneed" talks clearly of the differences that have been noted in research of how fathers relate quite differently to their children, even when they are the primary caregiver, and right from the very beginning. Pruett explains that children need what both fathers and mothers have to offer. He points out that fathers don't and can't do things in exactly the same as the mother. Abe, the father of a six-week-old daughter, in response to his wife's observations that he didn't seem to be happy, was able to share with her an important realization. "I've been trying to copy the way you



Fathers are not mothers and "Fatherneed" talks clearly of the differences that have been noted in research of how fathers relate quite differently to their children...

are with her and it doesn't work for me." Abe had to find his own way of relating to his new infant daughter before he could feel deep pleasure in being a father. (P17)

The chapter on divorce includes a quote from Margaret Mead, "Marriage is a contract, and in most societies in the world, you can rescind it, but parenthood is not a contract and you cannot break it. The law's attempt to achieve the civil death of a non-custodial par-

ent is foolish and destructive." (P. 102) This chapter gives some helpful ideas of how parents can talk about their separation or divorce with children – stressing the absolute importance of doing this together and not telling the children it is the other parent's fault. (P. 114) The main idea is to explain that you both want the children to stay in both of your lives and are going to work towards that goal together. The words chosen vary, depending on the age of the children, and Pruett offers some sound advice on how to handle this situation.

Pruett explains, "Voluntary agreement by parents on custody is far superior to any court-ordered arrangement. Ongoing, meaningful contact with their father protects children against many of the consequences of divorce." (P. 113) He also talks about how helpful it is to children to know that their father's support cheque comes on time. To the child, regular support is proof that the father is thinking about him and is committed to making sure the child is well taken care of, even if the father is not living in the same home as the child. Pruett also addresses and how a man's desire to be a good father and to support his children can be undermined when he is "ordered" by courts to send money.

Fatherneed stresses how beneficial committed fathering is to the father himself. "The Haverford Longitudinal Study found that engaged fatherhood promotes a man's ability to understand himself, to empathically understand others, and to integrate his feelings in an ongoing way. Furthermore, fathers are more likely to want to give back and serve in community leadership positions than are men who have remained childless." (P. 183)

What about fathers who may have spent time in jail? Pruett says although not enough research has been done yet in this area, but there is some indication that fathers who maintain family ties while in prison have a lower rate of recidivism and that their kids show some moderately positive outcomes. (P. 140) This research suggests that no matter what the father's shortcomings may be, a relationship with one's father is beneficial to the child if this is mutually desired.

Fatherneed is a carefully researched book, drawing from numerous academic studies, books and articles (all carefully annotated) and gives a wealth of pertinent information that both mothers and fathers will find helpful in understanding why father care is as essential as mother care for every single child. b

OUR READERS SHARE

The flirtatious 4-year-old!

Janet Gasparini responds to Barbara Burrows column.

Background:

A mother wrote wondering what to do about her normally flirtatious 4-year-old who refused to let go of her mother's leg at her swimming lessons with her male teacher. (www.barbaraburrows.com column link - archives - June 28/02)

Barbara answered "I think her shyness might be related to her usual flirtatious behaviour with men. Little girls, when flirting with men, often wish for the men to notice them, to think they are pretty, to admire them. Their feelings are not that much different that when more mature people flirt ... they feel affirmed by the other person's attention."

Barbara added that her flirting behaviour was quite likely fun with her mother present. Suddenly, when she encounters a man (as a male teenager will appear to her), in swim class with no other kids present, with her in her bathing suit rather than clothes, her usual way of relating probably did not feel comfortable, so she won't let go of her mother.

Janet responds:

Your response to the woman who was concerned about her daughter's behaviour with the male instructor set off alarm bells. 4-year-old girls do not flirt. In fact this is one of the biggest myths that we deal with in terms of the sexual abuse of children - that they somehow "wanted it" or "asked for it". Your response implies that you concur with this myth and is very dangerous. Many adult women who were victims of childhood sexual abuse have deep feelings of shame because they may have had a sense of enjoying the attention that they received while many others hated the attention right from the start. Children must never be considered responsible for any kind of sexual mistreatment and the myths must not be perpetrated. You would do your readers a favour by responding to this issue in a more productive manner.

Barbara:

Little girls do flirt and are often seductive, especially with their fathers. They want their dads to love them better than they love their mummies - and often say so. Little girls with absent fathers are often seductive with male family friends - they are looking to be loved by someone who can replace the father they long for. Young children, both boys and girls have strong sensations in the genitals that leads to masturbation and many excited behaviours. Little girls rub their genitals up and down their father's leg while pretending to ride a horsy. Children "show and tell" pulling each other's pants down. Indeed, sexuality begins at birth, and develops slowly, through a variety of stages, until it reaches the form we most recognize - adult sexuality



Sexual impulses and body feelings are often very difficult for children to manage.

Sexual impulses and body feelings are often very difficult for children to manage. If we can recognize these body feelings, and "sexual" behaviour, it is easier to find ways to help children with excited "key-up" behaviour that results.

I agree fully that children must never be held accountable for any sexual misconduct by adults.

Janet:

I am not suggesting that children do not have sexual impulses or body feelings. This is very different however from suggesting that 4-year-olds flirt or are seductive. Seducing someone is an invitation to sexual activity and the natural and normal behaviour between 4-year-olds and their fathers or other men is not one of a child "seducing" or inviting sexual activity. In fact there have been cases before the courts where judges have suggested that a child "asked for it" and the judges have been severely reprimanded. Please be careful with this line of discussion. You are contributing to the myths of sexual assault.

Barbara:

Unless one has the opportunity to explore

the fantasy life of a child, it is difficult to know if they are indeed seductive - with wishes to have babies like their mothers, and all kinds of sexual ideas of how babies get made. Their sexual fantasies and impulses can be both frightening and exciting - even when adults around them are sensitive and non-shaming.

People suffer immeasurably from childhood sexual abuse. In one documented case, the women remembered doing summersaults in her pretty dress, trying to attract the attention of the perpetrator - a young adult who lived next door. When he did respond, and took her into a dark house, and put his penis into her mouth, she had not only the terror of the incident, but also the terror of feeling that she was to blame.

She never discussed her somersault behaviour with anyone, (and not even with her therapist for a good long time) and it came out totally by accident one day when she had to bring a toddler she was babysitting to a therapy session. There was a lull in the session, and she put her arms around the little one. Soon she was quietly weeping. All she could think about was a small child couldn't be at fault. It took some time to figure out that her tears were related to her seductive feelings and summersaults that made her feel the assault had been her fault.

Bringing this terrible sense of responsibility to light, after so many years, gave her some relief. This insight allowed further exploration and understanding of her deep need for her non-responsive father to love her. Getting to her unconscious feelings of being responsible helped her start to understand that her seductive behaviour was reasonable - that all little girls need love and approval from their dads, and her wish for it was not "bad". It is only with this careful work that it is possible to work through the guilt that people carry.

Her mother didn't shame her in any way - but even as a three-year-old, she wouldn't tell her mother who did it, even though she did see the person again from time to time. She carried her own shame inwardly, all those years until she was able to get to it in therapy.

I cannot agree with you that I am perpetuating myths. In fact, I think it very helpful for victims of sexual molestations to know of the sexual, seductive, normal fantasies and behaviour of young children - both boys and girls. I believe acknowledging this reality protects children more. Those who have suffered have a much greater chance of recovering if they are able to uncover the complex reality of their own experience - including uncovering their own seductive wishes if these wishes were part of it. When denied, these beliefs remain encapsulated within the psyche and the person continues to suffer, no matter how often others try to insure them "it wasn't your fault". b



Tip for Kids – Apply yourself!

“You’d be so good if only you would apply yourself! You are so talented and one of the best skaters on the ice.” A parent laments her talented daughter’s reluctance to put forth the best effort possible to achieve a standard of excellence most definitely within her reach.

Certainly, parents help their children achieve so very much – research shows that right from infancy, that children achieve better when a loving and interested parent feels proud of the child’s accomplishment.

But parents have a difficult tightrope to walk – their genuine pride in their children motivates children to achieve, but parents may have another, unconscious motive that can interfere with children’s accomplishments. The parents want children to achieve, not so the child can take genuine pride in what he or she has accomplished, but more because parents feel the child should achieve in a particular area. The child’s achievements get “taken over” by the parent, who feels that they

have done well as parents when their children do.

When children start to feel that the parent’s pleasure in the child’s achievements has to do with the child’s accomplishment boosting the parent in some way, the child cannot feel the same degree of gratification as when the parent is thrilled at what the child achieves for himself.

The child’s achievements get “taken over” by the parent, who feels that they have done well as parents when their children do.

When a parent urges a child forward to meet a conscious or unconscious need in the parent, it leaves the child wondering why the parent cannot be satisfied with what the child has already accomplished. This may diminish a child’s good feeling, no matter how accomplished the child may be.

Some children become quite resistant to progressing further in a particular area when they feel they are doing it more “for the parents”. Parents can best help children reach their greatest potential by thinking as carefully as possible about how to support children in striving towards the child’s own interests and goals. b

Tip for Babies – Helping older babies sleep through the night PART 2

by Barbara Burrows

Last issue we spoke about teaching babies to get to sleep without nursing. Another thing that helps is developing a “transitional object”. A transitional object is a soft, cuddly toy or blanket that the baby associates with getting cuddles and love from her mother or father. When a baby forms such an attachment to the blanket or toy, she happily uses the toy to give the same safe and secure feelings she gets from being in contact with the mother. It makes going to bed a happy time, as the child takes “mommy and daddy” to bed with her, yet gets good feelings from not needing to call for parents during the night.

To help babies develop an attachment to a transitional object (which rarely happens before 18 months) parents can

start as soon as babies differentiate between different objects. When you say “Where’s bunny” and your baby looks towards the stuffed bunny, your child has enough understanding that you can start developing her attachment to “bunny” as the transitional object. Every sleep time, bring the same soft blanket and bunny as part of the “going to sleep” routine. Talk about what is happening. “Baby goes to sleep,

Another thing that helps is developing a “transitional object”

bunny goes to sleep. Mommy tuck baby and bunny in.”

Over time, the baby will look for bunny and blankie. Bunny and blankie are associated with sleep and eventually will be all the baby (who may by now be a toddler) will need to sleep well – all through the night. b

Watch next issue for ideas of helping babies who sleep in the parents bed wake up less often.



F E A T U R E

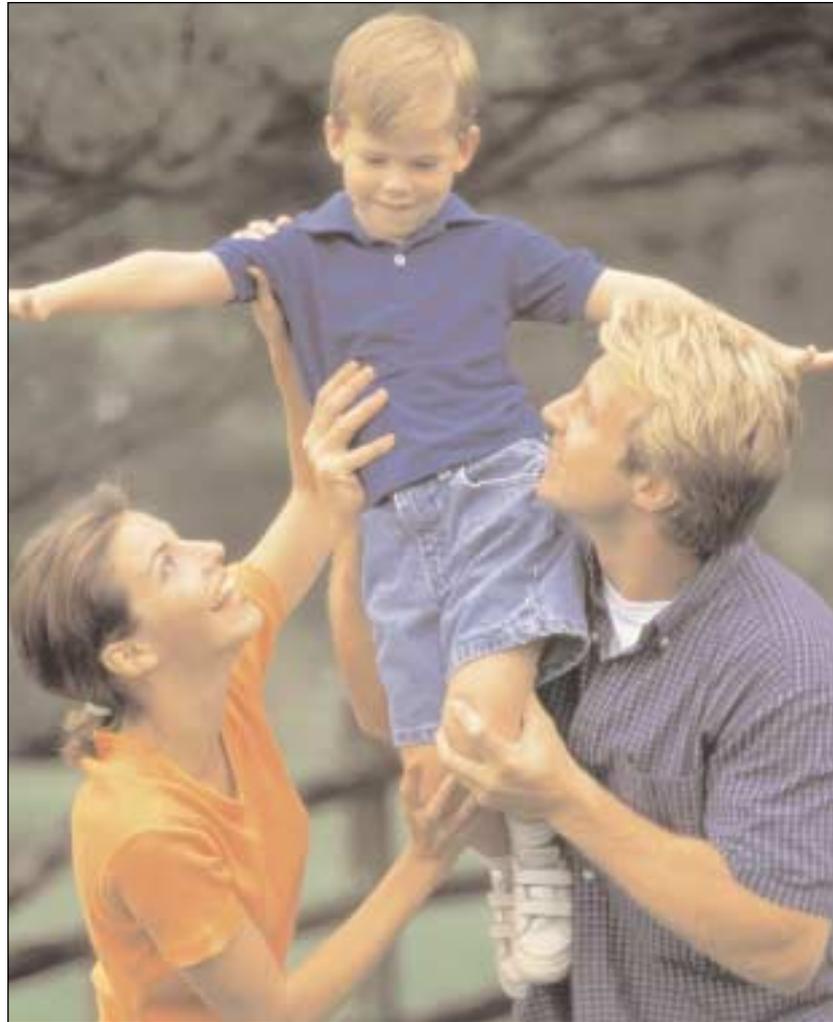
"SELF RESPECT"

by Georgina T. Roberts
of The Grandmothers

"The Grandmothers" are Early Childhood Consultants, and an energetic, experienced group of professionals linked with The Hanna Perkins Center in Cleveland, Ohio. Collectively, they have decades of experience and have helped several thousand children lead happier lives. "The Grandmothers" are Maria Kaiser M.Ed.; Lyn Kirst B.S.; Georgianna Roberts M.Ed.; Nancy Sabath, M.Ed., Kathleen Smith, M.Ed., Virginia Steininger M.Ed. "The Grandmothers" are co-ordinated by Barbara Streeter M.S. (Bank Street) L.P.C.C. Child Psychoanalyst, Associate Director; Hanna Perkins Center, Extension Division

Everyone talks about how important it is to foster a child's self-esteem. But what, exactly, does that mean? Self-esteem comes from a feeling that one is respected and clearly, children's self-respect comes from parents and teachers speaking respectfully to them.

But no one can speak respectfully without having self-respect, something that is in pretty short supply for parents in our society. Parenthood is a job with long hours, no benefits or vacations (in fact, vacations mean more work rather than less!) and no chance for advancement, no matter how well you do the job. Parents do it solely for the rewards of helping a child grow, but they certainly do not get rewards from the society around them. And, of course, they take every little thing their children do, especially the bad things, as a reflection on themselves, feeling that the normal developmental problems and unavoidable illnesses are completely their fault. And often, they even feel responsible and guilty for things



Self-esteem comes from a feeling that one is respected and clearly, children's self-respect comes from parents and teachers speaking respectfully to them.

that they should be proud of.

There are many examples of signs of good parenting which are often mistaken as sign of bad parenting. For example, when their child cries upon entering a new program or activity in a strange place with strange people, parents are embarrassed and think that the child is showing signs of poor mothering. Absolutely *not*: To the contrary, this shows that he has formed a good attachment to his parents, that he knows the difference between the familiar and the unfamiliar and how much he trusts and depends on his parents to help him manage this new situation. He really is behaving appropriately. We would be concerned if he did not show signs of distress in a new and strange place.

And at the end of the day, when he gives Mom and Dad a hard time, wants to play a little longer, wants the teacher to help him put

on his coat, parents may think he really likes the caregiver better. Not so. Actually, this is his way of showing them that he missed them *so much*, that it was so hard to wait for them, that now he's showing them how that feels by making them wait. But he also has good feelings for Mom and Dad and wants to be sure to give them the picture he made for them and we hope that they know that all this behaviour is a sign of good parenting, of how terribly important they are to him.

We also hope that preschool teachers are taking advantage of these kinds of situations to point out to parents what vitally important work they are doing in raising their children. This is a particularly important time in young parents' lives to have that support to bolster their sense of self-respect and confidence so that they can nurture their child's self-esteem. b

F E A T U R E

Adoption PART 1

by Marilyn Thorpe

Marilyn Thorpe BA, MD, FRCPC is a Part-time Assistant professor at University of Western Ontario in the Department of Psychiatry and a Adolescent psychiatrist and psychotherapist in London, Ontario.

Ideally the adoption of a child should be a happy time for the child and the new parents. The child receives a wonderful, safe family prepared to parent and appreciate the child. The parents get the child they feel is integral to their happiness as adults. There are many happy relationships with goodness of fit between adoptees and their families. Sometimes there are troubles. By foreseeing some of the difficulties that may be encountered, such difficulties may be prevented by well-meaning adoptive parents.

First is the issue of bonding. For biological parents, a parent ideally begins bonding with the child in utero. The mother gets to know the child's temperament (e.g. active versus quiet baby). The parents have months to get used to the idea of parenting and to fantasize about the child. This is a 'biologically handy phenomenon' given that as adults we take a while to trust and bond. At the time of the child's birth, the parents begin to bond with the child whose natural suck reflex and little hand grasp reflex are set in motion to encourage the parents to adore the child. Gradually the child learns to trust the dependable parents and begins the first primary attachments - patterns of relationships and trust that the child will repeat automatically throughout life.

When an infant is adopted at birth, this process is altered for the parents and the child. The child will be without a primary attachment figure for days (or even weeks). In order to establish the ability to form healthy attachments, the child will require an attachment figure immediately and readily available with whom to bond.

For the adoptive family, they learn of the baby after its birth. This means the adoptive parents are without the time of preparation and anticipation during the pregnancy. This may interfere with the parents' ability to be available for the child - not just physically when the child calls out but also emotionally. In the event that the adoptive parents have not truly dealt with their feelings about not being able to have their own child, etc, they may not be ready to embrace the adoptee. They may wish the child was their own. The mother may feel inadequate as a mother not



The parents will need to be very honest about their many conflicted feelings; it is our denied feelings that erode a child's esteem.

having carried the child or being unable to breast feed. In the event that the parents are unsure that they are valuable and valid parents, they may hesitate. Also, they may be pre-occupied with thoughts of the biological parents. In some jurisdictions, the biological parents have a time to change their minds about the adoption - it is hard under such circumstances to fully claim and lose oneself in another person. All of these concerns may distract the parents from readily attaching.

As a person considering adoption, one must reconcile that one will raise another's child. One must be convinced that emotional parenting is a very valuable and fundamental gift for a child. One must reconcile that it is not breast or bottled milk but the peaceful nurture and mutual satisfaction of feeding time that the child will internalize. It is especially important that the mother be the pri-

mary person to feed to begin, as this helps the baby form a strong relationship with one person. Once the baby shows a clear preference for mommy, parents could take advantage of bottle feedings making it a time that father can bond and nurture the infant too.

The parents will need to be very honest about their many conflicted feelings; it is our denied feelings that erode a child's esteem. For example, when mothers and fathers can acknowledge to each other their darker feelings about the adoption - perhaps their worries that they will not be able to love the child, the fact that they don't feel connected at the beginning, or their disappointed or depressed feelings (that often accompany even a natural birth), they will be less likely to run into difficulties that come when denied, unconscious feelings get acted out.

A common problem that can develop is that certain normal and expected disappointments of the mother or father remain unconscious, or even when conscious, parents cannot speak about them. The baby, of course, "feels" these hidden or unspoken emotions, in the way he is held, diapered, fed and cared for. The infant responds to these hidden feelings with unsettled and difficult behaviours. He doesn't "warm up" to the parents, who then feel even more inadequate. The more parents can talk together about these darker feelings, the less the emotions go underground, where they get "stuck" and create greater problems for both the parents and the child. Talking helps parents find their way to feel more loving and get over the disappointments. This frees them emotionally to respond more fully to the baby, who then responds better to the parents.

Of course, as with a biological child coming home, the father is integral in caring for mother so that she is free to face the greatest emotional challenge of her life - caring for the baby.

The father should also provide an attachment to the child and be a sounding board for the mother. The parents will do well to have supports who are knowledgeable and understanding as they navigate through their early times with the child. b

Watch for Part II of Dr. Thorpe's article on adoption in November.

Since adoption does create different pressures for parents, we invite parents of adopted children to share their experiences. Send your stories to barbaraburrows@cogego.ca

D E A R B A R B A R A

Mom helps 4-year-old with "missing" feelings

Readers have often told me they wonder what happens after parents seek advice for some problem. Thanks to Heather Keith of Hamilton Ont. for her willingness to share this discussion regarding her son.

Dear Barbara

My son is almost four now and has been kicked out of a daycare and a Montessori school. The reasons they cite are that they don't have the manpower for his energy level. My son is not ADHD, and has a wonderful attention span at times. In my opinion his problem is that his mother (that's me) spent the first two years of his life at home with him and then went back to work full time. I believe that his issues are my fault and I need help trying to figure out how to rectify them. I wanted our time together to always be fun and wonderful and as a result I let him get his way on most things. He has been spoiled and I just hope I haven't ruined him for good. Now when he doesn't get his way he becomes aggressive, and overbearing and prone to fits of anger. I was hoping you would have some other insights for me. Any advice is much appreciated.

Heather

Barbara's response:

I don't think it possible that your two years together have "spoiled" your son. What angers or troubles him? I'd guess that either he or maybe both of you are mourning having to leave one another. Another possibility is that you feel frustrated and angry which comes when mothers fear they are failing and your son senses this and it makes him anxious. His anxiety makes it difficult for him to manage well. It is not easy to figure out a child's needs, especially when they are upset, but meeting those needs (even obscure needs) can help.

Heather:

Can you help me with this specific problem I faced today? My son is now in a private home daycare and his provider, while very patient, has definitely had some difficulties. I have told her to call me any time she needs support or assistance. I talk with Josh and sometimes that helps. Sometimes it doesn't. Today it seemed that nothing I said got through to him. Finally I told him that we would be putting his bike in the shed until he learned to be nicer to Sarah. I read the notes my mother sent me from your presenta-



BARBARA BURROWS
Director,
Barbara Burrows
Parenting

Photo by Murray Pellowe

tion "Discipline: Not Punishment (www.barbaraburrows.com follow seminar link), and it would seem that I have made a mistake in taking away something he likes. It seemed to be the only thing that got his attention at the time.

I feel like my son and I have good communication. We talk all the time. I always praise him for his good behaviour and try to highlight that for him. I tell him daily how important he is to me.

So keeping him off his bike is the wrong thing to do?

Barbara:

It won't help him with whatever feelings over-took him and made it difficult for him to be kind to Sarah. Talk more about what caused the trouble.

Heather:

I sat down with my son last night and I asked him what it was he was feeling when he started acting up for Sarah yesterday. It took a bit of time, but eventually he told me that his tummy was telling him that he didn't want to see Sarah, he would rather be at home with mom. So it's probably safe to say that his issues are around being separated from me. The fact is that I have to work in order to support us. Do you have any suggestions on how I can get him to feel good about going to Sarah's and understanding that as much as I would love to stay home with him...it isn't possible?

Barbara:

Tell him exactly what you've told me and also that you think about him and miss him each day too. Make a plan with him about what he can do when he starts to miss you. Could he draw you a picture about what has just happened that might be making him upset? Keep something of yours that he could hold when missing you? Ask Sarah to help him write a story that he could share with you when you both come back home again? Help him think about what will help him with his "missing mommy tummy feelings".

Heather:

Thanks so much. Those are great ideas!!!! Josh and I have been through alot together and other than my mom, haven't had a lot of support. Your advice means more to me than you know.

Two days later

Heather:

I have sent Josh to Sarah's with a little photo album and a charm from a necklace that he liked and he has had a great past two days. I am not going to get my hopes up that this is the answer to all our problems, but we definitely seem to be heading in the right direction. b



Tip for Tots – Toddler holds breath from anger

On a recent radio talk show, a mother asked what to do with a toddler who became so angry that he held his breath for very long periods of time. Someone recommend throwing cold water in the child's face; however children often experience this approach as an assault because it shocks them.

Ms. Audrey Simpson, a listener and long time foster parent called with another solution. Ms. Simpson says just blow a simple puff of breath into the baby's face. The sensation of the puff breaks that baby's fit of temper but does not upset them like cold water. b

About Barbara Burrows

Barbara Burrows is a psycho-therapist in private practice. She is founder of Parent to Parent Magazine and Positive Parenting. In 1999, these companies merged to form Barbara Burrows Parenting. Her syndicated column runs in newspapers across Canada.

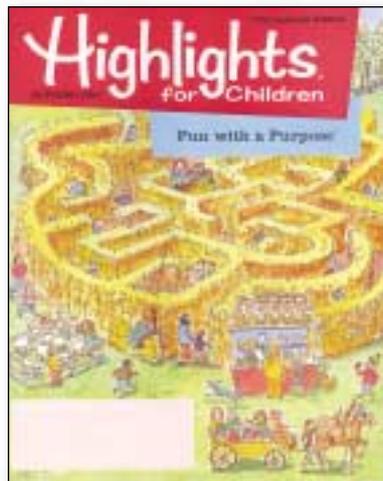
Barbara helps parents raise emotionally healthy children and experience joy in parenting. After graduating from McMaster University in sociology and psychology, she worked to help parents with children's behaviour in Hamilton at Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals before developing her own parent education program.

She and her husband have two daughters and a son, and live in Burlington Ontario. b

In researching various approaches to parent education, CBC TV's "the fifth estate" found that parents made the most gains with Barbara Burrows.

Highlights

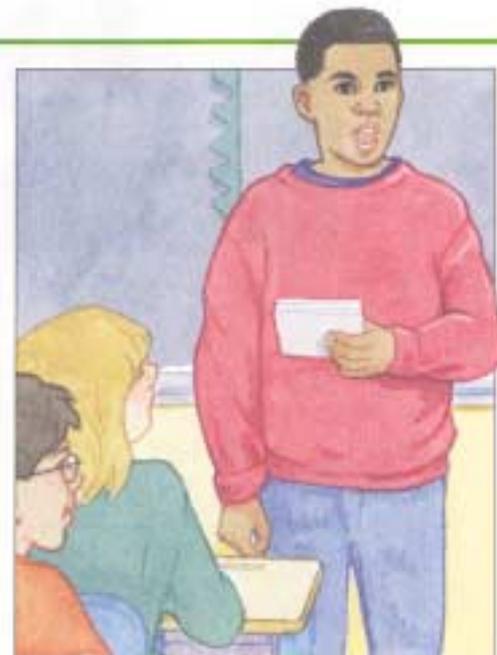
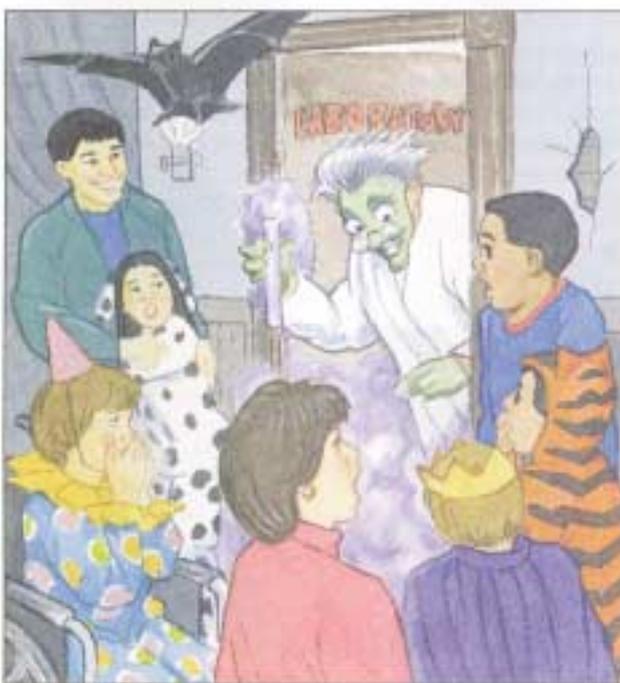
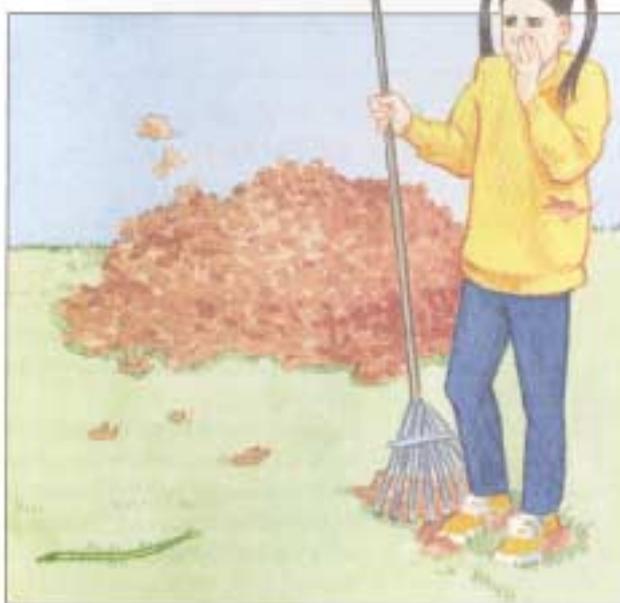
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Highlights for Children was founded in 1946 and has been publishing books for children filled with wholesome fun activities, stories, jokes and cartoons ever since. Designed for use in the classroom or at home, Highlights is dedicated to helping children grow in basic skills and knowledge, in creativity, in ability to think and reason, in sensitivity to others, in high ideals and worthy ways of living. This publication offers children fun with a purpose. It targets children from 2 - 12 years and contains no advertising. Children from all over the world subscribe and contribute jokes, submit questions and sometimes even write stories. b

Thinking

- Why might these children feel frightened? What frightens you?
- If you're afraid of something, why might it help to learn more about it?



- Can you think of something that seemed scary to you at first but doesn't seem scary any more? how did you overcome your fear?
- Some actors and athletes say that they perform better if they are a bit nervous. Why might that be true?

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F E A T U R E

TEEN TALK?

by Zoe Weininger Pepler

Zoe Weininger Pepler, is an Honours graduate of the Ontario College of Art & Design. Over the past several years she has balanced an active schedule as a mother, a part time teacher, personal coach and writer/editor.

It was late Thursday afternoon, Carole and her son Michael pulled into the grocery store parking lot. She asked if he would get the cart for her. She gave him a quarter to unlock one of the large buggies from the stack along the wall. As she watched, Carole thought Michael seemed tired. Maybe just disinterested. She worried that maybe he'd had a difficult day at school, perhaps there was a huge assignment he hadn't mentioned. She came up beside him, resting her hands on the edge of the cart,

"What classes did you have today?" she asked, hoping that the question was open ended enough not to shut him down.

"E1, computers, gym and stuff," he mumbled, not looking at her.

Carole felt the back of her neck tighten. A fine edge of barbwire just grazes the skin. "Lots of homework?" she asked, as they entered the brightly lit store.

"Look," he barked, staring at her. "You don't understand."

Carole turned to pick up a lettuce, shoved it into a clear, plastic bag, and tossed it into the cart. "If you talk to me about it, I might be able to understand," she said. "But I can't help you, if I don't know what it is."

"Mom, what do you want?" he whined.

"I want to buy the groceries and get out of here. Ok?"

"Ok."

Carole began to think that they should leave the store and open a can of soup for dinner. She picked out some carrots and tomatoes putting them in the bottom of the cart. Michael laid his head on the handle of the cart and ignored her.

"Would you like steak?" she asked him.

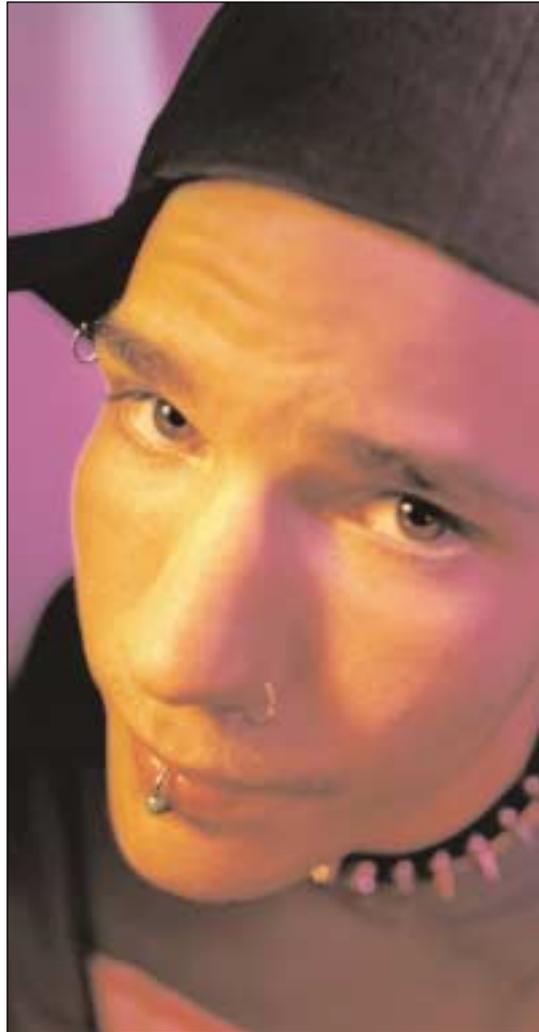
"Whatever," he grumbled, not looking up.

Carole breathed deeply, "What about chicken?"

Michael flipped his head off the bar to look at her, "I hate chicken and I hate you," he yelled at her. His hands gripped the cart handle as he moved through the vegetable section. Carole followed him, aware of the people around her.

"Well then, what would you like?" she asked him.

"Nothing," he yelled again. "I don't want to eat your food. I never want to eat it again in my life. I'm not hungry and you can't make me eat," he screamed, his voice echoing through the vegetable section of the grocery store.



If she had screamed at Michael, like she wanted to, she would only be setting a bad example, and he would probably have shut her out for a longer period of time.

People stared at them. The grocery attendant sorting potatoes leaned close to Carole's ear whispering, "You will be blessed later in life for your patience."

Carole turned to Michael who was spinning around to walk away. "We are leaving here now," she said to him, in a voice strained with control. Her throat

felt sore as she swallowed the words she really wanted to say.

Carole walked to the car shaking. Her chest ached. Not only was she confused and angry – she still had nothing for dinner. She wanted to go home and cry. Instead she slammed the car door and sat there with Michael beside her.

"Don't ever speak to me like that in public again," she said.

He didn't respond, he stared out the car window. The wall around him was thick.

She walked a very fine line.

Carole knew that at this moment Michael was volatile, ready to ignite. If she pushed him,

he might jump out of the car and take off. But, she felt she had a right to be upset and angry. How dare he yell at her like that? Lousy disrespectful kid – she argued within herself.

Michael continued to stare out the car window. The sky was now dark as the evening sun set. It was late. He hadn't asked her why they were still sitting in the parking lot. She realized he wasn't going anywhere. So, she sat quietly until she felt she could speak in a rational way. This meant that dinner would be very late and that their whole evening schedule was thrown off. She could open a can of soup.

"You didn't need to yell at me like that," Carole said, finally.

Michael shifted to look at her.

"I'm hungry," he said.

"We could have grilled cheese and soup," she replied.

"Ok.....mom," he said. "Sorry."

Carole knew, even through her rage, that as the adult she needed to find a way to get control of her own angry feelings and understand that something was really bothering her son. If she had screamed at Michael, like she wanted to, she would only be setting a bad example, and he would probably have shut her out for a longer period of time. Carole had to make a decision, she didn't want to contribute to her son's hostile reactions, allowing him to think that this behaviour was acceptable, but she needed him to know that she was not ok. She imposed a calming down time, and gradually, Carole was able to talk in a rational way. Later she would not have to regret her words.

Talking with a teenager can feel like walking through a maze blindfolded, at every turn there is another wall to bump into. Although Carole still hadn't discovered the root of Michael's real problem, at least he was willing to talk with her again.

So, what happens if a parent is having a really bad day? If they can't seem to find the control within themselves to think before they speak. Sometimes we are so tired, having been harassed at work, on the subway

and at home. Teenagers don't usually take into consideration the events of our day, the one's they don't see, that lead us to the breaking point.

Kathy is coming home after a very long day at the office and she feels tired. She has stopped to buy groceries on the way and is hoping that Jason will help her carry them into the house. She calls to her teenage son from the front door, to please help carry the bags in from the car. But he is busy playing computer games on the Internet and he doesn't want to know about her, let alone go outside and carry

Continued on page 12

Kathy needs to be aware that each out of control episode they go through chips away at Jason's confidence and trust in her love and support as a parent.



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OUR READERS SHARE

Yes, you CAN do it!

by Abbey James

Mother's really never know for sure if they are pushing or pulling hard enough. My normally responsible and happy eleven year old was late for school one morning. She claims, "You didn't wake me up in time!" Me? This is my fault? Sure it is, I think. I am her mother. I always wake her up in time. How could I be so negligent? What a bad mother.

Well this normally happy and responsible mother is tired of being a "bad" mother. So I say to my daughter, "You have an alarm clock. You are eleven. You set the clock to give yourself enough time to get ready in the morning. If you miss the bus, you can walk to school. I am not going to be responsible for you getting up in time any more!" She's furious; I'm mad at always being bad. "Do you know how to set the clock?" I ask, not sure I am being totally reasonable. "Of course I do!" she screams.

The next morning I am waiting. Waiting to hear the alarm clock go off. It does, out of bed she flies. She's bathed, dressed and down for breakfast is good time. She makes her lunch, her bed and packs her backpack. She's feeling pretty proud.

Me too. b



Teen talk? continues

Continued from page 11

bags of food. He ignores her and she snaps.

Kathy is aware that her emotions are out of control. It doesn't matter, she thunders into her son's room, leaving the groceries on the floor by the door.

"You lousy, self-centred kid," she yells. "I do everything for you and you can't even help me carry some f-king bags of groceries. You can buy your own food from now on.....I'm done taking care of you."

And with that said, Kathy leaves the room.

Jason thinks, 'screw you, I will buy my own food.' He thinks maybe he should help his mom, but he doesn't want to be yelled at anymore, so he stays in his room. His feelings have been hurt and he's shocked that his mother would yell at him like that. It makes him uneasy; he isn't exactly sure what to do. The message he gets is that it's ok to yell and bully someone you love. The trust he had that his mother was a safe person, has been slammed. The experience leaves him feeling alone and

guilty. He decides that the best way to protect himself is to withdraw into his own world and away from his mother. He stays shut in his bedroom. Now there is no communication between them.

Many hours later, Kathy comes to Jason's room to apologize. She feels terrible for having yelled at him. She has made dinner and invites him to come to the table. Jason shrugs. He accepts her apology and she hugs him around the neck. She is lucky he let her into his room. Jason isn't a bad kid, just a self-absorbed teenager, who still needs his mom. The problem is, that he won't forget what happened. He will be unsure of how extreme his mother's reactions might be and he may decide that it's safer not to tell her much. Kathy will lose a connection in her son's life, when he still needs her very much. Kathy needs to be aware that each out of control episode they go through chips away at Jason's confidence and trust in her love and support as a parent. b