

PSYCHOLOGY FOR
Living
FALL 2005

**Four Keys to Success
in the Stepfamily**

Also In This Issue:



- **How To Handle Anger**
- **Helping Children Who Don't Like Change**
- **Honoring A Vision & Serving God's Servants**

Serving God's Servants

by Dr. Bruce Narramore

One of my uncle Clyde Narramore's favorite scripture verses is Galatians 6:2: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." In many ways, this has been Dr. Clyde's lifetime mission. He has shared the good news of Christ with those who do



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

not know the Lord and he has helped bear the burdens of God's children through more than 50 years of personal counseling, writing, teaching, speaking and radio ministry.

Every day I am grateful to Dr. Clyde and to Ruth, his wonderful wife and partner in ministry. Together they have touched literally millions of people around the world. I am also humbled by the opportunity to follow in his footsteps in leading the ministries of the Narramore Christian Foundation for the next generation.

Of all of the ministries that Clyde and Ruth have founded, the ones that are closest to their hearts are the Narramore Christian Foundation's ministries to missionaries, pastors, and the sons and daughters of missionaries returning to the United States for college.

Every year hundreds, if not thousands of missionaries and pastors and their children are touched by these ministries. Missionaries from twelve countries are coming to Chiang Mai, Thailand, to seek Christian counseling in order to cope with stress, trauma, and all sorts of personal, emotional and

relational problems.

MKs from more than 20 countries around the world come to Southern California each summer for two weeks of intensive training and counseling to help smooth their transition to life in the U.S. away from their parents and friends in the countries they know as home. And many pastors and missionaries are taking training in counseling and missionary member-care, as well as receiving personal counseling at NCF retreats and training seminars.

This Fall the Narramore Christian Foundation is initiating a major campaign to be sure that these life changing ministries continue for generations to come. We are establishing a permanent endowment to honor Dr. Clyde and Ruth Narramore and to carry on and expand their wonderful ministries to pastors and missionaries and their children. I invite you to turn to page 15 of this issue of *Living for* more details, and to seriously consider helping us establish the endowment that will enable us to continue serving God's servants around the world.

All gifts to the endowment will be carefully invested and each year the income from the endowment will be used to enable MKs to receive reentry training, and for pastors and missionaries to receive much needed counseling and training that will enable them to stay in their ministries and effectively serve the Lord and His people. The endowment will grow as NCF friends and supporters add to it through periodical gifts, their wills, or through deferred giving arrangements. In time this fund will allow us to serve thousands of additional families in ministries both here in the U.S. and in difficult, demanding areas of the world. ☞

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3** How To Handle Anger
by Dr. Bruce Narramore
- 6** Four Keys To Success In
The Stepfamily
by Eileen Rife
- 9** The Barber Of Civility
by Clifford E. Denay, Jr.
- 10** Helping Children Who Don't
Like Change
by Dr. Doreen Dodgen-Magee
- 12** Moving Between Cultures:
Understanding Missionaries'
Transition Challenges
by Richard J. Geham
- 17** Why Do You Put So Much Pressure
On Yourself
by Kathy Collard Miller
- 19** Mental Health News
- 21** Ask Dr. Narramore
by Bruce Narramore
- 19** Letters
- 22** NCF In Action

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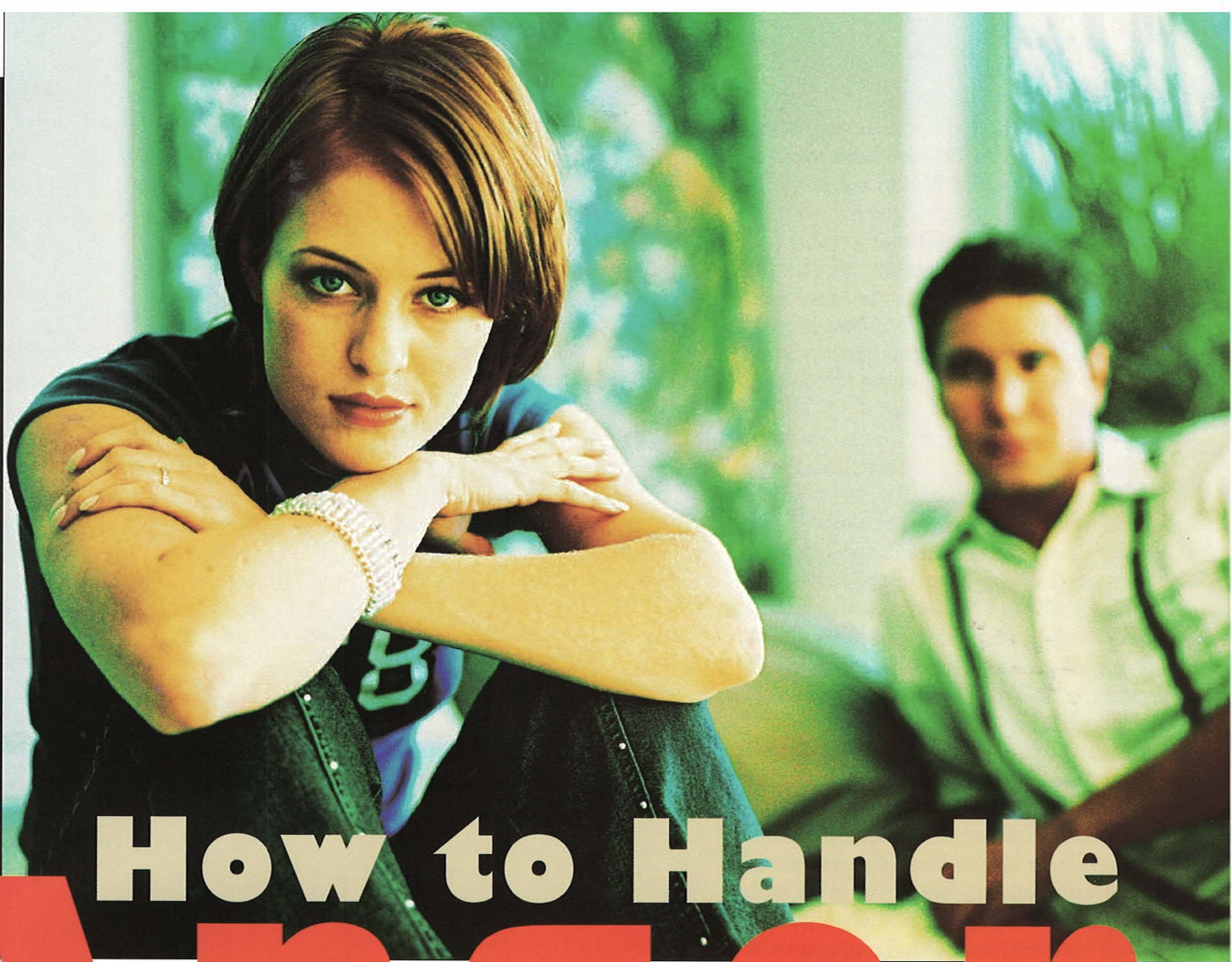
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How to Handle **Anger**

by **Dr. Bruce Narramore**

When six-year-old Chris shoved his brother out of his way, Chris's dad yelled, "Stop that," and gave Chris an angry swat on the rear. Chris dropped his head, began to cry and walked away. His dad felt badly for losing control of his temper.

Many of us are like Chris's dad. We periodically lose our tempers, act impulsively, and later regret our hurtful actions. We know our outbursts are hurtful but we don't know how to stop.

This cycle doesn't have to continue. We can take specific steps to avoid acting on anger in hurtful ways.

1. Restrain Your First Impulse

The Bible says, "A fool always

loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back" (Prov. 29:11, *NASB*). So to restrain your first impulse, count to ten—or to a thousand if you must! Bite your lip. Walk away. But don't act out your first angry impulse. If you think you can't do this, imagine if I offered you one million dollars if you avoided losing your temper in an upsetting situation. I suspect you would find a way to restrain your angry impulse!

2. Count the Cost

When we lose our temper and act or speak impulsively, someone always ends up being hurt. An Eastern sage put it this way: "He who harbors a

grudge should dig two graves." (Meaning one for the person we wish were dead and the other for ourself.) Anger hurts others and it hurts us. It undercuts our children's self-confidence and self-esteem. It causes problems at work, school, in the community, and between nations.

Anger will also eat you up. It hurts you as much as it does the person you are angry at. It alienates you from others and causes family problems, stress, anxiety, and guilt. Thinking about the price you and others pay for poorly handled anger increases your incentive to control your anger.

3. Find a Safe Person

Anger is like a boiling teapot. When we become really angry we ►

may need to let off some steam so we don't boil over. The next time you are about to lose control, find somebody to talk with. Let them know how you feel and why. Let off some steam. Tell the Lord as well. He wants us to pour our hearts out to Him. As His Word says, "This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin" (Hebrews 4:15, *NLT*).

When our children were growing up, my wife Kathy's best friend was Alice Hill.

When Kathy got upset with me or with our son Richard and was in danger of reacting hurtfully, she would phone Alice. One day Kathy called and told Alice, "Dickie is driving me crazy. I could ring his neck." When Alice asked, "Why?" Kathy quickly replied, "Because he is acting just like his father!" Already she felt better. Then they both began to laugh. Kathy was overreacting to Richard because she and I had some unfinished business. Once she realized that her problem was with me she could relax with Richard. Telling someone how we feel not only relieves the pressure to act inappropriately. It can also give us understanding into the problem and a different perspective.

4. Find a Good Place

My wife and I are both intense people. Early in our marriage we had our share of arguments. Sometimes we lost control and said things or spoke in ways that weren't constructive. One of us would get upset, blame the other, and things went downhill from there. We finally realized that we needed a better way to handle our disagreements so we started setting aside one evening each week to go out for dinner. Often they were wonderful, pleasant evenings. Sometimes we had to talk over potentially upsetting topics. But by doing that in a restaurant, we found we had to keep our voices down and speak respectfully so we wouldn't look foolish in public!

The restaurant helped us learn to discuss our conflicts more quietly. It doesn't need to be a restaurant but we

all need to set aside a good time and place that is conducive to calm and thoughtful discussions.

5. Take Responsibility for Your Feelings

Have you ever said, "He makes me so mad?" Most of us have. But if you stop to think about it, no one can "make" us angry. No one can drill a hole in our skull, pour in some "mad powder," and ignite it. People do things to which we respond with anger but they cannot "make" us angry.

Taking responsibility for our own feelings is one of the most important keys for handling angry feelings. True, others do things to which we respond with anger. But they cannot "make" us angry. They are responsible for their actions but we are responsible for our emotional reactions. As long as we continue blaming others we will not learn to control our own emotions.

6. Mellow Out

Sometimes it isn't enough to just restrain our first impulse. We need to take a good bit of time to calm down. We may need to go for a long walk, put on some classical music, dig in the garden, scrub the tile or take the dog around the block. Different things work for different people, so find what works for you. Do something to work off your energy or relax yourself so that you can mellow out. If you cannot temporarily control your anger at one of your children, step away and let your spouse handle the situation until you cool off.

7. Reevaluate Your First Assumption

We have a tendency to overreact when we are angry. We also tend to distort other people's motives and engage in strictly black and white thinking. Our mate whispers a criticism or "suggestion" and we think they are shouting. Our mate overlooks something important to us and we conclude they don't care. Or our mate acts in a way that is upsetting to

us and we think or say, "You always do this," or "You never do that."

Instead of assuming that your mate doesn't care, or that he or she purposely wants to hurt you, or "never" does what you want, ask yourself if your initial conclusion might be a bit overdone. Perhaps your mate wasn't really "shouting." Perhaps your mate cared but was very busy, tired, or preoccupied. Or perhaps your mate is usually thoughtful and observant but just not today.

Try giving the other person the benefit of the doubt. Since we are all at least a little self-centered, we can easily distort the other person's motives and make things a lot worse than they really are. So stop and reevaluate. Let in another perspective. Reevaluate your first assumption. And watch out for "all" or "none" thinking. Don't let your anger wipe out your memory of all the good things in your relationship.

8. Express Your Feelings in a Non-destructive Way

Handling anger well doesn't mean that we repress or deny our feelings. Sometimes angry feelings need to be expressed, but they need to be expressed in a constructive way.

Don't give "you" messages. Give "I" messages. Instead of saying, "You make me angry." Say "I am feeling angry." "I am angry." Or "When you do that, I feel hurt and angry." Then ask for the other person's help. I messages avoid blaming and putting the other person on the defensive. They lead to calmer, more constructive communications. And they indicate that we are taking responsibility for our own reactions.

9. Address the Real Problem

Anger is usually a symptom. It reflects our frustrated desires or wishes or it grows out of hidden hurts, hypersensitivity or other personal weaknesses. When you are feeling angry, ask yourself, "What is



triggering my angry feelings?" "Am I overly sensitive to criticism?" "Do I tend to feel unloved so I easily feel rejected?" "Do I have poor self-esteem and feel a lot of guilt so if anybody says 'you should' it's like pouring gasoline on a fire?" Or am I being selfish and demanding, expecting everyone to do or say exactly what I want?

10. Let God Be God

At its core, most anger reflects a desire for revenge. Someone has hurt us, frustrated us, or upset us and we want to get even. But the Bible tells us, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay says the Lord" (Romans 12:19). In His wisdom God has reserved justice to Himself (except for that which He delegates to government leaders).

When you want to get even with someone, remind yourself that if we all got what we deserved, we would be punished for eternity! But God in His mercy took out all of His righteous anger toward each of us on His Son on the cross. He settled the issue of justice so it is not our role to make people suffer because they have hurt us. Leaving justice to God can bring incredible release from angry feelings.

11. Look for What You Can Learn

Most people have their favorite Bible verse. I used to have my most unfavorable. It was Romans 8:28, "For we know that all things work together for good to them who love God and are called according to His purpose." I thought there was only one worse verse in the Bible. That was "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thessalonians 5:18). Haven't you heard Christians naively mention those verses when something horrible has happened? Somebody died or there was a serious car accident and instead of feeling sympathetic somebody says "Praise the Lord." "All things work together for good."

This, or course, is a serious misunderstanding of these verses. I Thessalonians doesn't say for everything give thanks. A better translation is in everything give thanks. If your son is on drugs, or your daughter is pregnant out of wedlock, God doesn't want you to thank Him for this. You should feel sad and concerned. But God wants you to know that even in the most difficult situations, He is still working and wants to bring good for you out of a bad situation. This is why we thank God for His presence and care. He is working in even our most difficult experiences to help us grow, learn, and become healthier, happier people.

Don't let yourself be a victim. When something triggers your anger, use it to understand yourself and grow through it. God can use upsetting circumstances to help you become a more Christ-like person. ➔

Four Keys to Success in the Stepfamily

by Eileen Rife

Mack and Abby had only been married a few months when the conflict started. A second marriage for both, they had faced each other at the altar with new hope and visions of a bright future together. What could possibly go wrong?

Seven months later they were finding out. The love they had for one another was being tested on every front. Susan, Mack's teenage daughter, quarreled increasingly with Abby. Abby's son, Jake, an honor roll student, was now failing subjects and cutting classes. The picture-perfect family Mack and Abby had envisioned began to crumble in front of their eyes. They wondered if their marriage had been the right thing in the first place.

When you consider the profile of the stepfamily, it's no wonder that parents and children face some big adjustments. The stepfamily originates out of loss, either from death or divorce, with the focus of this article on the latter. Two fully developed, often diverse sets of traditions occur in stepfamilies. Furthermore, the parent-child bond predates the couple's relationship making discipline a major source of contention. Family roles and rules may be blurred. Parents and children in stepfamilies may lack legal relationship. One parent lives elsewhere, thus children are moved between two households. In some marriages, one partner may become an instant parent with no prior parenting experience.

How can a stepfamily work



through these challenges and take progressive steps toward health? Four keys can unlock the door and start your stepfamily on the path to success.

Build a Strong Marriage

More than any other factor, the love you model will breed security and self-esteem in your children. Building and maintaining your growing marriage should be priority number one. Healthy couples honestly confront challenges as they arise while keeping

things in perspective. You have children for only a few years, but you have each other for a lifetime. Don't allow children's issues to overwhelm your marriage relationship. Keep your lines of communication open. Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 5:15). Respect each other's opinion. Don't compare your mate with a previous spouse nor fall prey to spouse bashing. Keep your communication positive and solution-focused. Decide what isn't working and discover what is. Then form a plan of action.

Activities such as daily devotions and weekly date nights are important in every marriage, but especially vital in a remarriage where spouses are stretched thin by the obligations of two households and the tension that often ensues. Many spouses reserve fifteen minutes at the close of every workday as "couple time." In successful remarriages, couples learn to manage anger toward former spouses. Instead of directing the anger toward their current mates, they set boundaries. They may feel angry, but choose not to take out that anger to damage their mates, kids, ex-spouses, or themselves. They also decide early on how much they will share about their former spouses. Refusing to communicate when hungry, angry, lonely, or tired, they establish space for themselves as well as their mates until they can more objectively discuss issues. Church attendance, accountability partners, and friendships with other couples provide incentive to get through tough days as a stepfamily. Laughter makes life look less threatening and will help your children feel more secure in your love for one another and for them.

Maintain a Spirit of Cooperation Between Households

For the sake of your children, households need to be as amiable as possible, placing your children's needs above feelings toward your ex-spouse. There should be no negative messages about the birth parent. Parents should ask questions such as, "How do we maintain contact between our child and a birth parent who lives elsewhere? How often? (In

many cases, the courts have already decided this.) How often will you and your ex talk? In person? On the phone? Is there anything said at one house that can make it easier on the other household?" When parents work together, the kids are far less likely to play one against the other because all parents involved in the children's lives present a united front.

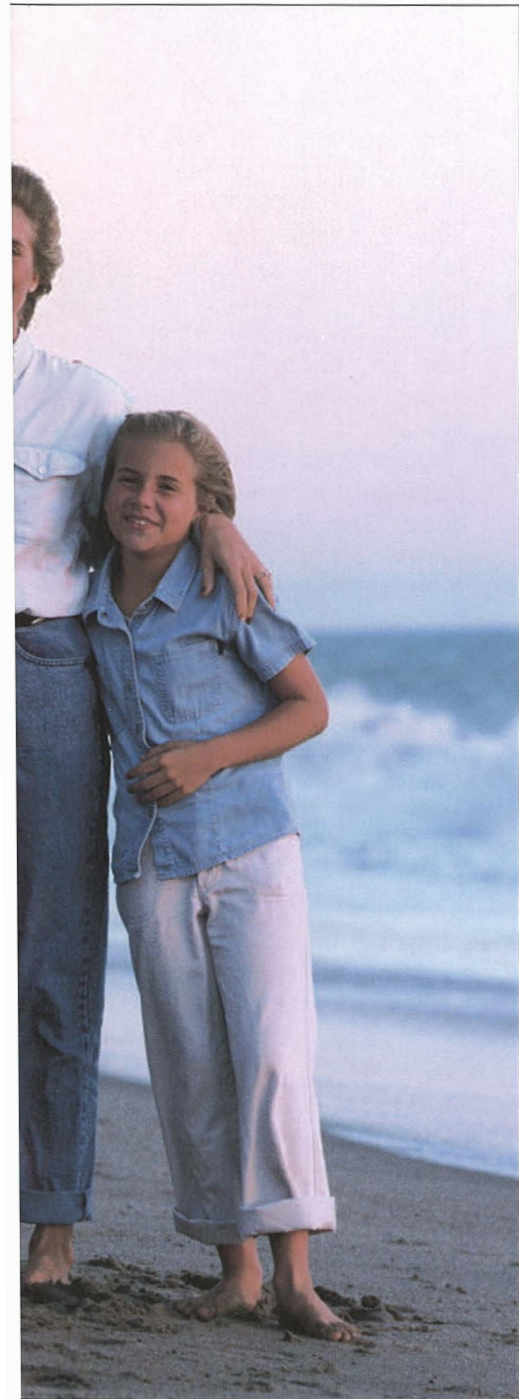
Carla Barnett, licensed professional counselor, mother of three children and stepmom of two, suggests that gatherings where kids can see their biological parents getting along contribute greatly to their security and well-being. It is a special benefit when all parties involved put bitterness behind and participate in an occasional shared activity, or holiday dinner.

A parent must not retaliate if and when an ex exhibits abusive speech. You have little or no control over what the other parent is saying, but you can control your responses and defuse the flame on your end. Praying with the child for the ex can soften sour attitudes.

Carla shares that the best advice she gives a stepfamily is, "For the sake of the children, let go of bitterness, exercise forgiveness, and walk in love."

Establish an Effective Order of Discipline

Agreeing on discipline in the stepfamily is one of the toughest issues the home faces. David Mortellaro, clinical director of Associates in Brief Therapy, says that it is crucial to develop a solution-focused approach. When a stepfamily walks into his counseling office, stressed over kids, the counselor's first questions are, "What are you doing now? Is it working? If not, why? What can you do that does work?" Together, the couple discusses the possibilities. Dave encourages compromise, recognizing the many adjustments a stepfamily must make. Often the birth parent who has custody of the children ends up playing the heavy while the ex who only has weekend visitation rights offers recreation. One frustrated father acknowledged that he saw his kids so seldom, he wanted to create happy memories of fun times together, ►



rather than discipline them the entire weekend, even though he admitted that they needed it.

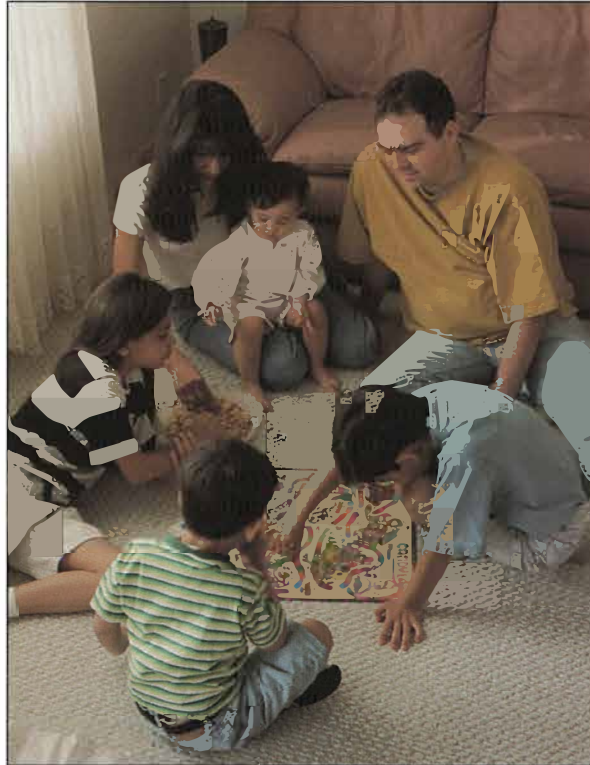
Unraveling issues and working on one at a time is critical for change to occur. Each spouse must clarify his position and come to a place of agreement on which issue to focus on first. Then the solution (game plan) can be put in writing and signed, holding spouses accountable to follow through with the given assignment until they meet again with their counselor. Dave acknowledges that if couples are faithful to work on strategies, change can take place. If they don't, they develop a pattern of improving and regressing. As Dave says, "No matter what the circumstances, real solutions begin with willingness on the part of both for lasting change."

Sometimes the birth parent and child have spent years together before the remarriage. The parent/child bond is so tight, the new couple has trouble establishing a strong bond. Again, it is critical to protect the marriage, since this is the foundation for a strong home. Couples who keep their marriage strong are more likely to generate kids who eventually come on board and cooperate. The children will most definitely test all parties involved to discern any loopholes they can slip through.

Natalie Gillespie, author of *The Stepfamily Survival Guide* encourages parents to find common ground in parenting styles and discipline. She urges parents/stepparents to schedule a time to sit down in a neutral setting and discuss the children's issues, activities, and rules of conduct. Parents who have the child's best interest at heart will reinforce the other parent when the child is in his home. Furthermore, she encourages parents to always seek the other parent's side of the story when a child shares a complaint. Gillespie, a stepmom herself, maintains that "children who have boundaries that do not shift

from home to home are the happiest and most secure children in both homes."¹

Charles Rife, licensed professional counselor with Total Life Counseling, Inc., admits that it takes time and



patience on the part of all to see kids in line with the new game plan. All parents need to be firm fence posts because "the cows will get out where the fence is the weakest". The birth parent (regardless of sex) is the one who speaks, lays out directives, while the stepparent is the cheerleader. Once you attain consistency parents can take turns calling the plays. Birth parents living in other households need to work with primary caregivers to hold children accountable to new standards. That provides the most consistency.


Get Help

Frequently, because stepfamilies have so many diverse issues, it takes a third party to help unravel and map out a plan of action. This help can take the form of books, marriage/parenting seminars, pastoral care, support groups, and in more difficult

cases, professional counseling. Seek Christian counselors who adhere to God's plan for the marriage and home and are sensitive to spiritual as well as relational and emotional issues.

Natalie Gillespie offers several good suggestions for support in her book, *The Stepfamily Survival Guide*. She recommends locating or starting a class for stepfamilies at your church. Announce a stepfamily function, such as a picnic in the park or game time, in your church bulletin or website. Host a stepfamily web page where families can chat, place announcements or ask questions. Start a prayer chain, Bible study, or babysitting co-op among stepfamilies in your local church. Gillespie maintains that stepfamilies need all the support and fellowship they can get, because so much is going against them from the get-go.²

Other good resources for the stepfamily include, Ron Deal's book, *The Smart Stepfamily: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family*; "Kids Hope", a divorce recovery seminar led by Gary Sprague; *Stepfamilies: Love, Marriage, and Parenting in the First Decade*, by Dr. James H. Bray (psychologist) and John Kelly; the Boundaries series of books, audio products, and seminars created by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend.

Employing these four keys to success in your stepfamily can help you move beyond those first years of intense struggle to a growing family relationship that stands the test of time. 

¹Natalie Gillespie, *The Stepfamily Survival Guide*, Revell, 2004, p.78.

²*ibid.*, pp.206-208.

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The Barber of Civility

by Clifford E. Denay, Jr.

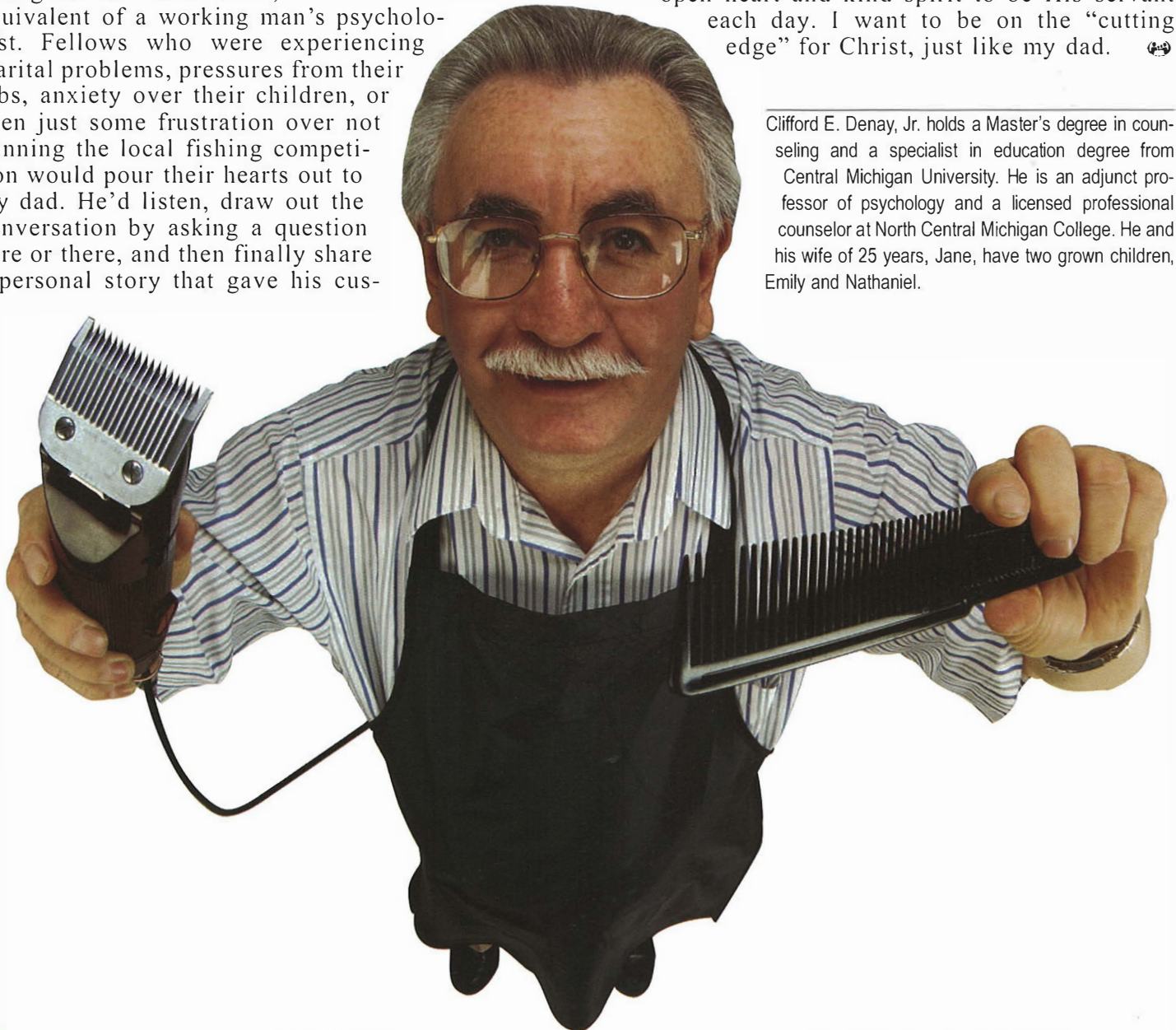
You've heard about people who have to think on their feet. Well, my dad did that for more than 40 years. He was a barber in a small Michigan town where he cut the hair of everyone from the school principal to the grocery store manager, from the shoe salesman to the crippled war vet, from the town dentist to the garage mechanic.

Ostensibly, folks came to my dad for a shave or trim. As often as not, they were also seeking a listening ear. In a small town, the barber was the equivalent of a working man's psychologist. Fellows who were experiencing marital problems, pressures from their jobs, anxiety over their children, or even just some frustration over not winning the local fishing competition would pour their hearts out to my dad. He'd listen, draw out the conversation by asking a question here or there, and then finally share a personal story that gave his cus-

tomers a feeling of encouragement. Often, he would even prompt a hearty laugh. People went away with "lowered ears" and lifted hearts.

When dad passed away at 81, the minister referred to him as "Christ-like" in his kindness, patience, and outward concern for others. That humbled me. You see, I have seven years of university training as a professional counselor, with numerous endorsements and licenses. Yet, without being "Christ-like," I would be less effective than the town barber in helping others. I pray that God will grant me an open heart and kind spirit to be His servant each day. I want to be on the "cutting edge" for Christ, just like my dad. ☞

Clifford E. Denay, Jr. holds a Master's degree in counseling and a specialist in education degree from Central Michigan University. He is an adjunct professor of psychology and a licensed professional counselor at North Central Michigan College. He and his wife of 25 years, Jane, have two grown children, Emily and Nathaniel.



Jacob is typically a happy, bright five-year-old but recently he has begun digging his heels in every morning before going to kindergarten. "He loves school," his baffled mother says. And "once we're there he's happy. But getting out of our home has become a nightmare. He has tied his own shoes for a year. Now, when I ask him to get his shoes on, he cries or stomps his foot and yells, 'I'm waiting for you to do it.' I have a baby to take care of so I can't just drop everything to tie his shoes!" Making a smooth transition from home to school is seeming like an unattainable goal.

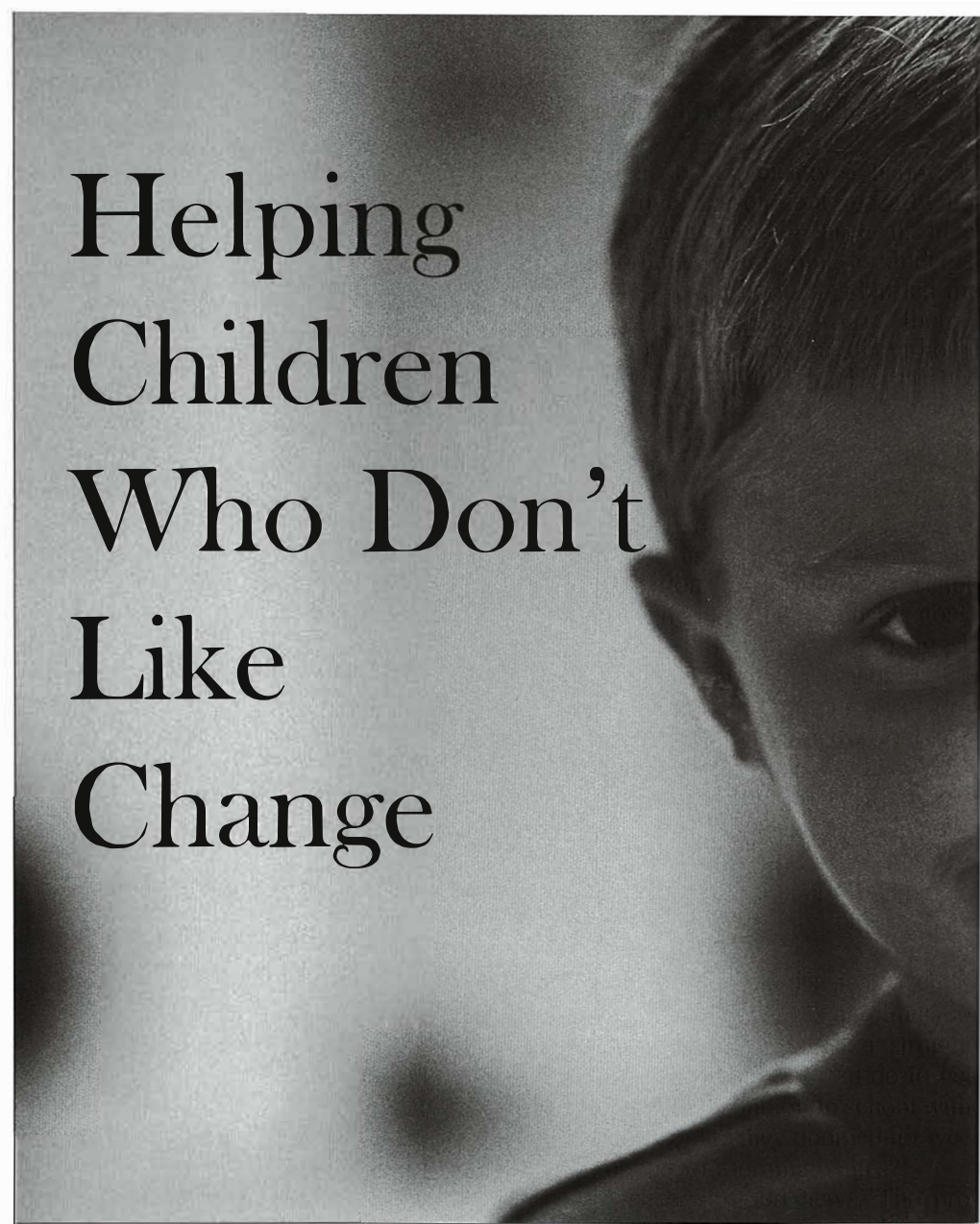
Transitions come in many shapes and sizes. Some are small, like departing home for a morning away, or large, as in moving from one school, home or city to another. And while every child handles change differently many have strong feelings about change. Some relish the thought of moving from one activity to the next or from one location to another. Others balk, resist and refuse.

How can parents help a child like Jacob when changes and transitions in his life become such a struggle? Is there anything they can do to get him out the door and off to school without a hassle or are they doomed for weeks or months of morning battles?

There is good news. The problem can be solved—probably relatively quickly. But it will take some carefully thought out sensitivity and planning on the part of Jacob's parents. Here are some guidelines that will help!

Understand

Before you can help your child negotiate change, you need to be comfortable with change yourself. Ask yourself how comfortable you are moving from one setting to another when you don't want to. How do you manage your emotions when you are upset about a transition? How do you feel when you want to change an activity and your child won't cooperate? Do you, like Jacob, throw your own little tantrums? Or can you be aware of feeling strongly but you talk it over and



Helping Children Who Don't Like Change

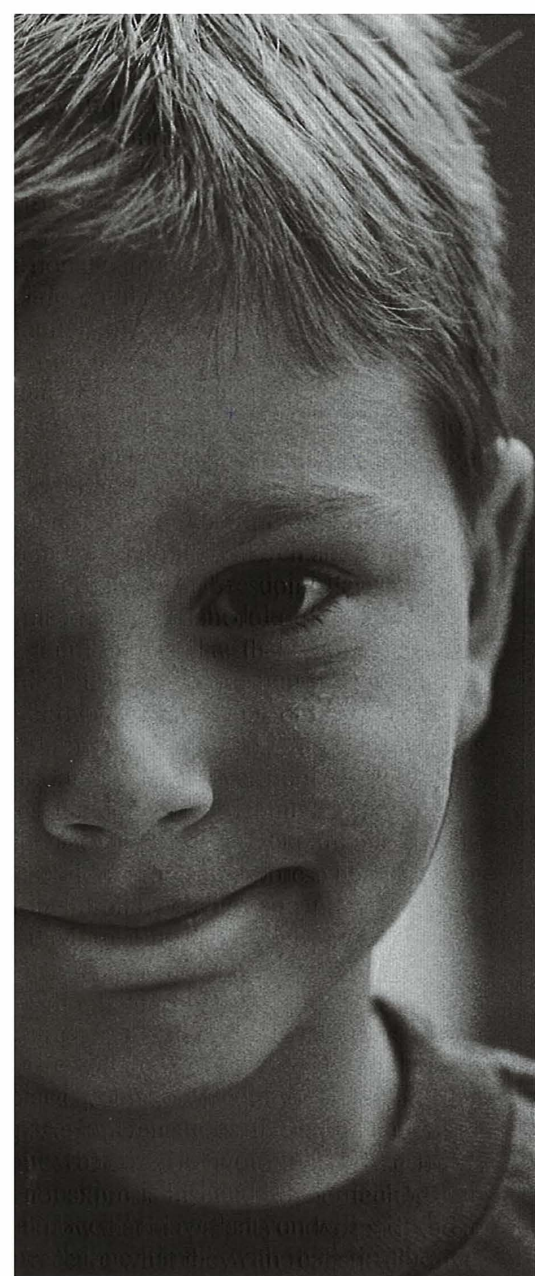
work it out? Answering questions like this can help you understand how your child may be feeling and what it may take for him to adapt more flexibly.

Think about previous transitions that you and your child have gone through together. Have you had difficulty before? If so, was it related to your child's temperament or ability to manage her emotions? Were the changes too sudden or traumatic? Have you or your child gotten into habits that perpetuate power struggles over who will get their way when changes arrive?

Sometimes difficulties with transitions have more to do with power struggles than they do with the transition itself. It is inevitable that our children will want us to fulfill their needs

and wishes but sometimes we must say no. When our limit setting leads to a power struggle we need to get underneath the surface of the struggle to see why either we or our child feel like we have to "win" rather than cooperate. The Bible tells us "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). Our outer acts are caused by our inner lives. Often children are unhappy for some reason we can't understand or they are not feeling heard or understood. Once we understand how our children are feeling we can help them manage their emotions or communicate their wishes appropriately instead of through a tantrum or a struggle for power.

The clue to why Jacob was suddenly



upset is that he has a new baby sister and his negativism about leaving home came after her arrival.

To some degree Jacob has been (and feels) pushed aside. Not only does Jacob now have to share his parents' affection, his mom's demanding new responsibilities make her less available to Jacob. Where once he was the sole recipient of his parents' affections and attention, now he has to share these. Being observant, Jacob realizes that his baby sister gets attention because she is a helpless baby. Since mother has to dress the helpless baby, Jacob decides that if he becomes more baby-like (e.g., needing his mom to tie his shoes), he will gain more of mom's attention. And sure enough, it works. It isn't positive

attention. But negative attention beats no attention at all!

Once Jacob's mother realizes this, she can address the real problem. She can anticipate Jacob's need for emotional contact and find ways of connecting with him. She might decide to fit small bursts of one-on-one time into the morning or she might decide to get Jacob up a bit earlier so they can have a few moments of snuggle time before baby needs to be fed. Or she might decide that tying Jacob's shoes for a week or two wouldn't necessarily mean she's coddling him. Instead it might give him just the support he needs to head to school more confidently. By letting Jacob know that she understands his need for more morning mothering and her plan and commitment to follow through on it, Jacob's upset emotions about leaving for school will probably settle down significantly.

Jacob's mom and dad might also consider helping him express his desire for attention more directly and with words. ("Mom, I'm feeling left out." or "Dad, I'm wanting some attention before school.") If they do this, there is an even greater likelihood that Jacob's acting out will decrease.

The important thing here is not that Jacob always gets the extra attention he feels he needs but rather that he learns to express his needs and feelings, to know that his parents understand, and to receive what they can realistically give. Sometimes even a simple, "I know you want more attention right now. I want to give it to you and yet we need to get moving," communicates to the child that you hear him, that his wishes are important to you, and that you take him seriously. The Lord told the Israelites through Isaiah "as one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you" (Isaiah 66:13).

Just as it is not helpful for children to always have their wishes gratified, it is also detrimental to deny them the opportunity to communicate and understand their needs and feelings. If Jacob's mother can help him become aware of his wishes for attention and show him appropriate ways of requesting that, she will do him a great favor that will last a lifetime, including in his marriage!

Jacob will learn to calmly and directly express his emotions, needs, and wishes rather than fighting, blaming, or feeling misunderstood.

Plan

Children thrive when there is predictability in their world. Daily rituals and routines are extremely important for a child's growth and emotional regulation. Bed times, meal times, even quiet rest times are excellent opportunities for building predictability and structure into the home life of your child. When you talk with children about their day's activities you are doing far more than laying out a schedule. You are letting them know what they can expect, what the time and space boundaries will be, and your expectations of them. This gives them time to think and plan ahead. And when you talk through potentially difficult transitions and make a plan together you are giving your children tools at a time when they can best conceptualize and prepare to use them ... outside of the heat of the moment.

Prepare

Once you understand and have a plan in place, you should help your children prepare for transitions by letting them know what each of you will do when the transition is at hand. You might let your "Jacob" know that you will spend some "alone time" with him in the morning. Then he will get dressed while you feed the baby. Then he will get his books and papers. Then you will drive him to school. Then you will give him a big hug when he gets out of the car. Then stick with your pre-made plans.

Sometimes longer-term preparations need to be made. If your child has major difficulties managing his emotions or communicating when he is upset, you may need to do some "training" over the course of a few weeks. This might include role-playing games aimed at teaching your child to soothe his upset emotions or communicate his difficult feelings directly by reading age appropriate books that highlight characters who are developing these desired skills.

Children, continued on page 20 ►

Moving Between Cultures: Understanding Missionaries' Transition Challenges



by **Richard J. Gehman**

The Lord called us to Africa in the 1950s. Extensive cross-cultural ministry training served us well when we arrived in Kenya in 1966. But when we were set to furlough in the United States, no one suggested that we would suffer culture shock. After all, we were just returning home.

What a Shock We Had!

Over the years, however, as we

transitioned back and forth numerous times, we became more adept in making cultural adjustments. We retired in the US last year, yet we are only beginning to come to terms with our bicultural identities. This article reflects on the cultural adjustments missionaries face when transitioning between cultures, especially when returning back to their homes in the United States.

Material Affluence

We never lived as pioneers in the

African bush. Our homes were modest but comfortable. Supplies were not abundant, but adequate. We never suffered materially.

But that first trip home, we suffered cultural apoplexy. Supermarkets with amazing options on every shelf overwhelmed my wife. I found myself emotionally perplexed, perhaps envious, when visiting a former Bible school classmate's magnificent home. In hindsight now I believe it was a very modest American dwelling, but at the time I thought the house was



where we were staying, so we joined a small group. But to our horror, the group was unable to do anything without spending tons of money, or so it seemed. For them it was part of life, but we could not afford it, so we left the group.

Transitioning between poverty-stricken Africa and affluent America has become easier as we learned what to expect. In retirement, however, we still struggle to find our footing in this world of affluence, to know how to live within our means. While most people retire to a smaller income than they had when working, we find it necessary to double the income we had in Africa, and it does not go as far in America!

Still, we can truly say with the hymn writer, "All I have needed thy hand hath provided. Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me." We never lacked anything we needed when serving in Africa, and God is providing for us in retirement in the States. The rich experience of serving cross-culturally is a far greater reward than the monocultural life of most affluent Americans. It is amazing what little we need in order to enjoy life. Africans taught us much in this regard.

Personal Relationships

American culture is individualistic. Most Third World cultures are centered around relationships. As an only child, I grew up learning to be content with privacy and the absence of in-depth relationships with extended family. Living in Kenya for thirty-seven years has changed us so that we now have a felt need for more and deeper relationships than the average American seems to need. African hospitality means you can pop in any time for a visit without prior arrangement. Visits are always welcomed with a cup of tea and a bite to eat. Home fellowship around the table is synonymous with building relationships.

Relationships in America, however, tend to be more superficial and impersonal. Seldom are you invited to someone's home for a meal.

Americans are often too busy for a home visit and home-cooked foods.

These superficial relationships can be painful on home assignment. Meeting good friends from the past involves a hearty handshake and warm smile, an exchange of pleasantries and, after a few moments, a



farewell. That is the depth of the relationship for another four years.

On one home assignment we lived next door to devout Christians from our church. We never once set foot into their house. When we were about to leave and return to Kenya, I thought it desirable to say goodbye so we knocked on their door. They came to the door to say goodbye. But in Kenya it is offensive to greet someone at the door without inviting them in.

Faced with the strange experience of saying goodbye to these friends on the porch, I manifested both the African and American part of me. I felt offended not to be invited inside for a farewell and a word of prayer because I am part African. So I eased (pushed?) myself into their house without their welcome because I am an American. I felt a need to be with them in their house and to have them pray for us. But that did not happen. An African would never force his way into the house. And yet, my feeling a need to enter the house reflected my African enculturation.

Missionaries are half-and-half ►

ostentatious. On one home assignment when a friend picked us up at JFK Airport to take our family back home to Pennsylvania, the spacious van was offensive. The van was actually modest, but in Kenya we were used to squeezing into public vans and taxis that would even leave passengers' limbs hanging out windows and doors. I didn't object to comfortable seating, but why so much wasted space?

During another furlough we wanted to build friendships in the church

people. No African would ever think of us as truly African. But Americans do not understand that although we are Americans by birth and citizenship, we have imbibed another culture. It's been said that bicultural peo-

Africans in their culture have lived close to the spirit world, which intersects the natural world. Both are real and vivid to them. Instead of finding a natural explanation for a certain phenomenon, they find supernatural

Coming to the American church is truly a culture shock. Prayer here simply does not have the meaning it does in Africa. Prayer meetings have all but disappeared except for the few older people who gather during a weekday when all the hale and hearty are engaged in other activities. When prayer is part of a mid-week service, the other activities, including the Bible study, consume most of the time. At best prayer may consume ten to fifteen minutes including prayer requests and arrangements for prayer. Here we have all kinds of human solutions, from medical doctors to psychiatrists, from scientists to sociologists. Dependence on God is not so deeply felt. In Africa people are more conscious of their dependence on God and the value of prayer.

I remember my shock and annoyance on our first home assignment when our Bible school class had a reunion in our house. The class president questioned whether prayer was needed before refreshments since it was not a real meal. It was supposed to be a joke, but the hilarity was both foreign and offensive to me. We *always* give thanks for all things; we learned that in Africa.



ple are the happiest in an airplane, flying from one culture to another. Not fully at home in either culture, we are gifted in transitioning between them.

In retirement we are now faced with life in America. We must reach out to others by welcoming them into our lives via our home. Otherwise, a valuable biblical lesson learned in Africa will be forever lost on our part: "Practice hospitality" (*Romans 12:13*). "Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it" (*Hebrews 13:1, 2*).

Modes of Spirituality

Personalities differ as do cultural expressions of spirituality. When observing the piety of others cross-culturally, we are prone to make exaggerated judgments, either in elevated praise or depreciating criticism. As Jesus warned us, "Do not judge or you will be judged" (*Matthew 7:1*).

explanations. No germ leads to an illness, nor does a person die from a car accident. Behind all sickness and death are spiritual agents. For the Westerner, however, the spirit world is at best distant and remote. American evangelicals do believe in it but don't experience it like their African brothers and sisters.

These cultural features have great implications on the modes of spirituality expressed in Christian faith. For Africans, prayer is very meaningful, and they engage in it fervently. African Christians pray before everything, not only before a meal but before taking any cup of tea or morsel of food, before setting out on a trip and when returning safely, whenever someone was sick or in need, before one would leave a friendly visit in a home. All-night prayer meetings were common in churches and in our college. Africans often raised long, beautiful prayers infused with biblical theology.

Conclusion

Transitioning cross-culturally back to our "home" in America will be as great a challenge as when we first went to Africa thirty-seven years ago. It will require humility, love, grace and patience. We will need to identify with the people, come to understand them and love them. We must avoid judgmental criticism that is so easy when dealing with people cross-culturally. And hopefully, after a time we will be able to enter into the lives of our new circle of friends in ways that will bring positive change in others and in ourselves. This transition is always a challenge. But the rewards are great for those who persevere. ☞

Richard J. Gehman served for thirty-seven years in Kenya with the Africa Inland Mission in theological education, eight years as principal of Scott Theological College. Reprinted with permission from *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, April, 2005. Vol. VI, No 2.

Honoring A Vision & Serving God's Servants



Dr. Clyde and Ruth Narramore have served missionaries and pastors around the world for more than 50 years. To honor and extend the Narramore's faithful, visionary ministry the Directors of the Narramore Christian Foundation announce the creation of the

Narramore Endowment Fund for Pastors & Missionaries.

Income from this permanent endowment fund will provide Christian counseling, training and support for thousands of Christian workers and their family members through

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- Free and Low-Fee Counseling for Pastors and Missionaries
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- Reentry Training for the Sons and Daughters of Missionaries
- Vocational Assessment and Counseling
- Training Seminars in Counseling and Missionary Member Care
- On Field Renewal Retreats for Missionaries
- Email and Phone Consultation for Individuals and Agencies

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You can join us in funding this vital endowment while honoring the Narramores through a current gift of cash, stock, or real estate or through your will, trust, or charitable gift annuity. Your investment of any amount, large or small is needed. But we are praying that many will be able to make a current or deferred gift of \$10,000, \$25,000, \$50,000 or more since this is a major challenge above our regular monthly financial support needs. It will bring help around the world to pastors and missionary families. Our initial goal for this ministry fund is \$1,000,000.

YES, I want to help perpetuate this ministry to God's choice families in ministry for years to come and honor Dr. and Mrs. Clyde Narramore for their faithful ministry.

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or Phone us at 800-477-5893 if you would like additional information on making a deferred gift.



Why Do You Put So Much Pressure on Yourself?



by Kathy Collard Miller

Someone has quipped, "A perfectionist is a person who takes great pains...and passes them on to others." I know! I'm a perfectionist! I'm great at making life tense and pressured for myself and others because of my inner drive to make life just right! Many of us think that other people fit that bill, but not ourselves. But take this brief quiz and see if you might have some perfectionist tendencies also.

Read each statement below and

check each one that you relate to. It doesn't have to be in your life 100% of the time in order for you to identify with it. If it seems to describe you often, check it.

- Most of the time I sense God is disappointed with me.
- I spend lots of energy evaluating my performance.
- I tend to think in terms of "all or nothing."
- I think I should have my act together by now.
- My expectations tend to be

unrealistic.

For me, "good" is rarely "good enough."

I often wonder why people can't get their act together: I'm compelled to straighten out misunderstandings.

I won't begin something if there's a possibility I can't do it well.¹

Now, add up your check marks for your score. Score: _____

If you scored three or more of

those statements, you have perfectionist tendencies.

I have given this quiz to more than 2600 women across the United States, and 90% of them scored three or more.

Most of those women were surprised that they had identified perfectionist patterns in themselves.

Causes of Perfectionism

Of course, the logical question is: Why am I this way? There are four primary causes of perfectionism.

Critical and/or Perfectionistic Parents

Highly critical parents always find something they dislike about the child even when the child makes every effort to please the parent. The child then strives for perfection believing that her parents will

give her the love she craves if she can only do a little better.

Danny's mother communicated her perfectionist expectations by quoting this little poem:

"Good better best,
Never let it rest,
'Til your good gets better,
And your better is the best."

You can imagine how Danny felt. He could never be satisfied until he did the very best. He had to measure up to his mother's expectations in order to feel loved.

Abusive or Alcoholic Families

Homes that are abusive—either physically or sexually—sometimes breed perfectionism in the children. Jodie is an incest victim. Her father sexually abused her from the time she was two years old until she was eight when her mother finally had the courage to separate from him.

As the years passed, Jodie's pain expressed itself through perfectionism. Even as a child, she believed that the abuse meant she was a bad person. In her school years, she felt compelled to make straight A's, wear only color-coordinated clothing, keep her room perfectly clean, and never become angry. Perfectionism was her way of saying, "See? I'm not really bad! I am not worthless. I can do good things!" It was also one way Jodie could try to keep control over some areas of her life at a time her father was abusing her and cruelly violating her boundaries.

Temperament/Personality

A person's temperament or personality can be a source of perfectionism. Although any temperament can have perfectionist tendencies, the Analytical/Melancholy temperament is more "naturally" prone to respond in this way. People with this temperament tend to be overly self-critical. This is where my own perfectionism finds its roots.

Childhood Choices

The final cause also contributed to my perfectionism. Past wounds or decisions we make can create perfectionistic tendencies.

With all four causes, the forming of perfectionism can be described this way:

Past event ... leads to ... a Belief which in turn ... leads to ... a Vow which in turn ... leads to ... Self-protective sinful strategies ... which lead to ... Flashback memory reac-

tions.²

For instance, a painful childhood event causes a child to form an incorrect belief that he/she is inadequate or bad. This causes him/her to vow to protect himself or herself. In time that vow solidifies into a deeply ingrained self-protective strategy. This self-protective strategy can then trigger flashback memory reactions in adulthood.

When I was in third grade, I lied to my teacher in the presence of my fellow students (who knew the truth) in an effort to keep my teacher's approval. I then believed, "I'm a liar." In order to avoid the pain of my inadequacies I vowed to protect myself: "I better be perfect so that I can convince other people I'm not really a liar." As other painful things happened, my vow to become perfect in order to protect myself formed sinful self-protective strategies and my perfectionist roots deepened. Now in adulthood, I overreact to any message, either overt or subtle, where someone indicates I'm less than perfect. I feel hurt, ashamed, guilty, or angry.

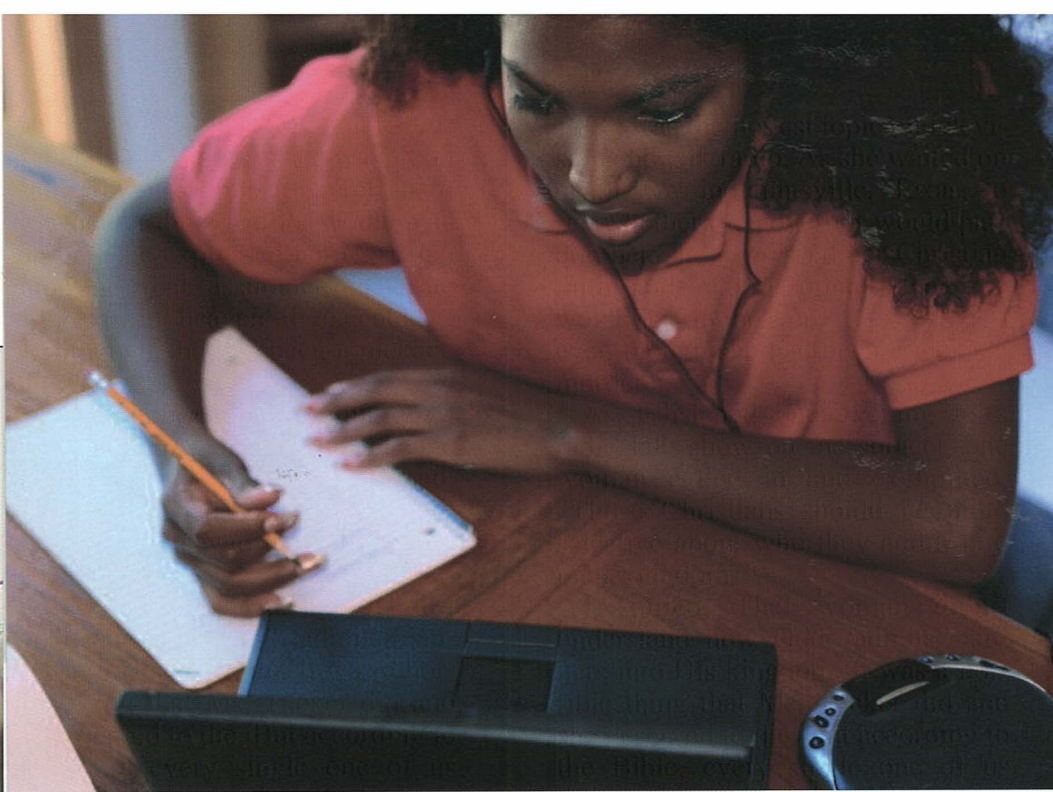
Healing for Perfectionists

Regardless of the causes of perfectionism, it is possible for healing to occur. A powerful tool for that is to "transform" (Romans 12:1-3) our minds from those layers of self-defeating strategies. We need to:

Realize the connection between our reaction and our past wound (Eph. 4:22-24). When we connect painful experiences of the past with our present overreactions, we often have an "Ah-Ha" moment. We can connect the dots by listing all the painful experiences we have had and try to see if our overreactions seem to refer to some pattern of thought and feeling formed years ago.

Recognize the pain. Simple intellectual insight is not enough. For healing to occur, we need to allow ourselves to remember and experience the pain of the past event. Pushing the pain away only keeps it deeply rooted. Experiencing it begins the healing of the wound.

Reject the wrong belief about ►



yourself, God, or life. Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). He takes our painful experiences, whether a parent's rejection or our own choices, and convinces us that we are different than God sees us. If I'd had the wisdom as a child (which really isn't possible) to handle the situation ideally, I could have asked God to forgive me for my lie and reject Satan's accusations that said I would always be a liar.

Renounce the vow. Most of the time, the vow to do better is wrapped in believing I can protect myself from further pain by making myself perfect. But that never works. Only God's grace and acceptance can provide forgiveness and a freedom from believing that I have to perform and become perfect to be accepted (Philippians 1:6). God accepts us exactly as we are.

Repent (turn away) from bitterness toward yourself or the person who hurt you. This may be like peeling an onion: there may be many layers of forgiveness needed. And this can take a good deal of time. But in order to move beyond our childhood wounds we must eventually get to a place of forgiveness.

Rehearse the truth. What does God say about you, your past and your present? (2 Cor. 10:5). Tell yourself

the truth over and over again.

Receive support through the Body of Christ and/or Christian counseling. Many perfectionists find it very difficult to grow out of their drivenness on their own. Since we learned our perfectionistic patterns in close relationships they are best altered in new, healthy, accepting relationships.

Grace Is God's Favor. Another powerful tool for healing of perfectionism is absorbing the truth about God's grace. Grace is the opposite of perfectionism. In fact, perfectionism could be defined as "un-grace" or "dys-grace." Perfection is a form of legalism. It says that we must do or be something to earn God's favor. But God accepts us exactly as we are because Christ has already paid the penalties for our sins and failures. We can experience God's grace-filled love as we meditate on His truth, fellowship with Christians who model His love and acceptance and allow the Word of God to transform us.

Even when we don't feel God's love and grace, we can claim it based on our position in Christ. Titus 3:5 says, "...he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy" (NIV).

That was the experience of Karla Faye Tucker, who in February of

1998, was the hottest topic on television and talk radio. As she waited on death row in Huntsville, Texas, to see whether the governor would pardon her, she expressed her Christian faith and real assurance that she would be in heaven if executed—even though she had been a pickaxe murderer.

As I listened one evening to a radio talk show on the subject, one woman called in and exclaimed, "Those Christians should be more selective about who they admit into their kingdom."

I smiled. That woman didn't understand how God "admits" sinners into His kingdom. It was a horrible thing that Ms. Tucker did and she deserved to die. But according to the Bible, every single one of us deserves the execution Karla Faye Tucker received on February 3, 1998. None of us are selected into heaven based on our worthiness. We are offered unconditional grace and forgiveness and a home in heaven—based on Jesus' dying in our place. Karla Faye indicated that she accepted that grace—even though she didn't deserve it.

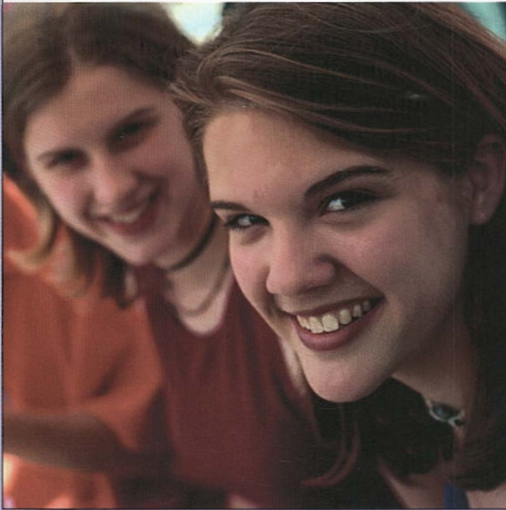
God wants us to know his incredible, unconditional love—because of his unending grace. Someone has said, "There's nothing you can do to make God love you more, and there's nothing you can do to make God love you less." He loves us and wants only the best for us, including our healing from the destructive strategy called perfectionism. ☞

¹*Why Do I Put So Much Pressure on Myself and Others?* by Kathy Collard Miller. Xulon Press, page 13, 2003, Longwood, FL.

²Inspired by Larry Crabb from *Understanding People*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI.

Kathy Collard Miller (www.KathyCollardMiller.com) is a popular speaker both nationally and internationally, and is the author of 48 books including *Partly Cloudy with Scattered Worries*.

Majority of Teens Believe "UNDER GOD" Belongs in the Pledge of Allegiance



According to a recent poll released by the American Bible Society, 82.4% of teenagers believe the words "under God" belong in the Pledge of Allegiance. Perhaps more importantly, nearly two thirds (63%) of the teenagers indicated that they think about the words "under God" while they are reciting the pledge.

The survey was a random sample of 1,000 teenagers from across the 48 contiguous states. The interviewees ranged in age from twelve to seventeen and they were evenly divided by age and gender.

The majority of the teens surveyed (81.9) also believe that the words, "In God We Trust" belong on U.S. currency. And 82.9% think that it is okay to sing God Bless America at sporting events like basketball and baseball games.

This is the fifth annual American Bible Society survey. Earlier studies have looked at teenage spirituality and teenagers' beliefs in the power of prayer as well as what teenagers think about God belonging in the White House.

The American Bible Society is a non-profit, interdenominational organization that works to transform lives, particularly among the young, by promoting personal engagement with the Holy Scriptures. The American Bible Society web site is www.americanbible.org.

MENTAL HEALTH NEWS

Suicide Risk in Schizophrenia

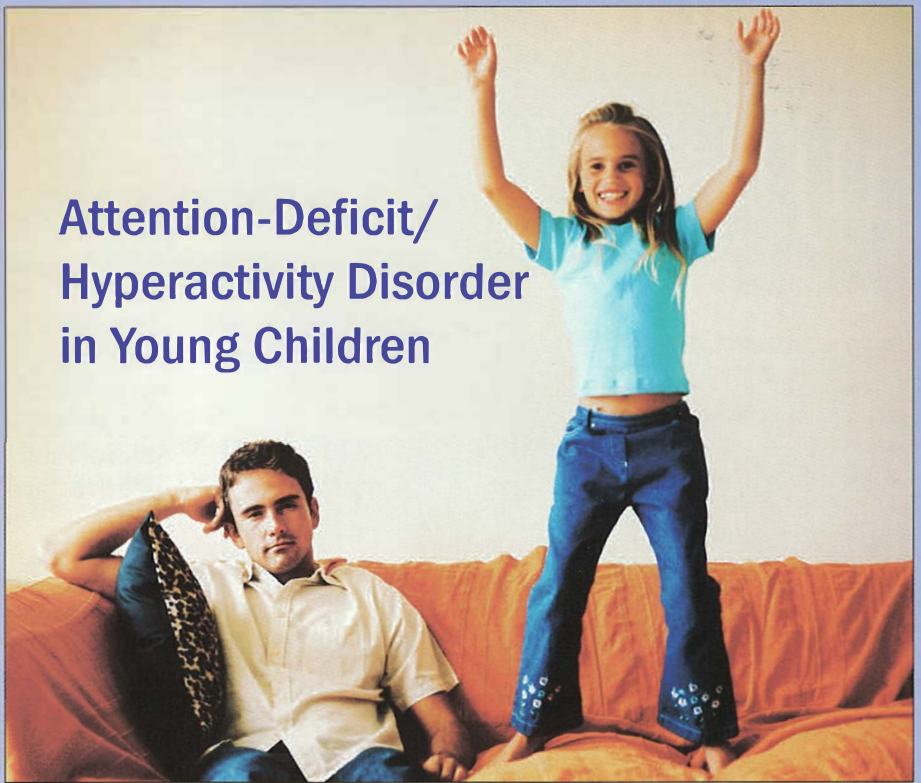
A review of 61 studies involving more than 48,000 patients diagnosed as Schizophrenic shed some important light on the dangers of suicide among this group of individuals. The lifetime suicide risk for groups of schizophrenics who have just been diagnosed and/or hospitalized is three times the suicide rate of groups that include a mix of newly

diagnosed and chronic (long term) schizophrenics.

This data points to the importance of suicide prevention with patients during the early stages of schizophrenia.

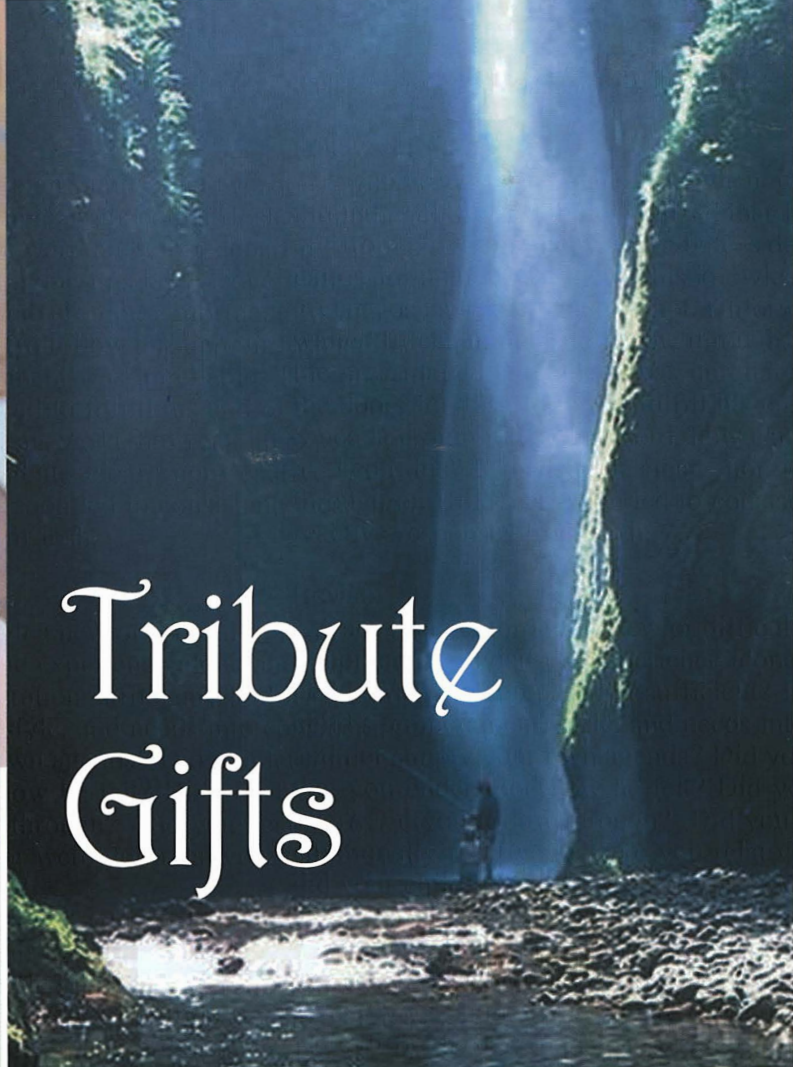
Palmer, B.A., Pankratz, S., and Bostwick, J.M. "The lifetime risk of suicide in schizophrenia: A reexamination." Archives of General Psychiatry, 62:247-253.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Young Children



A three years study of 255 children diagnosed with possible ADHD found that most children who met the criteria for an ADHD diagnosis when they were between four and six years of age continued to have significant impairments in comparison to children who were not diagnosed with ADHD three years later. These children also had more academic and social problems in comparison to the norm group and were seven times more likely to have unintentional injuries than the norm group.

Lahey, B.B., Pelham, W.E., Loney, J., et al. "Three-year predictive validity of DSM-IV attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children diagnosed at 4-6 years of age." American Journal of Psychiatry, 161:2014-2020, 2004.



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Children, continued from page 11

Follow-through

Even the best-laid plans fail when we don't follow through. Bill, for example, realized that Josh would benefit from a five-minute warning before departing one situation for another. Utilizing this knowledge, Bill started giving Josh a five minute prompt. Unfortunately often he waited fifteen minutes to follow through. In Josh's mind, the prearranged agreement was unreliable. This opened the doors for Josh to fail to fulfill his end of the "deal". Since Bill didn't keep his word, how can he expect Josh to keep his? Consistent, clear, non-reactive follow through on Bill's part soon led to consistent, clear, non-reactive responses from Josh.


Revise

Once you get through a new or difficult transition take a moment to revisit the experience alone and with your child. Was your preparation sufficient? Did it take your child's temperament, style, and needs into consideration and not simply your own agenda? Did you let him know that you understood how he felt? Did you have a clear plan? Did you follow through? Did you become overly emotionally reactive or were you relatively calm? How did your child respond?

Discuss the outcome with your child and, if necessary, work out a revised plan for next time. If there are parts of the plan that you failed to follow through on, apologize to your child. If there were portions of the plan that were difficult for you or your child, or that seem unrealistic in hindsight, talk about those things and revise accordingly. There's nothing like the power of example in the realm of communication between parents and children.

Traumatic Transitions

Occasionally a child has a nearly traumatic reaction to a transition. Persistent headaches, stomach aches, dizziness, shortness of breath, strong and chronic worries, a marked reduction in enjoyment of activities, a restricting of social endeavors, an increase in acting out behavior, or a rigid refusal to engage in activities requiring transitions or change may indicate an excessive level of anxiety.

If your child shows one or more of these signs, it may be important to consult with your pediatrician or mental health professional. Excessive anxiety or depression, or extreme resistance to change can impair a child's ability to meet developmental milestones. "Catching" these symptoms early can greatly reduce your children's discomfort and increase their ability to engage actively and happily in the business of childhood. 

Doreen Dodgen-Magee is a licensed psychologist in private practice in Portland, Oregon. She works with adults and has a subspecialty consulting with parents around difficult parenting dilemmas. She is a frequent guest lecturer in professional and parenting circles. She can be reached at doreendm@verizon.net.

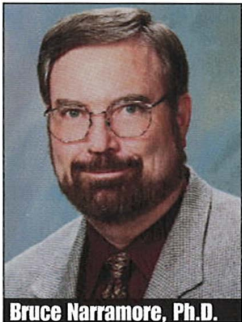
Is Shyness Selfish?

Q: *Is being shy all about self? Is it pride? I read a Christian's take on this and he said it was "all about self-self-self."*

I have struggled with shyness for years, since childhood as a matter of fact. Could you give me some insight into this?

I have you in my prayers.

Sincerely,



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

A. Thanks for your questions about shyness. I was sorry to hear of the material you read saying shyness is "all about self-self-self."

While in a certain sense, any

feelings that we have, have to do with our "self." However, that kind of statement tells me the author doesn't have a clue about the dynamics of shyness. It is also condemning and guilt producing, as though shyness was a sin. That is simply not true. Here are three things to remember about shyness.

First, much shyness is due to inborn temperament. Some people are less outgoing and more reserved by nature. God peoples His world with a variety of physical and personality types and shy people are one group. Unfortunately, in some segments of our culture extroverts are idealized. And yet many of the world's greatest thinkers and citizens have been quite shy. In many vocations shyness and some of the introspectiveness and carefulness that often go with it can be a won-

derful asset. For example, you probably don't want your accountant or engineer to be a raging extrovert. Someone more careful and cautious will probably be much better!

Second, some shyness comes from family dynamics. For example, a critical, hostile or angry parent, or a strongly outgoing sibling might cause another sibling to be somewhat anxious or fearful of being rejected, which in turn creates shyness. All sorts of abusive or conflictual family experiences can lead a sensitive child to be fearful, extra cautious of meeting new people, or afraid of engaging freely in social relationships. The problem is not pride, it is anxiety or fear.

So don't let anyone tell you that shyness is selfish. It is not. And if you are painfully shy, you know that it is never something you would choose!

Finally, shyness only becomes a problem if it is accompanied by fears of being rejected or an inability to participate in social activities due to the shyness. In that case, counseling can be helpful to get to any family dynamics or developmental experiences that may be at the root of excessive shyness. The goal in counseling, however, would not be to turn into an extrovert. It is simply to gain more confidence and reduce one's anxiety so that it doesn't hinder you in the relationships you would like to enjoy. God values you just as you are and He doesn't want you to be bothered by fears of rejection or false guilt because you are shy.

I trust these few thoughts are helpful to you. Very best wishes.

Bruce

"I so much enjoyed *Psychology for Living* magazine. Each of the articles had a special message and I found the suggestions to be well thought out and helpful. I particularly enjoyed your article about divorce. So often, people in this situation get no concrete information. The steps outlined were realistic and helpful. I so much appreciated the wisdom I found within its pages, and loved the humorous article about grandparents."

— M.C.

"I just want to say thank you for the booklet article, *Married to a Non-Christian*. It really put things into perspective for me. I will continue to be a patient wife who prayse that one day my husband will be saved."

— C.L.

"I work at a school and many times working in the nurses office we see students that need attention or have a need to talk to an adult with whom they feel comfortable. I gave a copy of *Why Teenagers Turn to Violence* to the school counselors."

— G.S., Texas

"What a wonderful website you have. I am a moderator of a Christian Anxiety support group and I have found a wealth of information to help us."

— G.R. Florida

"I am an undergraduate psychology student and to find out that there is a website like this gives me a lot of encouragement and inspiration."

— M.A. Canada

Editor's Note: Please let us know what you think about *Psychology for Living*. We welcome your comments and strive to serve our readers better for the Kingdom of God. You can write to us, or email your comments to ncf@ncfliving.org.

Cornerstone Counseling Center Completes First Year Of Ministry

It has been an incredible year of ministry, blessing and hardship. First the good news! The center has already served scores of missionary families from twelve different countries! They have come for Christ-centered professional counseling to cope with traumas, emotional struggles, team conflicts, child and adolescent adjustment problems and difficulties adjusting to their first term of service in Southeast Asia.

The terrible Tsunami created additional, unexpected opportunities to serve. Three Cornerstone staff traveled to the devastated area within three days of the Tsunami and provided care for nationals and for aid workers who were laboring around the clock identifying bodies and offering help to victims.

Two Cornerstone staff members were also asked by a member of the royal family of Thailand to help develop counseling services for Thai children who lost loved ones during the Tsunami. Cornerstone's Director, Dr. Tim Friesen, and staff counselor, Pam Davis trained three teams of lay counselors on how to conduct play therapy and use children's drawings to understand and allow the children to express their sadness, fears and confusion.

The trained lay counselors were then divided into three teams and provided with new vans that had been converted into mobile play therapy offices. The vans and their counseling teams travel from school to school to minister to these devastated children. They return to each school on a regular basis so they can follow up with the children and build ongoing relationships with them!

This first year has also been a difficult year. Moving into the rented



Cornerstone Counseling Center, located in the left wing of this facility near the Chiang Mai International Airport.



Chiang Mai, Thailand before/after the Tsunami.



Flooded street in front of rented home of Cornerstone Counselor, Pam Davis.



Kitchen of Pam's flooded home.

office space near the Chiang Mai International Airport was a big task that was complicated by the difficulty getting services like telephones and computers properly connected. While the Tsunami created many wonderful new opportunities to minister, including to predominantly Muslim groups, it was also draining, difficult work that took the counselors away from their families and created added stress.

August and September brought two episodes of major flooding in Chiang Mai with the river that runs through the center of the city overflowing its banks by many feet. One Cornerstone Counselor, Pam Davis, was flooded both times and had to go through the laborious process of cleaning mud and crud from her car and rented home, replacing ruined appliances, doors and cabinets, and trying to air out and recreate a fresh smell in her home and auto. She is now looking for a place to live on higher ground! Fortunately, the counseling center and the homes of other counselors were not affected.

Now that the first year of ministry is complete, the staff is looking to an exciting future. Already the staff has grown from three to five counselors and two more will soon be joining the team. Additional space has been rented but before long it may be time to build or purchase our own facilities in order to meet future needs for counseling and training among the many missionaries throughout Southeast Asia.

The staff counselors and their families deeply appreciate the prayers and financial support of NCF's faithful friends that are making this ministry possible. And they ask you to continue to praying for the Lord's protection and provision for them as they serve dedicated missionary families from that entire region of the world. ☞

Thanksgiving Prayer by Dick Innes

Dear Lord, Please give me:

A few friends who know me and love me still,

A thankful heart to give you praise always and in everything,

A trusting mind to keep on believing in you no matter what the future brings.

A humble, pleasing personality,

A teachable disposition,

A thoughtful, kind, and caring touch,

A forgiving and understanding spirit,

A loving and accepting attitude to communicate your love to every life I touch,

A worthwhile work into which I can put my best efforts and thereby help make my world a better place in which to live, and

A life that will make a difference not only in my world, but also in my street and, most of all, in my home.

Last Laugh



"Ask Uncle Louie to do that trick where he pulls a silver dollar out of your ear. Get him to repeat it 60,000 times and you can go to college!"



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