

Inside This Issue:

Sale/Notes
Page 1

Our Children's Needs –
AFFIRMATION
Page 2

Interview – Breaking the
habit of disposable diapers
Page 3

Tucson Classifieds
Page 4

This Valentines Day
Page 5

Phoenix Classifieds
Page 5

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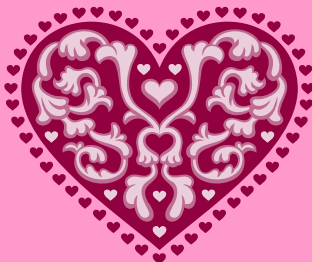
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Our Children's Needs - Part 3

Robert Elias Najemy

AFFIRMATION

Everyone likes a pat on the back, recognition, strokes, praise or affirmation of his or her ability, goodness and worthiness. Our children have not yet formed images of themselves and need these positive inputs even more than adults. Children are not sure if they are able or not. They are small in such a large world. They are learning and thus making many mistakes as they try to learn how to do things correctly.

In our attempt to help our children we often tend to point out their mistakes more frequently than their successes. The mistakes are what are more obvious and thus we feel the need to point them out. The successes are taken for granted. We over-emphasize what our children do wrong. This undermines their sense of ability, and they start to doubt whether they can really succeed. Thus they become preoccupied, worrying about whether they will be able to do it, and whether they will be criticized. Thus little energy is left for focusing on what they are actually doing so that they can do it correctly and succeed. Then, if our children's performance suffers, we become even more critical. This creates a vicious circle in which our children's sense of ability, success and worthiness is completely undermined.

Later in life we seek incessantly to prove that we are okay, a success, by attempting to gain money, fame and respect from others. But it is a losing battle because inside us we are programmed to believe that we are not okay, not able. Although we may become very successful, we will likely be unable to satiate our need to prove our ability over and over. On the other hand, we may simply perpetuate the belief that we are failures and create continual failure in life, by undermining our success in relationships and at work and perhaps our sense of self-worth through alcohol, drugs, tranquilizers or other means.

If we want our children to succeed, to accept themselves, to be happy and to have the self-confidence which is required to proceed in life, then we must give them plenty of positive affirmation of their ability and goodness.

A SIMPLE TECHNIQUE

A simple technique will help. Every day sit quietly for a few moments and relax your body and mind so that you can concentrate. (Breathing deeply a number of times will help). When you feel relaxed and concentrated, then bring your child to your mind. Visualize the child healthy, happy and full of self-confidence. Now bring to mind five positive qualities or characteristics that you recognize in that child. Imagine these positive qualities increasing every day. Then again see your child in the screen of your mind, full of light, health and happiness. Imagine yourself and the child in loving embrace, or

dancing or singing or in any type of harmonious, happy communication. This will take from about five to ten minutes.

When the opportunity occurs naturally, we can then inform the child of these qualities or abilities, which we recognize in him or her.

We need to let our children know that we love them, respect them, and believe in their ability to make decisions, to be responsible and to cope with life. But we also need to clarify that your love is independent from the positive characteristics or abilities, which we recognize in them. They should not be left to feel that we love them more because they do well in school, or sports, or are pretty or handsome, or capable. Our love and respect should not be associated with specific qualities. Otherwise they will get the message that they must always be this way or else the others will not love and respect them. This will create anxiety.

Affirming our children will help them develop the strengths and abilities they need to be successful and happy in life. It will also do wonders for our relationships with them. It is much more effective than criticizing and blaming them for their mistakes. Mistakes should be pointed out for the sake of learning from them, but not for the purpose of rejecting the other or making them feel badly.

Also, we need to gain our own self-confidence. Otherwise we might be intimidated by our children's abilities and subconsciously want to undermine their success or intelligence. This sometimes occurs between fathers and sons, or mothers and daughters, when the children are entering adolescence. It is sometimes difficult for us to accept that our children have their own ideas and almost impossible for our ego to accept that these ideas may be better or more advanced than ours. We as parents may subconsciously be motivated to play power games with our children, rejecting them because of our insecurities. As our children enter adolescence, we must gradually learn to let go of our previous roles and become more of a friend or counselor (who gives advice when asked). Otherwise a conflict may arise between our children who need to assert and affirm their personality, and us the parents, who does not want to let go of our roles of directors of their lives.

Be Well

(Robert Elias Najemy's recently released book "The Psychology of Happiness" (ISBN 0-9710116-0-5) is available at
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/holisticcharmo-20>
and <http://www.HolisticHarmony.com/psychohappiness.html> .
His writings can be viewed at
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The New York Times Saturday Interview / Published: January 12, 2008
Breaking the Habit of Disposable Diapers By CLAUDIA H. DEUTSCH

TERESON DUPUY thinks reusable diapers are having their back-to-the-future moment.

Sure, she knows that lots of parents (indeed, most of them) would rather toss dirty nappies than wash them. But she says that the convergence of four disparate elements — Internet chat rooms for new mothers, easy ways to sell on the Web, the green movement and the development of better polyesters — is spurring many parents to rethink their attachment to disposables.

There are signs she may be right. In 1999, Ms. Dupuy, 37, started Mother of Eden, a company that sells reusable polyester diapers called Fuzzi Bunz. She does not advertise and does not have a sales staff. Yet her company topped \$3 million in sales in 2007, and she expects to sell double that amount this year.

"The Internet and environmental concerns have been a bonus," Ms. Dupuy said. "But even without them, reusable diapers would be meeting a real need."

In a recent conversation, Ms. Dupuy elaborated on why cloth diapers may be a product whose time has come — again. Excerpts from the interview follow:

Q. Have cloth diapers really evolved much from the bulky, leaky things with pins that many of us remember as so unpleasant?

A. There've been lots of small changes, but the key difference is the textiles. Cotton is very absorbent, but it's hard to wash, it stains and it can take forever to dry. Many of today's reusable diapers use polyester fleece, which lasts longer, absorbs better and dries in 10 minutes. And they are thin enough to fit under normal baby clothes. That's no small thing — clothes today are made to fit over a disposable diaper, not a bulky, multilayered cotton one.

Q. Disposables still seem more convenient. Why would anyone go back to cloth?

A. Lots of reasons. I used disposables with my first child, and we were only getting garbage pickups once a week. They literally stank. And my second child had severe eczema, and no matter what cream I tried, or how often I changed the diaper, his bottom was raw and bleeding.

Q. I've never heard of a reusable diaper curing eczema. Did that really help?

A. I switched to cotton diapers, and it got better, but he still got rashes from the wetness near his skin. That's when I had my light bulb moment: I bought a square of fleece, the kind that Patagonia uses in jackets and underwear. I stuck that in my son's diaper, and his skin stayed dry. So I decided to sell fleece diapers with pockets for inserts. I named the company Mother of Eden because my son's name is Eden, and I am, after all, his mother.

Q. Patagonia uses fleece made from recycled plastics, which are, of course, petrochemicals. Should people feel comfortable putting chemicals so close to a baby?

A. Not everyone does, I know. Some people will only use diapers made of organic cotton. But those diapers are awfully expensive, and they have the same problems as conventional cotton. I trust Patagonia — they wouldn't use it in underwear if it weren't safe.

Q. It takes a lot of energy to make polyester, and it uses a lot of water to wash diapers. And if people use diaper services, you have to factor in the fuel used by their trucks. Aren't you running counter to the "green" trend?

A. Quite the contrary. If you ask people what "cloth diaper" brings to mind, they mention bleach, soaking, washing, lots of hard work. But use the term "reusable diaper," and the first thing they say is "good for the environment."

Now, it is definitely better for the environment to produce organic cotton than polyester, I can't argue with that. But polyester diapers last five times longer, so you don't have to replace them as often. If you check the chat rooms on the Internet, most of the cloth-using moms are washing them at home. If you have a baby in the house, you're doing a lot of laundry anyway. And a lot of trees probably get cut down to make disposables.

Q. Still, polyester isn't biodegradable. Doesn't that pose an environmental disposal problem after the baby is toilet-trained?

A. We're trying to find a supplier who can recycle our fibers. We'll take diapers back from people, and donate them to orphanages, primarily overseas. We are also using our manufacturing scraps to make cloth baby wipes, breast pads for nursing moms and menstrual pads. They represent only 2 or 3 percent of our sales — but they use up all our waste.

Q. How can reusable diapers compete with marketing titans like Procter & Gamble or Kimberly-Clark, which lead the disposable diaper market?

A. Products like ours wouldn't exist without the Internet. People do Google searches to find cloth diapers. We distribute mainly through a network of 300 or so stay-at-home moms who found us on the Web, and who sell on the Web. We have 150 more on the waiting list; we just don't have enough product to supply them yet. Hopefully, this year we will.

And the Internet has enabled lots of working moms — people like me — to work from home. That means they are there to change the baby's diaper. A mom — or even a dad — is more willing to wash out dirty diapers than your typical day care worker.

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THIS VALENTINE'S DAY

Mary Kennedy Eastham



Remember an old love with fondness
not regret.
Pray for World Peace.
Send yourself flowers.
Give all but one to people who matter.
Kiss a child's tears away.
Smooth over love's jagged edges
in a relationship you've been meaning to send.
Slow down.
Thank someone for being kind to you.
Wake up smiling.
Hold that smile close to your lips all day.
Bury a prejudice.
Kiss someone you love
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