

Raising Happy Kids

...in Harmony

Magazine: 4th Issue Spring 2021

Honoring Tao, My Son & Harmonious Fathers

Honoring Tao

"For the Love of the Outdoors"



(Story Example)



**The 1 Rule:
Start Strong**



(Training)

A Harmonious Father



**Harmony: No
Strings Attached**



**Lisa
Wasikowski**

"I Hate You!"



(Story Example)

This Issue...

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue focuses on harmonious fathers in honor of my son, Tao, an example of a harmonious father and being in general, as you can read in “Meet My Son, Tao.” His sisters created a Facebook Group where those who knew and loved Tao could share their thoughts and pictures, since the memorial has been postponed until next year. I’ve shared some of that massive tribute here, shared by hundreds of community members. A tribute to a harmonious being.

Besides the deep admiration and genuine love that people had for him, many people expressed that he made them want to be like him, at least in terms of the qualities he lived. “Be Tao Now” is one phrase that came out in one of the post threads.

Imagine all of us growing up to be our most fulfilled selves, moment by moment. That is what I wish for everyone and why I am sharing some of Tao’s story and why I do this work.

Lisa Wasikowski is our guest contributor sharing “Harmony: No Strings Attached,” a delightful story of how her daughter’s birthday celebration helped her find inner harmony, because of her daughter’s wishes and her deep love for her daughter. After the tribute to my son, this issue is graced with another contribution from Lisa, “Talking About the Five Stages of Grief” where she shares her daughter’s unique understanding of death.



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Harmony with the Readers



There are no messages from readers because the previous magazine was shared only with a few people. This situation is being changed and all the magazines are going to be widely shared.



HARMONY: NO STRINGS ATTACHED

I am a giver, always have been. I love spoiling the people I care about. The time it takes to put the details together, to make the arrangements, to do the research, to do the shopping or creating, it fills me with immense joy, but I attach myself to how they feel about it, which has frequently, unintentionally, sabotaged the outcome.

True harmony has no strings attached. Harmony is about agreement. Sometimes the agreement is within us, instead of with another person.

My daughter's ninth birthday was a few days ago. I wanted to pull out the stops, as usual. All she really wanted was to see her grandma and uncles, but even I could not make it happen. In the days of the pandemic, we cannot fly her anywhere and they cannot fly here.

This year, at least we had some time to plan. Last year, everything was cancelled two days before her birthday.

I have to get over my own expectations and insecurities to open the door for what she wants, without tweaking it to fit what I want too. If my plans are dashed and

the end result is unhappiness (whether hers or mine), I blame myself, and walk away feeling hurt, then end up holding a grudge. Who benefits from that? No one.

My biggest gift to her this year was to tap into what we have built, and give with absolutely no expectations. Okay, very few expectations: a high bar, especially for me, but I respect my growth enough to believe I can do it, and I love her enough to at least try. Inner-harmony is not easily procured, especially when it is the opposite of the norm.

As a kid, I wanted big, over-the-top fabulous, fireworks and everything dipped in chocolate. But to her, fabulous can be any size, and really low-key. I have had a hard time tailoring to what she wants, instead of what I want her to want. Her favorite celebrations have been spent with the ones she loves, no gifts to unwrap, just quality time and really delicious food. Sounds ideal, and cliché, but it is the truth. My way is not necessarily the best way (for her).

She is severely hard of hearing. She understands verbal English but American Sign Language is her first language, and her dad and I are hardly fluent. There is only so much to work off of. Much of our connection with her is on a spiritual level, which can be a big help when language fails us.

She said she wanted to go skateboarding. Her bestie from school has learned how to skateboard so they can go together. These two can spend months apart, and miss each other terribly, but once they are reunited all is right with the world again. Their late-morning skateboarding date was a perfect way to start her birthday.

I asked her what birthday treat she wanted. She said fish and rice. No surprise. My girl does not like sweets, especially typical birthday pastries. Shocking, I know. Originally, we joked about sushi for dinner with a sushi cake. Actually, I was joking. She was not. I messaged our friends at our favorite Hawaiian poke (poh-kay) place. We are regulars. They know and love my girl, and were more than happy to put something special together for her.

In lieu of family not being able to join us, I contacted her two favorite teachers, who are also friends of mine. Both adore my girl, and miss her terribly. They came over for a backyard birthday picnic with a seafood and flamingo themed smorgasbord (no flamingos were harmed, but much seafood was savored). One of her teachers cannot eat raw fish, so I made a couple of my girl's cooked fish faves: pan seared scallops served with our housemade vegan arugula pesto, and prawn scampi with tons of garlic and lemon: happy bellies and happy times.

Honestly, it was a wonderful day. She thoroughly enjoyed her time with some of her very favorite people, and indulged heartily in some of her very favorite foods. Plus, we had plenty of family snuggles, belly laughs, and even agreed to dance to some of her favorite Glee music.

She has no idea how much love went into planning her birthday celebration. I am starting to release expectations involved with her reactions to my intentions. I grant myself permission to feel my feelings about the process, but part of my gift to her (and to me) is to let go, and to just allow it to be what it is. She owes me nothing in return, especially happiness (with strings attached).

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MEET MY SON, TAO

The following is because on March 23 while out walking the dogs, Tao suddenly went to Heaven. He was in good health as far as anyone knew. His sisters created a Facebook Group so that people could share what they wanted to share. I've gathered some of what was written by the 483 people who have joined so far. I'll share some of the pictures too. When he was a boy I believed that he would be a new kind of man. I say he has proven that belief. He was an example of a harmonious being. Read what his community has to say about him...

Tao's Love Bomb

"Be Tao Now"

"Look for me where I am, not where I'm not."

This morning during the middle of my meditation that sentence came to me as what I am to share with all of you about Tao. Tao's departure dropped a love bomb on all who knew and loved him.

His departure made people poignantly aware of the loving man he was, to each and all. It made them want to be like that, loving to each and all they meet in their lives. His potent loving has now magnified the loving in all of us. His devotion to his family makes others want to be so devoted. Instead of one man being a force of love in his world, he had sparked the desire in hundreds of us to be like that in our worlds. Our loving response to ourselves and to all we meet spreads the love even more and so it goes.

No doubt we have that in us anyway, but it has been emphasized over and over again that his way of being inspired people to be the best versions of themselves they can be. So much love and caring has been expressed to us, his family. What a powerful, loving community. So helpful. Helping create an atmosphere where such loving beings as my children could and can thrive.

I've wandered through your comments, gathering, reading what has been written about him and how we also want to be for ourselves and for those in our world:

"kind and loving brother" "accepting and thoughtful" "I valued his advice and insight to life. Tao was passionate about life. He was a loving husband and father. Watching him and Danielle together was such a joy, they adored each other and put their family first in all things. He was a strong teacher and leader for his boys and his community. He was a mentor to my sons who loved him dearly. I still can't believe he is gone from this world.

Tao, I love you and will miss you everyday. Thank you for being such an important part of my life and the lives of those around you. You have left a hole in our hearts, but I feel your spirit around us wrapping us in your love ❤️"

"Your family home was so beautiful and peaceful. And, I remember your brother, busy at some task, glancing up with a big smile and big happy, kind, brown eyes. He acknowledged us and said, "Hi Shanti," and went back to what he was doing."

"such an incredible man."

"Sita, Shanti, and all the rest of your family, sending the biggest hugs! You are loved and you make the world a better place just as Tao did:). In a lifetime of give and take— the take is sometimes the most painful process, but the give is everlasting.. with our love light shining, Tao is always there to show " the way."

"He had that very calm, accepting, spirit about him and a sense of fun..."

"Tao's spirit and intention is real and loved deeply by everyone who knew him. He inspires people to be the best version of ourselves."



"Tao acted with great calm and although he was my captain, he always treated me as an equal as we decided our course of action....A great firefighter, a great family man, a great neighbor, and although I did not share his days of music and rabble rousing as a youngster, I am honored to have known him and served together in the fire service."

"Super Tao, indeed"

"his gentle spirit, kindness and commitment to his family and community."

"All the older locals I've met or overheard speaking of his passing said, "Tao was one of the GOOD Ones." What wonders come from an intentional life; that live on in his community, his family, his vibration! I love you Super Tao, thanks for the upliftment..."

"The closeness you all shared, your mother and fathers kindness and unconditional love for you all."

"One of the most special humans I've ever had the honor of knowing, hugging, training and most of all loving."

"he has been the older brother I always wanted ever since, he had the biggest heart, and he cared about every one, I love him like a brother"

"who was genuine, kind-hearted, calm, friendly, caring and always had a warm smile on his face and something positive to say"

"That is who I remember Tao to be- a thoughtful and sincerely friendly humanbeing, talented beyond belief with a megawatt smile to share."

"I'm so grateful men like him exist, and that he now has two young men carrying the torch of all that a truly good man is. You did so good, Tao. You were so loved, and will be so deeply missed. If I could be just one bit as patient and loving and calm as you, I will have learned a lot in this life..."



"The world needs more Tao, not less..."

"Such a unique, special human being we can all strive to emulate."

"He was a person who cared, who was thoughtful in how he navigated the world, and made things better for anyone who was lucky enough to be his friend."

"Thank you, thank you Tao. I don't know how you did you so well, but you did and we were/are better for it, and your memory, like your life will be our blessing."

"I was struck by how sweetly and calmly and gently he brushed little Escher's teeth in the evening. His son looked up to him, was so open to him, and trusted in him so fully. He explained how important teeth are to Escher in a way that I immediately filed away in my mind in case I ever became a parent. His boys are so incredibly lucky to have him as a role model and father."

"I think Tao was a shining example of what a person should be like in life. A stalwart dude, sacrificing himself for the community through the Briceland Fire department, volunteering his time to friends, family and the community. Being a dedicated man and husband to Danielle and a great example for his boys, Asa and Escher. He was a great man and an awesome friend, always with a genuine hug and a smile for you."



"most of all it has made me want to be the best I can be for those around me and myself, like Tao....Knowing them has shown me what the best life has to offer means."

"Dearly beloved by all who met him, Tao lived a humble life full of grace and good will. Born at home in the hills on Perry Meadow Road to his loving parents Peter and Karen Ryce, Tao is a son of Southern Humboldt in the truest sense. Raised by the grass and trees, river and

sky, ocean, stones, birds, beasts, and all the life here, as much as by his loving family and community. Tao embodied all of this as he grew into a man. Gentle, strong, caring, creative, inventive, curious, understanding, sensitive, humorous, patient, willing, loving, and flowing. He was all of these things and so much more.

"Tao was very intentional in his life, always doing his best to do what he thought was right, always willing to learn and improve. He put himself fully into whatever it was that he was doing, and he did many things. As a lifelong learner, Tao developed many varied skills. He understood subtle energies and delicate things through his studies and practice of Aikido, Qigong, Rolfing, and Tai Chi. He had very practical skills of carpentry, water systems, mechanics, and more. Tao had a love for the arts, especially music, as he showed us with his many years in his band, NPK. And as anyone that know him knows, he had excellent interpersonal skills, able to be fully present with whoever he was with and always striving to be inclusive. He was always willing to help and do the hard work that needed doing along with sharing the fun that also needed doing. Tao was a true blessing to our community."

"Such a kind hearted soulful man, always with the best of intentions, the kind of guy you come across maybe once or twice in an entire lifetime (if you're lucky).....Now the heavens have taken him as a powerful Angel to guard so many of us on a grander scale. Mourning the loss of this great spirit in the flesh, but knowing intrinsically he will surround his family friends and all of our community and beyond with his steadfast reassurance protection and support. We have gained a guardian Angel and those on his Briceland Fire team are sure to experience his otherworldly reach to help In times of crisis, because that's just the kind of guy he is. His work is not done, the only sense I can make of all this is maybe he will be able to help so much more from his new place of being in spirit and all around us. Surrounding his sacred family in so much love and healing."



Love and blessings to each and all of you always.

I am so grateful for your stories and photos.



TALKING ABOUT THE FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF

By Lisa L. Wasikowski

The five stages of grief: 1) Denial, 2) Anger, 3) Bargaining, 4) Depression, 5) Acceptance. Not all people will experience all five stages, and not all people will experience them at the same time, in the same way.

My daughter is an anomaly. I marvel at who she is, and how much she knows - how much she was born knowing.

I understood from a young age that death is part of life, and it is one certainty we can count on. We just have no way of knowing exactly when it will happen, how, where, and why. Each loss I have experienced, hit me differently.

Watching my daughter in times of great sadness and loss has always been surprising. When her grandpa died, we started to understand more about who she is. With her cognitive issues, and hearing issues, the lack of access to language can be difficult to deal with and to interpret, but there are some things she understands quite well, without our help or intervention, for instance: death.

Imagine, being able to see your dead grandfather or your dead great-grandmother or your dead cousin. Imagine not only seeing them, but the ability to have actual conversations with them, in real time, as if they are sitting with you like they did before they died. Grieving would look and feel so completely different.

Denial, in her case, is simply a lack of understanding of what is going on, as a result of misinformation or unclear explanations - not the fight against reality.

For me, denial is the “shock” phase – the moments when my brain simply cannot process the information. Some of us get a little delusional. I felt this way when I miscarried. In my mind, the doctors were wrong, this baby was one-hundred-percent loved and wanted, he was meant to be. No way he could die! I felt this way when my cousin died last month, because, as my sister and I said – it just does not make sense. He was Super-Tao. Super-Tao does not die - but he did.

My daughter is not angry, by nature, and as an in-the-moment girl, her bursts of anger do not last long. I have never seen her angry as a result of death, even as a result of how others are processing and dealing with death. Her reprieve is to offer love. I think “frustration” might be a better word than “anger,” at least in her case.

After my miscarriage, I was livid. For a while, I blamed my doctor, because I had no one else to blame. After what seemed like forever, I let go of the blame entirely or it would’ve fallen on me and crushed me. When the blame was gone, the anger was too.

Bargaining is a skill. No amount of skill will bargain a loved one back to life. I was in a fatal car wreck about twenty-three years ago. I remember the light from the

full orange moon on my face, the blood from his head in a stream on the street. I begged the Universe to let him live, to take me instead. Didn't work.

Depression is not a word I would ever associate with my daughter. She does not dwell in sadness. Unless she is struggling with a personal challenge or she feels she has upset or disappointed someone or she is feeding off of someone else's energy, sadness is not her prominent emotion, "I cry because you cry, Mama. You sad, I sad."

Acceptance is a gift. If you believe those who have passed on are somehow with you - it brings comfort. If you believe death is the bitter end, nothing more to it, then the void feels bigger and deeper, and probably takes longer to heal. Regardless, when enough healing has happened for the grief to not be all consuming, to leave room for life beyond the here-and-now, to start trusting yourself to be okay, to balance, to shift, to smile, to laugh, to feel alive again without the constant penetration of sorrow's merciless edges, when acceptance gives way to light, when our hearts open for love, it is then we can be free.

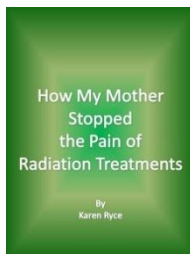
I accepted that my grandmother died when I felt her body go cold. Being there in her final week, in her final hour, in her final moments, was truly a blessing, and ended up being a powerful tool for healing. Will the pain ever stop? Probably not. Will I ever be okay with it? Probably not. But as my daughter says, "Noni not sad. No ouchies. Sky dancer. Sky dancer free." No reason to argue with that.

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DISCLAIMER: This true story "is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease." It is just my mother's story.

To learn more and/or buy... copy/paste the link below into a new tab:

<https://www.happykidsco.com/motherstory.html>



She wanted to share how she went through radiation treatments so comfortably...



Preparation

The 1 Rule: Start Strong

You decide that you want to have a harmonious relationship with your child. That sounds good, right?

You decide that: you do not want to make your child do what they do not want to do... and you do not want to do what you do not want to do ...and you are going to make this work.

You decide that you want to use the 1 Rule to make this happen. This is going to become your new habit.

What Works For Me

To create this new habit, you are going to start with yourself and what you want.

You decide that you are going to let how you feel about a situation determine whether you agree with it or not. If it feels good, then you can agree with it. If not, you cannot.

- When you are looking at situations, you can do it in your mind.
- You can write them out and even journal on them.
- You can approach each situation as it comes up and work your way through it.
- You can do any or all of these for any or all situations. You choose what works best for you.

You look at situations with kids, one by one, and decide: is this situation okay with me just as it is?

If yes, good. Go on to another one.

If no: what would have to change, be different so that I could feel good about this?

Maybe several versions of this situation would feel fine with you. Maybe only one.

This is your first practice as you create this new habit: following the 1 Rule. This is a good practice no matter what age your kids are. It helps ensure a strong start and makes following the 1 Rule so much easier.

The following Introduction and examples are from *Parenting for the New Millennium*, the third edition of my first book:

INTRODUCTION

In the cartoon series “Calvin and Hobbs,” by Bill Watterson, Hobbs asks Calvin why they play war rather than peace. Calvin says that there are too few role models. Role models are what this section of this book is about.

Since I also have very few role models, the adult responses in this section of the book are based on what I might actually say or do in the various situations, varied according to the needs and friendly parenting skills of the adults in the examples.

The children’s responses are based on what I have experienced of children’s responses to respectful treatment. If this does not seem realistic to you, I can only say I have tried to make these examples fit my experiences as closely as I could.

I have found that children, those born to me, as well as those I’ve worked with and those I’ve enjoyed as friends, are willing and even eager to brainstorm for solutions once they understand

the process, and especially once they realize that only solutions which are agreeable to all involved are considered acceptable.

I have found that children are quite willing to cooperate once they realize they are consistently treated with respect. I have found that children treat me with great care and consideration when I have treated them that way, and when I have been a model of this behavior for them and toward them.

WATCHING IT WORK

In the following examples, the first situations concern families in transition toward being more respectful. The later ones deal with families whose members are in the habit of interacting respectfully.



“I HATE YOU!”

“I hate you, Daddy!”

“Don’t talk to your father that way, young lady!”

“I’d like to handle this, Missie. I want to try what I’ve been practicing in the class.” Conrad took a few deep breaths to calm himself. It was upsetting to hear his daughter say this. He walked over to Nan so they could have a private talk. “You are mad at me, Nan?”

“I HATE you! Go away from me!”

Conrad feels the pain of the energy she has hurled at him. “It hurts me when you say that, Nan. Would you tell...”

“I hate you! Don’t be here! I’m glad it hurts you!”

Conrad sees that Nan is not at all open to him right now. “Nan, I’m going to work in the shop. I hope we can talk about this later.” He decides that she is too emotionally charged to relate to him and he thinks that he might have more success later. He shakes his head at Missie, who is about to reprimand Nan.

About an hour later, Conrad joins Nan out in the back yard. “Can we talk about it now, Nan?”

Nan looks at her father suspiciously, “Why are you being so nice? If you think you can make it up to me, you can’t.”

“Did I do something to hurt you?”

“You promised. You promised to come to my class today. We waited and waited. The teacher didn’t know what to do since she was planning to have you come and bring your scale models and talk about making buildings. It was the pits. After school some of the kids were teasing me. I hated it.”

“Nan, I’m very sorry. I must have written the wrong date on my calendar. I thought it was next month. I hope you can forgive me. I know you said I couldn’t make it up to you, but I hope I can. I could come another day.”

“That wouldn’t be enough. You’d have to do something really great to get some of those boys to stop teasing me.”

“Something really great, huh?”

“Yeah, or they’ll still think I have a flake for a father.”

“A flake, huh?”

“Yeah, that’s what they were saying, and that you don’t really care about me, or you wouldn’t have forgotten. They said that maybe I’m adopted and that’s why you don’t care very much. Am I adopted?”

“No, Sweetie, you were born to your mother and me. And I do care about you. I love you very much, very much, I’m sorry those kids were so mean to you. You asked me why I am so nice to you after you said you hated me. I’d like to tell you. I love you so much that I am taking a class to learn how to be a respectful parent. I don’t want to be bossy and mean any more. So it’s very important that I think of something really great to make up for today’s mistake. What if we plan a day for me to come to your class, and another day, soon, the whole class can come out to the building site. We’ll give them the grand tour, they can even climb on the machines and see how they work. How does that sound?”

“That sounds great. I don’t think anyone will tease me after that. I’ll write it on your calendar so you don’t get the dates wrong. Are you really going to learn to be nice to me all the time?”

“I’m doing my best to learn to treat you in ways that feel good to you and to me.”

“What about Mom? Is she doing this, too?”

“No, but I think when she sees us having such a good time together, she will want to do it, too.”

“Daddy, I’m sorry I said I hated you. I don’t really hate you, but I was real mad. And those kids really hurt my feelings.”

“I’m sorry you ever had to be afraid that I don’t care about you.”

“Sometimes when you won’t listen to me, I think you don’t care about me.”

“I hope you never have to feel that again. I’ll tell you every day how much I love you and how important you are to me, and I’ll listen to you; I’ll do my best.”



BEDTIME FLEX-TIME

“Dad, you said I could talk to you if you made me do things I don’t like, and I don’t like going to bed when it’s still light outside.”

“I’m glad you told me this, Jason. But we’ll have to figure something out, because it doesn’t get dark until after 9:30, and that seems pretty late to me.”

“You and Mom stay up later than that. Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and you and Mom are still up. Anyway, I don’t have school right now.”

“Well, what would you like to do about it?”

“I want to go to bed when I’m ready to.”

“Well, one problem I see with this is that your mother and I need to spend time alone together. We only have time to do this in the evenings when you’re asleep. This is very important to us.”

“Well, when you want to be alone, you could go in your room and close the door.”

“Yes, I suppose we could. But usually we like to be in other parts of the house. We have a lot of things to do in the evenings.”

“Oh. Well, I could be in my room with the door closed, except for when you guys are in your room, and then I could be in other parts of the house.”

“Well, that sounds okay, but I’m concerned that you might not get enough sleep. You are a growing and developing person. I’ve been taught that you grow when you are asleep.”

“I promise I’ll rest when I’m tired and sleep when I’m sleepy.”

“Well, Jason, it sounds like a good plan to me. Let’s find out if your mother likes it. If she does, then we’ll try it and have another meeting about it next week to see if we’re all still happy with the arrangement. Oh, another thing, before school starts we’ll have to come to a different agreement, okay?”

“Okay, as long as we still work things out so we all like it. I like it this way.”

“So do I, Jason. I want to continue that, too. Let’s go find your mother.”

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OR message me on Facebook



WHEN CHILDREN HIT

“Waaah! Daddy, Michael hit me!”

“Oh, sweetie, I’m so sorry you got hit; let me hold you.” Dalon is determined not to give in to his first angry urge to punish Michael. He remembers that first his daughter needs comforting. He holds her and strokes her hair. He also remembers that there are always at least two sides to any story.

“I just wanted to get my Gameboy out of his room. He’s had it for a long time and I want to play with it. I didn’t want to go out of his room until he gave me my Gameboy. So he hit me.”

“Let’s go talk with Michael.” Dalon takes deep, slow breaths (inhaling and then being sure to exhale) to calm himself, as he walks slowly to Michael’s room. He knocks on the door. “Michael, we would like to talk with you.”

“What do you want?”

“Can we come in or would you join us out here?”

“I can hear you through the door.”

“I’d feel much better if I could see you. I’m not going to hurt you.” Dalon remembers to keep sharing his feelings and needs, and to speak respectfully to his son.

“Okay, come in.”

“Thanks, Michael. I need to tell you that it upsets me when you hit your sister.”

“She hit me.”

“Well, you didn’t tell me that, Claire. I don’t like you to hit him either.”

“He wouldn’t give me my toy. It’s special.”

“I don’t like it when you hit each other to try to get what you want.”

“You hit us.”

“You’re right, Michael. I used to hit you, and I’m very sorry I did. I thought it was the right thing to do. Now I know it was wrong, very wrong and I promise never to do it again.”

“Oh. Alright, I guess I won’t hit her any more either. Here’s your Gameboy, Claire. But don’t come in my room without my permission, it really makes me mad. That’s why I wouldn’t give you your Gameboy.”

“Okay, Michael, I won’t come in your room without asking you. And Michael, I won’t hit you either; we’ll be a no-hitting family.”

“Yes, Claire, that’s exactly what we are. Thank you both for working this out so well. I think we have a great family and I love you both.”



CUT THE CURFEW

“I called this family meeting because Dad said he wants me home by nine on school nights and by eleven on the weekends. I think this needs to be worked out with the three of us so we all feel good about the decision. I don’t feel good about Dad’s decision.”

“How would you like it to work, Clara?”

“I want to be able to come home whenever I want.”

“Well, Clara, I’m afraid that if I don’t set some kind of curfew, you won’t get enough sleep. That can cause lots of trouble: you could be tired in school and not be able to concentrate; you could get rundown and sick; you could be a grouch to live with, maybe even worse.”

“Well, even if I am home by nine on school nights and eleven on the weekends, so that I get enough sleep, I don’t want to have to do it because of some rule; I want to do it because I think it is the best thing for me to do.”

“Well, it sounds good in theory, but I’m not sure it’s really going to work out satisfactorily.”

“Dad, you have to trust me. I’m growing up and I need you to trust me. I’ll let you know where I am when I’m not home, but I don’t want a curfew.”

“Dennis, that’s just what we were talking about last night, an area of weakness in our being a respectful family. We need to trust each other.”

“Yeah, I see what you mean. You’re right, Clara, I do need to trust you. It’s just hard for me not to worry about you. But you’re right, that won’t help anything. Since I’m not going to ride in your pocket, I have to trust you. Okay, I think I can live with you not having a curfew, but I really need you to keep in touch with us when you are not at home, and let us know where we can reach you.”

“There might be times when I can’t reach you to let you know.”

“Just do your best, Clara. That’s usually good enough.”

“That’s when we get extra practice in trusting.”

“That’s right, Mom. Thanks, Dad. Thanks, Mom. I’m going over to Lorene’s. Her number is in the back of our phone book. I finished my homework. I won’t be back late.”

Dennis speaks up, “Just a minute. Let’s have another meeting next week, so we can check on how this is going for all of us.”

“Dennis, I think one week isn’t long enough to give this thing a try. Let’s make it two weeks.”

“Okay, two weeks. Take care of yourself, Clara.”

“Don’t worry, Dad. See you soon.”

In the following interactions between parents and teens, we notice that these parents have already had many years of being respectful to their children and vice versa. They all know how to negotiate and find win-win solutions to their problems. They cooperate, no matter what issue is involved, no matter who needs what. They know how to keep communication clear. They are respectful to each other at all times, so that the love they have for each other shines through.



FOR THE LOVE OF THE OUTDOORS

“Chuck, thanks for washing the dishes and cleaning the kitchen. Your mother called and told me she’ll be late tonight. Would you help me get dinner together?”

“Sure, Dad. I don’t have too much homework tonight. Do you want help right now or can I finish my chemistry? That should take about twenty minutes.”

“No problem. I need a little time to change gears anyway. Where’s Suzanne?”

“She might be in her room, but she’s probably down by the creek.”

* * *

“Suzanne, your brother thought you might be down here. Have you finished your homework?”

“Yes, I didn’t have very much today.”

“I came to ask you to help with dinner and to ask why you are sitting here by the creek instead of straightening up the house. If we don’t all help, our household won’t run smoothly.”

“I hate to be inside on such a beautiful day. I have to spend too much time inside at school. I just can’t do it here too. I know I should do my chores, but I just can’t.”

“Well, what do you think we should do about this? It is a family problem if you don’t do the work we are counting on you to do.”

“I guess we should have a family meeting, because I have to be outside a lot more than I get to be.”

“That sounds like a good idea. Your mother will be home a little late today. I’d like your help to make dinner. Chuck already said he’d help me.”

“I’d really like to eat outside.”

“I don’t see that that’s a problem if you’ll set up for dinner and move everything inside when we’re done.”

“Sure, I’ll do that.”

* * *

“Shall we have our meeting right here after dinner is cleared away?”

“Sure, Dad, I’ll help Suzanne.”

“We can all help. It’ll be more fun and get done sooner.”

“Thanks, Mom.”

“Well, I guess I sort of called this meeting, at least it mostly has to do with me. I love to be outside. At school I have to spend most of the time inside. At home I need to spend as much time outside as I can. That’s hard when I have chores inside. Sometimes I just don’t do the chores, because I really need to be out. It’s especially good for me to be by the creek.”

“Well, honey, I’m glad you are so clear about what you need and that you are taking care of yourself.”

“Thanks, Mom.”

“It seems we have to figure out how your needs can mesh with the needs of the family, or the other way around.”

“I’ve been thinking about this since Dad and I had that little talk down by the stream. Maybe I could just do outside jobs. I could work in the garden and do yard work; I could wash the car, and keep the front porch steps and sidewalk swept. The rest of you could do the inside work. We could eat outside more often, and when we do I can set up and clean up like I did tonight. It seems like a lot of work, but since I’ll be outside, I want to give it a try. You’ll have to teach me how to do some of the gardening and yard work.”

“This sounds good to me. We’ll teach you what you need to know. We could start our new jobs tomorrow. Tomorrow you can sweep the front and wash the car after I get home. This weekend we can teach you what you need to know to take care of the garden and the yard. Let’s plan to meet again the following weekend to see if this is working for all of us, or if any adjustments need to be made.”

“Sounds like a plan.”

“It sounds fine to me, Dad. I’m going to finish my homework.”

“Thanks, all of you, for being such an understanding family. I feel really lucky.”

“I feel really lucky to have all of you in my family. I’d like to have a family hug before we go off.”

“Me too, Mom. I think we’re a great team.”

“Now, I’m going to wash the dishes and straighten the house.”

“I’ll help you, honey.”

“Is there a problem if I go down to the creek and write in my diary? I really have a lot to think about.”

“No problem, see you later.”



WHERE THERE’S A WILL THERE’S A WAY

“But, Dad, I have plans for that week. I’m going camping with some of my friends.”

“I’m sorry, Toby, I didn’t know you had anything planned.”

“I was going to tell you tonight. I thought two weeks in advance would be enough notice. I’ll need to take some of the camping gear.”

“You’re talking as if you’re going camping, but we haven’t discussed this enough for me yet, I still want you to go to Washington D.C. with me that week.”

“Any other week, Dad, just not that one.”

“I can’t do that. My office is sending me for a meeting that week and I just got a call from your grandmother that all the arrangements are made for the family reunion. I thought two weeks would be enough advance warning, too. Can’t you make your camping trip for another week?”

“We can’t. Jeremy is leaving after the camping trip for the rest of the summer and Craig is coming up especially for the trip. I would hate to miss it. I don’t see how we’re going to work this one out, not so we’re both happy with the results and feel we’re getting what we need.”

"I suppose you could go on your camping trip and I could go to Washington, but it's not really what I want. I was really looking forward to exploring with you and also having you with me at the family reunion. No one there has seen you since you were a little boy."

"When exactly is your meeting, Dad?"

"I have one meeting on that Wednesday and another on Thursday. The family reunion is on Saturday. I thought that on Monday, Tuesday, maybe Friday, maybe Sunday, you and I would have time together to go adventuring."

"Which Saturday is the reunion? Before your meetings or after?"

"After. What's your plan?"

"I'm thinking that this has got to work out. Do you think you could take off the Monday and Tuesday after the meetings instead of the one before?"

"I think I could work that. Why?"

"Maybe we could leave for our camping trip a couple of days early so I get the full time with my friends. On Thursday or Friday I fly to Washington."

"Toby, that's great. You are becoming a master negotiator. I could not imagine how this would work. Thanks for your efforts and thanks for understanding how important this trip is to me."

Harmonious Answers

Ask Karen...





In honor of my son, I want to address a question he had about introducing the 1 Rule into families. He was concerned that parents would have difficulty of believing that it was possible to find agreement when the people involved seemed to want opposing outcomes.

Although I really want everyone to adopt the 1 Rule when relating to kids, from birth onward, I do understand the concerns and am going to do my best to address them today.

When I was first introduced by 3yr old children to what I now call the 1 Rule, I told them, to help them understand what I wanted to help them do, that they were each important. Then I pointed to each of them and said, “You are important and you are important.” They could agree with that. One little girl’s awareness expanded to realize that they were both important. I saw it as her eyes lit up.

I just realized that her eyes may have lit up because she thought of a solution. However, before thinking of the solution she had to accept, that the solution had to be something that they both liked.

Until now I’ve believed that her eyes lit up because she expanded her thinking to accept that both of them were important. That may be true.

However, it is only now that I’ve come to realize that whether that is true or not, by following what is now known as the 1 Rule, she found the solution that was waiting in harmony. That is true for anyone who uses the 1 Rule. There may be more than one harmonious solution, but it has been my experience, working with kids, that there is always one solution.

No one has to believe that they are important or that the other person is important, but when a solution is discovered that all involved truly like, so they can agree to it, they are acting in harmony. They are harmony in action. This is built into the 1 Rule.

Even if people’s awareness does not expand to include the importance of the other person, as long as they are following the Rule: they find a solution that they both like, or they all like, and they agree to use that solution, the result is harmony.

They also get to feel good about themselves and their life. They are happy with the solution. It may not be the solution they originally thought of, but they like it anyway. That is why they agreed to it. Think about how you feel when things are going a way you want them to go. You feel good, right?

Another thing I mentioned to those first two little girls was that they both deserved to have what they want and that we were going to figure out how to do this.

This is the main thing that people have trouble with. This is why people have trouble believing that the

1 Rule works. They want something and someone else wants the same thing, like the little girls both wanted to swing on the same swing, the only swing available.

Whatever the situation, it seems that there is no way that both people could have what they want. They think that they have to give up on what they want, OR the other person does. That is the most common outcome. That is what people are used to. It's hard to realize that there IS a harmonious solution. It's hard to accept a possibility that seems so uncommon.

I've just realized that when I promised, I vowed to never force my children to do what they did not want to do I put myself in the perfect position to be open to harmonious answers. Harmonious solutions require that everyone involved agrees. This does not mean that they just say they agree, but that they fully, truly agree because that solution is something that they like.

So I have been using the 1 Rule for at least 38 years. For most of those years it was called the Power of Respect and there were 108 Respect Tools, Skills and Strategies I used to make it work. That's why I knew it is a true solution, mighty enough to stand on its own. 1 Rule.

In case some of you don't know, the 1 Rule came into being one night when I wondered if people would actually have to learn the 108 tools, skills and strategies I'd used to create respectful relationships with the kids in my life. That night I asked myself, 'Of the 108, what is the least that people need to know to be able to raise happy kids?'

The 1 Rule was my answer and that one Rule is powerful enough to create harmony between parents and kids, and powerful enough to be your failsafe in your intention to raise happy kids.

The 1 Rule is love in action.

The following question and solutions are from my past newspaper column, The Power of Respect, in the Redwood Record to respond to a post in one of the Facebook groups I belong to. The person suggested that teens who complain move out, get a job, and support themselves while they still knew everything...(actually my mother did exactly that).

TEEN INDEPENDENCE

(The Original "Power of Respect")

Q: “How do you deal respectfully with teenagers when they reject your values in favor of their own in their quest for independence?”

G.B., Briceland

A: No two people, so it is said, have the same fingerprints; we are each unique. Sure, some of us may share some of the same physical, emotional, or mental characteristics, but we are not identical in every way.

We each occupy our own space and have our own unique point of view. Even literally, our eyes occupy their own physical place in space and time.

When considering values, it helps to remember this built-in individuality. The point is to live harmoniously with all the others who have different values.

People tend to become very attached to their values; they are almost as important to us as our bodies. Because values are so personally important and emotionally charged, it is especially important to practice clear communication and negotiation when dealing with issues connected with them.

Some of the greatest misunderstandings come about when the differences in values are not clearly understood and/or accepted. Wars and other atrocities have occurred when one group of people refuses to allow another group to have different values.

For harmony and balance, it is essential that we understand each other and that no one discounts another’s values. We need to accept that for you this is important, even if it is not important for anyone else. Each of us, including our values, is an essential part of the whole.

It can help to remember that some teenagers may not know how to be respectful; they may not have had much practice even if they do know how. Some people did not grow up with respect as a basic ingredient in the relationships within their family.

However:

- if you respect their values

- offer them respect first
- do not demand respect from them (this is disrespectful)
- model respect for them
- let them experience being respected
- then, tell them **specifically** what you need so that you can feel respected
- maintain your respectful interactions to the best of your ability
- apologize if you find yourself being disrespectful

You have a good chance of developing deeply satisfying and mutually enjoyable relationships with teenagers.

To maintain respectful interactions with teenagers, it can help to realize and remember that:

- For their survival they are driven to being as independent as they can manage; the more they practice, the better off they will be
 - Soon they will have to make it on their own, better for them to practice while they are still at home and you can help them, **when they want you to**
 - Negotiate any points of disagreement; don't give up until you both agree
 - Make sure that communication is clear between you
 - If you have not done so before, give up being "the boss;" if you have a good point to make, make it, but still negotiate a win-win solution
-

The 1 Rule makes this whole situation so much simpler. Sure there are many helpful things to learn and know, but with the 1 Rule all you have to do is follow the rule: Have you come to agreement?

Yes. Great! Continue on with what you have decided to do.

No. Keep coming up with ideas until you find what you agree to.

I know that some of you are concerned that there is no such idea. This has not been my experience with kids. A mutually agreeable idea was found, a solution, usually quickly.

Also I thought about how intensively I've focused on 2yr olds. Today I had a thought I'd never had before: with the 1 Rule, you can create harmony with your kids no matter their age. You can start if they are 3 or 33. The 1 Rule is powerful enough. Use it and you create harmony. Just follow the Rule.

During Tuesday's Raising Happy Kids Zoom Show: Episode 46, a very important question was asked: what can we do with people who do not believe in including kids in the decision making process?

As I was thinking about this, I was guided to my original intent: **to help kids grow up happy, in harmony. It also guided me back to the idea of teaching the 1 Rule to kids as a good place to start AND having it be entertaining as a good place to start with kids and adults. The following story is an example of this.**

The Guardians: Harmony With Adults

“Kathy, my mom wants me to come to the next Parent-Teacher-Student Association meeting and tell them about the idea for the fundraiser. She thinks it is a great idea, but wants me to explain it to everyone. I’m feeling very nervous. I’m not used to talking with groups of adults,” said Jenny.

“You’ll do great, Jen,” said Pam.

The girls had stopped by to talk with Kathy. She was their 1 Rule coach after all. And since she was an adult, they figured she’d have some helpful ideas so Jenny could feel confident sharing the fundraiser idea with all those adults. Jenny’s mom said there’d be at least 15 people, including parents and teachers.

“I’m especially worried about talking to teachers. I’ve been pretty lucky and had friendly teachers, but they are not all like that. I hope there are only friendly teachers and parents at the meeting,” said Jenny.

They were all sitting on the porch, Kathy, Timmy, Jenny and Pam. This was not a regular meeting day when all the Guardians would be there. Pam and Jenny were just walking Timmy home. They hoped it would be a good time to talk with Kathy.

It was. “Well, I certainly understand what you’re talking about Jenny. I sometimes have to deal with very rude people in the restaurant. I always remember the 1 Rule,” said Kathy.

“The 1 Rule!” said Pam. “what does the 1 Rule have to do with talking with rude adults? They are not going to even try to be agreeable.”

“You might be right about that, but there is something you don’t know about the 1 Rule, and about rude adults. I’ve never explained how we learn to use the 1 Rule with 2yr olds,” said Kathy.

“2yr olds?” interrupted Pam. “I don’t get it. What do they have to do with grumpy adults?”

“I’ll explain,” said Kathy, “because they actually have a lot to do with each other. When we are using the 1 Rule with 2yr olds, we have to do most of the work. We have try to agree with the 2yr old and if we can’t we have to help them choose something we like before the 2yr old is determined to get or do something we don’t want. Rude adults are kind of like 2yr olds, we have to do most of the work, trying to agree with what they want. Just like 2yr olds, they don’t know how to even want to find agreement. We are the examples of the 1 Rule in action to both of those groups, 2yr olds and grumpy adults.”

“I do get it! Exclaimed Pam. “They get to see how good it feels to have someone see their side of things and consider what they want is important. Oh! I get it!”

"I get it too. I can just think of any grumpy adult as a 2yr old who doesn't know better and be an example of a caring person to them," said Jenny.

"Yes," said Kathy, "and the other thing is that probably when these adults were small people did not treat them kindly and that's why they developed the habit of being rude or whatever. Maybe using the 1 Rule this way might help them feel better about life and other people. As least that's what's in my mind. When is your meeting, Jenny?"

"I think it's next Thursday. At least that's what my mom thinks. She is going to find out for sure."

"Well, at our next Guardians' meeting let's act out talking with adults," said Kathy.

"I was thinking the same thing," said Pam.

"Me, too!" said Jenny.

"We'll do it," said Kathy. "I'll explain to everyone what I explained to you and then we'll do our practice. It feels like building a bridge between people. It feels expansive."

"It's what Ken did when he reached out to Jeff and invited him to be a Guardian," said Pam.

"Yes," said Jenny, "and that has worked out great. I feel better already and I'm sure I'll feel great by the time of the meeting."

"I'm sure you will, Jenny," said Kathy.

"You are an awesome coach, Kathy!" said Pam. "Well, we'd better go. Bye Kathy. Bye Timmy."

A few days later, the Guardians were all gathered at Kathy's and Timmy's. Jenny told them about her upcoming meeting with the PTSA. Everyone was very excited about this. Pam explained how they decided to talk with Kathy about creating harmony with adults, even rude, grumpy adults. Everyone agreed that that was a problem sometimes. Then Kathy explained what she had told Jenny and Pam and Timmy about using the 1 Rule with 2yr olds and rude adults.

She also explained that they had decided that if everyone felt good about it, this day they would practice finding harmonious solutions when dealing with adults.

She said she'd been thinking about this since they met a few days ago and she thought that if we can all realize that adults who are not feeling happy and friendly are feeling bad inside of themselves, and some of these adults have been feeling bad for a long time. That's why they are rude or mean.

"Right," said Jeff. Everyone knew he spoke from experience. (See previous Guardian stories)

"People who feel good inside, people who are happy don't want to hurt other people in any way," said Kathy. "So maybe we can be a bit of goodness in their lives, if they come into our lives. It could make a good difference in their lives, maybe even a good, big difference. The 1 Rule can help us do that. So let's do this!"

“Yes!” shouted all the Guardians. Then they partnered up and went to create their demos.

“Okay, Guardians, who goes first?” asked Pam.

“I want to go first,” said Jenny, “since this is all because of me. Jeff is my partner.”

“Maybe your need started this, but we all need it,” said Kathy, “even me.”

“Our problem is grumpy father who doesn’t like the idea of the 1 Rule for a fundraising event. He thinks they should have a carnival. Here’s what we came up with.”

“No way! We always have a carnival. Everyone loves it.”

“I love the carnival, too. Everyone has fun there, going to try their luck at the different booths and eating all the delicious carnival food. We have to have a carnival. But I think we can have both.”

“You’re a crazy little girl! Do you know how much work is involved in having the carnival? No way can we do both.”

“I know it takes lots of people lots of work to do the carnival. This won’t take very much work. We have the place. We can do it here at the school. There is almost no set up involved. Lots of the kids are interested, even some of the teacher and parents.”

“It doesn’t sound good to me.”

“I understand that, but think of how much money we can raise with just a little work. Every student who participates is going to have their whole family come to see them. All those people will buy tickets and goodies during intermission. We’ll make a fortune! Kids love to act out, to be on stage. They will only need one day to learn how to do this and to perform at night. We could even do a few of these, inviting kids and families from all over town. Kids from other schools already like the idea of the Guardians.”

“Well, the Guardians is a good group of kids. I guess that is a good idea. You are right about making lots of money. Maybe we can use some of that for the carnival.”

“Yes! That is a great idea!”

Then Jenny and Jeff took a bow and everyone clapped and hooted!

“Wow!” said Kathy. “Awesome use of the 1 Rule for 2yr olds. We’ll have to think of a name for that version of the 1 Rule.”

“We want to go next,” said Timmy, “Elaine and I.” Elaine is Jeff’s younger sister and in the same class with Timmy.

“Here’s our problem, well, my problem. Talking with a mean, bossy teacher during lunch. Here’s what we came up with. Elaine is the teacher.”

“Timmy! Get over here and sit down! You know you’re not supposed to sit on that wall!”

“Oh, Mrs. Jones, I’m sorry. I didn’t know that.”

“Don’t you lie to me, young man! No one is supposed to sit on that wall.”

“I don’t lie, Mrs. Jones. I just never sat on the wall before and it looked like fun. I’m sorry to have bothered you by doing that.”

“Fun?! Jeremy fell off that wall and cracked his head open. He was my student. And can you imagine! They blamed me for that. His mother, his father, his whole family. They’ve never stopped blaming me for that. So, NO ONE sits on that wall! Ever! I don’t ever want to catch you on that wall again! Do you hear me?”

“Yes, Mrs. Jones. I won’t ever sit on that wall again. I’m glad you explained how dangerous it can be.”

“Well, yes. I’m glad you understand. You can go and play now. I’m sorry I yelled at you. You go play.”

Timmy and Elaine took their bow. Everyone clapped and hooted. “Great demo you two!” “She sure is mean!” “You were great with her, Timmy.”

“I don’t think I’ll ever be afraid of her again,” said Timmy.

“Me either,” said Elaine.

“You both did a fantastic job,” said Kathy. “Come here, Timmy.” She gave her son a big hug. “I loved seeing how strong and wise you are. It’s not easy to deal with such really rude and even mean people. I’m so glad that all of you are understanding how to use the 1 Rule with grumpy adults.”

“I’m glad you are not grumpy, Mom,” said Timmy.

“Me, too,” said Kathy. “Who next?”

“I want to go next,” said Ken. “I have some good news and because of that, I want to do something different. I want all of you who want to, to be my partners in this next demo. As you all know, I’m very involved in Scouting. Well, I am invited to speak at a Scouting conference. I’ve been thinking that I’d like to suggest a new badge, The 1 Rule.”

“Wow, Ken!”

“So I want to practice my presentation. This is just going to be the first time. I’ll probably want to practice it lots of times.”

After everyone was settled, “I have been invited here to present an idea for a new badge. Even Cub Scouts could start earning this badge. It could go all the way to Eagle Scouts. I learned about it by joining a club called the Guardians. We help keep kids from being bullied and from becoming bullies. I want to propose that we have Scout badges for The 1 Rule.”

Then Ken bowed. "That's as far as I can go today." Everyone clapped and shouted. "Great work, Ken!" "You go, Ken!" "Our hero!"

"Awesome, Ken!" said Kathy. "We'll definitely all work on this. You're going to give a stellar proposal. Awesome idea! Guardians, I am so proud of all of you! On with the show! Who's next?"

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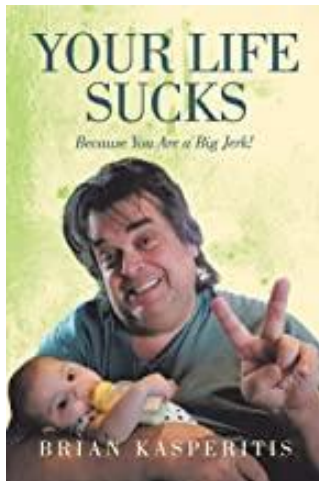
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