



UTAH'S ADOPTION CONNECTION

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

MAY 2014

Jasmine, age 16 is waiting...

Photo by: Linda Boyd

UTAH'S ADOPTION CONNECTION

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

QUARTERLY DCFS NEWSLETTER



Jesus, age 13 is waiting...

Photo by: Valerie Lindsay

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If you are interested in more information about any of the children featured in this publication, please contact The Adoption Exchange at 801-265-0444.

MAY 2014 EDITION

Kathy Searle, Editor

Lindsay Kaeding, Design Director

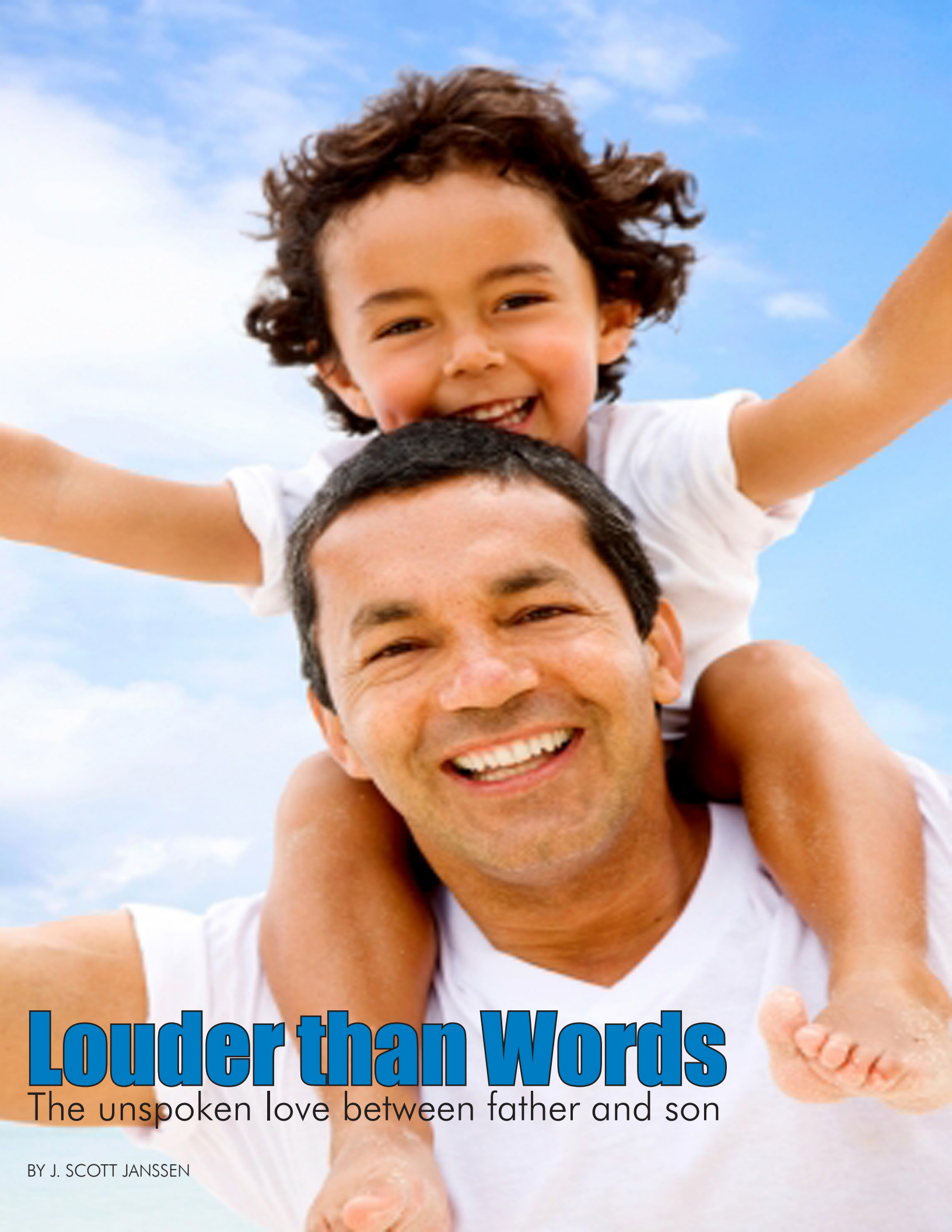
To submit articles or for a subscription, call (801) 265-0444 or toll free outside Salt Lake County call (866) 872-7212. This publication is funded by the State of Utah, Division of Child and Family Services. The Adoption Exchange prepares and prints the newsletter and the Division of Child and Family Services mails the publication. The mailing list is kept confidential. One can be removed from the mailing list by calling: (866) 872-7212 or 265-0444 within Salt Lake County.

Discrimination

A Rap By Josh, age 15, waiting child.

Through the love and the hate discrimination in place
through the gangsters and wangsters
through the raps and the fame
they haven't tried killing the source of the game.
But we're the only ones that can be blamed for our choices and mistakes
though we get remorse from the fakes,
out our tiny misfortune
of places of the tortures
like a hate that we hide inside
like a fire burning higher
and every time we try to love
we get blown off,
like a paper in the wind.
This ain't no win win situation
as we're getting through these people's brains,
that they have a choice whether or not to go through this circular chain,
to get beat up for or rise from fame
to the best of its ability
to get to the top of the mountain range
to see beyond the train and lies
to be neutralized and not have to deal with this nonsense and cries.
Though everyone wants to change
no one wants to try getting higher, higher then the sky
loving without hating,
hurting without bleeding,
taking shots without needing,
All I want is not to get bullied in this state,
keeping a clean slate,
not doing the drugs that I hate,
that got my family taken away.





Louder than Words

The unspoken love between father and son

BY J. SCOTT JANSSEN

As a young man living in New Jersey in the early 80s, I became a Bruce Springsteen fan. The Boss's music was everywhere, and the local imagery of his songs was as familiar to me as a well-worn jacket: dusty beach roads, boardwalks full of shady characters, muscle cars, freeways, factories, loading docks, and backstreets. The rough, taciturn world he described was my world, filled with people working hard to get by, clinging to their hopes while letting their deepest longings remain unexpressed or unacknowledged.

The Springsteen story that touched me the deepest, however, wasn't in a song, but in an introduction he delivered at a concert before he sang "The River," a haunting, dirgelike melody about how one generation's struggles can be handed down to the next. He described the spiral of hostility and misunderstanding between himself and his father during his teenage years. After their arguments, his father often angrily muttered, "I can't wait till the army gets you." It was 1968, and many young men in the neighborhood were being drafted and sent to Vietnam. Some of these men, Springsteen remembered, never came back. The ones who did were never the same.

When he got his draft notice, Springsteen expected the worst. It looked like his father had gotten his wish. He hopped a bus and disappeared for three days. When he showed up back at the house, his father was waiting. "Where you been?" he asked. "Got my draft papers. Went in for my physical." "What happened?" "They didn't take me." "That's good," said Springsteen's father, choking back his relief and saying nothing more.

Perhaps nowhere in the world of human relationships can so much be said in so few words than between fathers and sons: that's good. For a moment, clouds part, giving a brief glimpse of the depth of the bond that lies beneath. When I've felt closest to my own father, very little, if anything, was said between us. A few words have meant volumes, and the most important things have often been communicated in silence.

Recently, I've been thinking back to the times we spent in the backyard, throwing a baseball back and forth. It's early twilight, and the smell of freshly cut grass wafts in the summer air. The familiar sound of leather gloves popping with each catch creates its own unhurried rhythm, almost like a heartbeat. Little is being said, save for an occasional "nice catch," "good try," or "way to go, Hot Shot." When I don my baseball glove, my name always changes from Scott to Hot Shot, and the ball somehow stitches us together.

It's a simple memory---just a father and a son playing catch. So why do these times have such power for me now, 40 years later? As a boy, I saw these evenings as practice sessions, during which I was developing skills as a ball player. Now I see them as something else entirely. I know that it wasn't about baseball: it was about being with Dad.

There must've been nights when Dad, after working hard all day, would've preferred to relax, rather than throw a baseball. There must've been times, especially as I was learning the basics, when he dreaded the thought of chasing after yet another ball thrown wildly over his head. There must've been days when he put important things on hold or overlooked his own aches and pains to get out in the yard with the ball and gloves.

I'm overwhelmed with gratitude when I think of those countless nights, the Saturday practices he drove me to, the games he sat through. And I think about all the trips to the department stores (before there was such a thing as a sporting-goods store), when he not only helped me pick out the perfect bat, but paid for it without mentioning the work it'd taken to earn that money. I remember one trip in particular, when we went looking for a new glove. My mind was quickly set on one that was just a bit too big for my hand. After rebuffing a few gentle nudges from Dad, who encouraged me to try on a few more before choosing, he suddenly decided he needed a new glove, too, one that was just a bit too small for his hand. When we switched gloves, a few days later, there were no lectures, no I-told-you-so moments. He really seemed to like my glove.

Unlike Springsteen's, my relationship with my father wasn't contentious, but we did have our misunderstandings. What father and son don't? How many times have words of an older generation intended as guidance been interpreted as criticism? And how many times have the behaviors of a younger generation intended to carve out personal space been interpreted as rejection? I realize now that the language through which love was expressed between my father and me was often action-oriented, and a simple gesture or word stood in for much larger meanings. As our relationship changed, as I went from a boy barely able to swing a bat to a teenager, we always threw that baseball, no matter what.

As I've gotten older, I've become better at deciphering the shorthand fathers often use with their sons, and I feel increasingly connected to my dad. Like notes in a bottle, messages that went unnoticed, untranslated, or misunderstood for many years are now being fished out of the currents of time and delivered onto the shores of my awareness. I see now that he was always

watching---like when I was 4 years old and wandered off at Seaside Heights on the Jersey shore, not far from Springsteen's Asbury Park. Finding myself suddenly surrounded by strangers at the packed beach, I started screaming. People were towering over me like menacing giants. When a woman in a blue swimsuit and sun hat approached me, I yelled for her to stay back, terrified she'd carry me back to her lair. Then out of the corner of my eye I saw Dad running toward me---not walking fast, not jogging, but running at top speed. Relief flooded in as I realized I was safe. I must have been in his sight all along.

Why are these memories inundating me now? Through what alchemy have these dusky summer nights and crowded beaches been summoned back, after all these years? Who knows? Maybe it's just getting older. Is there some neurological program that makes us pause to take stock when we hit 50? Maybe it's the years spent as a hospice social worker, watching as messages get lost in translation and trying to help. Maybe it's just life.

My days of smacking line drives down the third-base line and digging wild throws out of the dirt on first are over. Dad's hair is gray, and mine is fast becoming so. But I still have a dog-eared photograph of my first Little League team, with my teammates and me lined up in two rows in our green-and-white uniforms bearing the name of our sponsor, Murphy Tile Company. Behind us are four adults, one of whom is my dad. What strikes me is how young he and the other fathers look, all of them younger than I am now.

In those days, I expected all fathers to live forever, but the summer after 10th grade, my friend Kenny's father died suddenly of a heart attack. The next day, Kenny and I were leaning against the gunmetal-gray hood of his dad's beat up Dodge, searching awkwardly for ways to fill the silence. I didn't want to be there, but it seemed important to show up, to let him know I cared. Before I left, we agreed to gather some of the guys in the neighborhood that Saturday and head down to one of the baseball diamonds to see if we could rustle up a game.

Later that day, I was out in the backyard throwing a baseball into the air and running it down, trying to calm my mind. At one point, Dad came out, pretending he needed something from the storage shed. I could tell he wanted to check on me but wasn't sure what to say. As we fumbled for words, I found myself crying on his shoulder as he hugged me. When I looked up, I saw the tears in his eyes. There was no conversation. When the moment was over, he went back to the shed, and we never spoke of it again. We didn't need to. In the mysterious lexicon of fathers and sons, it was one of those rare moments that needed no translation. I got the message. I'm here. I care. No matter what savage curveballs life throws, we'll always be a team. In my mind, I can see the Boss wink and hear him say, "That's good."



J. Scott Janssen, LCSW, has been a hospice social worker for more than 20 years. He works for Duke Hospice in Durham, North Carolina. Scott is the author of a book about using historical stories as metaphors with hospice patients and families. Contact: john.janssen@duke.edu.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BIRTH (NON-ADOPTED) AND ADOPTED SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS???

I am a student at the Boston College Graduate School of Social Work conducting a study to better understand how the relationship between adopted and birth (non-adopted) siblings growing up in the same adoptive home evolves from childhood through adulthood. Specifically, I am seeking assistance in locating in-race, adult birth (non-adopted)/ adopted sibling pairs in which the adopted person came into the adoptive family under 2 years of age and the non-adopted (birth) sibling was no more than 5 years at the time the adoption occurred. Ideally, the siblings are now adults between 20 and 40 years of age. I am interested in the possibility of interviewing both the adopted and non-adopted siblings and their parents. Interviews will be either face to face or over the phone, will probably take between one and two hours and will ideally be conducted beginning this fall.

A 20 dollar Target gift card will be provided to each participant at the end of the interview as a recognition of the time and energy you spent volunteering for this study. If you are interested or know any adult sibling pairs of adopted and not-adopted persons, please contact me for more information about the study. Thank you in advance for your support and interest.

Claire Madden
Email: maddenc@bc.edu



Utah's Adoption Connection **LENDING LIBRARY**

Utah's Adoption Connection Lending Library is just one of a variety of post adoption services provided by The Adoption Exchange. The Library includes selected titles for both adoptive families and the professionals who serve them.

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—UT Mother of Mood-Disorder Child

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Families Since 1983

BENEFITS FOR ADOPTING AN OLDER

Compiled by, Marty Shannon State Adoption Program Manager

YOUTH 13 YEARS OLD AND OLDER

Health and Mental Health

- Teenage youth adopted from foster care generally qualify for Medicaid coverage to age 18.
- Medicaid covers medical, dental and mental health services.
- Medicaid can transfer to any other state in the United States.

Financial Adoption Monthly Subsidy

- Monthly financial subsidy is based on the youth's needs to help with the costs of raising a teenager. It is generally less than the cost of care for the youth in foster care.

Post-Secondary Education

- Youth adopted at age 13 years and older are eligible for federal Pell grants that pay tuition expenses and often books or other expenses. Application for FAFSA (Federal Assistance for Financial Student Aid, i.e., Pell grant) will be based on the student's own income. They do not have to disclose their adoptive parent's income. (Pell grants are based on income eligibility and disbursed through the financial aid office of the college or training institute. The Pell grant pays tuition expenses, and if there is any left over, it is disbursed to the student for books or other expenses.)

YOUTH 15 YEARS OLD AND OLDER

Adopting a youth 15 years old and older could have all the benefits of adopting a youth 13 years and older plus.....

Transition to Adult Living Services

- Basic Life Skills classes – the same that are available for youth in foster care. Classes are geared for youth ages 16 or 17. Classes are dependent on availability (adopted youth do not qualify for the financial incentives). Contact the Transition to Adult Living person in the region in which you reside.
 - Northern Region—Crystal Vail, 801-395-5956, cvail@utah.gov
 - Salt Lake Valley Region—Deena Ott, 801-755-7667, dott@utah.gov
 - Western Region—Michael Blakley, 801-372-2885, mblakley@utah.gov
 - Eastern Region—Jordan Witbeck, 435-630-5982, jwitbeck@utah.gov
 - Southwest Region—Mike Beacco, 435-652-2960, mbeacco@utah.gov

Post-Secondary Education

- Youth adopted at age 15 years old or older who have received 12 months of Transition to Adult Living services while in foster care can receive federal Education Training Vouchers to help with the cost of post secondary education until they are 21 years old.
 - To be eligible, the youth needs to:
 - Graduate from high school or get a GED; and
 - Be accepted into college or a vocational training program.

OLDER YOUTH FROM FOSTER CARE

YOUTH 16 YEARS OLD AND OLDER

Adopting a youth 16 years old and older could have all the benefits of adopting a youth 13 or 15 years and older plus...

Post-Secondary Education

- Youth who were adopted from foster care after age 16 will qualify for Education Training Vouchers (ETV). Youth who meet ETV qualifications can receive educational assistance until their 21st birthday. This can be extended to age 23 if the youth enrolled by age 21 and is successfully working toward a degree or certificate.
- Youth who meet the qualifications for ETV may also qualify to receive Olene S. Walker Transition to Adult Living Scholarship. An eligible youth may receive up to \$5000 per state fiscal year for tuition, room and board, books, a computer, and other costs of education. Actual award amounts will be determined by financial need and other financial aid/scholarship resources and funds availability. Awards will be pro-rated for part-time students.
 - o Selection: Applicants will be selected based on their strong desire to complete a post-secondary program of study, potential for academic success, and financial need. Students who are awarded the scholarship are required to participate in extra-curricular activities and meet regularly with a mentor.
 - o Scholarship Amount: The maximum yearly scholarship award is \$5,000 for full-time enrollment (12 or more credit hours); \$3,750 for three quarters-time enrollment (9–11 hours); and \$2,500 for part-time enrollment (6–8 hours). The scholarship may be renewed up to four years depending on satisfactory academic progress and availability of funds. Students must re-apply each year to renew the scholarship. The scholarship is sponsored by private donors in partnership with the Utah Educational Savings Plan.
- Utah JOB CORPS is a program for youth 16-25 years old who want to complete their GED and receive job training while living on a JOB CORPS campus.



THE IMPORTANT THING ABOUT YELLING

By Rachel Macy Stafford

I cherish the notes I receive from my children—whether they are scribbled with a Sharpie on a yellow sticky note or written in perfect penmanship on lined paper. But the Mother’s Day poem I recently received from my 9-year-old daughter was especially meaningful. In fact, the first line of the poem caused my breath to catch as warm tears slid down my face. “The important thing about my mom is ... she’s always there for me, even when I get in trouble.”

You see, it hasn’t always been this way. In the midst of my highly distracted life, I started a new practice that was quite different from the way I behaved up until that point. I became a yeller. It wasn’t often, but it was extreme—like an overloaded balloon that suddenly pops and makes everyone in earshot startle with fear.

So what was it about my then 3-year-old and 6-year-old children that caused me to lose it? Was it how she insisted on running off to get three more beaded necklaces and her favorite pink sunglasses when we were already late? Was it that she tried to pour her own cereal and dumped the entire box on the kitchen counter? Was it that she dropped and shattered my special glass angel on the hardwood floor after being told not to touch it? Was it that she fought sleep like a prizefighter when I needed peace and quiet the most? Was it that the two of them fought over ridiculous things like who would be first out of the car or who got the biggest dip of ice cream? Yes, it was those things—normal mishaps and typical kid issues and attitudes that irritated me to the point of losing control.

That is not an easy sentence to write. Nor is this an easy time in my life to relive because truth be told, I hated myself in those moments. What had become of me that I needed to scream at two precious little people who I loved more than life?

Let me tell you what had become of me.

My distractions

Excessive phone use, commitment overload, multiple page to-do lists, and the pursuit of perfection consumed me. And yelling at the people I loved was a direct result of the loss of control I was feeling in my life. Inevitably, I had to fall apart somewhere. So I fell apart behind closed doors in the company of the people who meant the most to me.

Until one fateful day. My oldest daughter had gotten on a stool and was reaching for something in the pantry when she accidentally dumped an entire bag of rice on the floor. As a million tiny grains pelleted the floor like rain, my child’s eyes welled up with tears. And that’s when I saw it—the fear in her eyes as she braced herself for her mother’s tirade.

She’s scared of me, I thought with the most painful realization imaginable. My six-year-old child is scared of my reaction to her innocent mistake. With deep sorrow, I realized that was not the mother I wanted my children to grow up with, nor was it how I wanted to live the rest of my life.

10 Within a few weeks of that episode, I had my Breakdown-

Breakthrough—my moment of painful awareness that propelled me on a Hands Free journey to let go of distraction and grasp what really mattered. That was two and a half years ago—two and half years of scaling back slowly on the excess and electronic distraction in my life ... two and half years of releasing myself from the unachievable standard of perfection and societal pressure to “do it all.” As I let go of my internal and external distractions, the anger and stress pent up inside me slowly dissipated. With a lighter load, I was able to react to my children’s mistakes and wrongdoings in a more calm, compassionate, and reasonable manner. I said things like, “It’s just chocolate syrup. You can wipe it up, and the counter will be as good as new.” (Instead of expelling an exasperated sigh and an eye roll for good measure.) I offered to hold the broom while she swept up a sea of Cheerios that covered the floor. (Instead of standing over her with a look of disapproval and utter annoyance.) I helped her think through where she might have set down her glasses. (Instead of shaming her for being so irresponsible.) And in the moments when sheer exhaustion and incessant whining were about to get the best of me, I walked into the bathroom, shut the door, and gave myself a moment to exhale and remind myself they are children, and children make mistakes. Just like me.

And over time, the fear that once flared in my children’s eyes when they were in trouble disappeared. And thank goodness, I became a haven in their times of trouble—instead of the enemy from which to run and hide.

I am not sure I would have thought to write about this profound transformation had it not been for the incident that happened last Monday afternoon. In that moment, I got a taste of life overwhelmed and the urge to yell was on the tip of my tongue. I was nearing the final chapters of the book I am currently writing and my computer froze up. Suddenly the edits of three entire chapters disappeared in front of my eyes. I spent several minutes frantically trying to revert to the most recent version of the manuscript. When that failed to work, I consulted the time machine backup, only to find that it, too, had experienced an error. When I realized I would never recover the work I did on those three chapters, I wanted to cry—but even more so, I wanted to rage.

But I couldn’t because it was time to pick up the children from school and take them to swim team practice. With great restraint, I calmly shut my laptop and reminded myself there could be much, much worse problems than re-writing these chapters. Then I told myself there was absolutely nothing I could do about this problem right now.

When my children got in the car, they immediately knew something was wrong. “What’s wrong, Mama?” they asked in unison after taking one glimpse of my ashen face. I felt like yelling, “I lost three days worth of work on my book!” I felt like hitting the steering wheel with my fist because sitting in the car was the last place I wanted to be in that moment. I wanted to go home and fix my book—not shuttle kids to

swim team, wring out wet bathing suits, comb through tangled hair, make dinner, wash dishes, and do the nightly tuck in. But instead I calmly said, “I’m having a little trouble talking right now. I lost part of my book. And I don’t want to talk because I feel very frustrated.” “We’re sorry,” the oldest one said for the both of them. And then, as if they knew I needed space, they were quiet all the way to the pool. The children and I went about our day and although I was more quiet than usual, I didn’t yell and I tried my best to refrain from thinking about the book issue.

Finally, the day was almost done. I had tucked my youngest child in bed and was laying beside my oldest daughter for nightly Talk Time. “Do you think you will get your chapters back?” my daughter asked quietly. And that’s when I started to cry – not so much about the three chapters, I knew they could be rewritten – my heartbreak was more of a release due to the exhaustion and frustration involved in writing and editing a book. I had been so close to the end. To have it suddenly ripped away was incredibly disappointing.

To my surprise, my child reached out and stroked my hair softly. She said reassuring words like, “Computers can be so frustrating,” and “I could take a look at the time machine to see if I can fix the backup.” And then finally, “Mama, you can do this. You’re the best writer I know,” and “I’ll help you however I can.”

In my time of “trouble” there she was, a patient and compassionate encourager who wouldn’t think of kicking me when I was already down. My child would not have learned this empathetic response if I had remained a yeller. Because yelling shuts down the communication; it severs the bond; it causes people to separate—instead of come closer.

“The important thing is ... my mom is always there for me, even when I get in trouble,” a poem written by my daughter #handsfreemama, My child wrote that about me, the woman who went through a difficult period that she’s not proud of, but she learned from. And in my daughter’s words, I see hope for others.

The important thing is ... it’s not too late to stop yelling.

The important thing is ... children forgive—especially if they see the person they love trying to change.

The important thing is ... life is too short to get upset over spilled cereal and misplaced shoes.

The important thing is ... no matter what happened yesterday, today is a new day.

Today we can choose a peaceful response.

And in doing so, we can teach our children that peace builds bridges—bridges that can carry us over in times of trouble.

Rachel Macy Stafford is a certified special education teacher. In 2010, this life-long writer felt compelled to share her journey to let go of daily distraction and grasp what really matters by creating the blog, “Hands Free Mama.” Here she provides individuals with the inspiration, motivation, and tools to let go of the distractions of the modern age so they can grasp the moments in life that matter. Join her on her journey at Hands Free Mama and by visiting “The Hands Free Revolution” on Facebook! Rachel’s life-long dream of becoming a published author recently came true. Check out her recently released book, *Hands Free Mama: Guide to Putting Down the Phone, Burning the To-Do List, and Letting Go of Perfection to Grasp What Really Matters!* <http://www.amazon.com/Hands-Free-Mama-Putting-Perfection/dp/0310338131>



Grief

PART OF THE HEALING PROCESS

By June Bond

A week ago I sat in a room with 30 professionals in a class designed to help us assist children in the grief process. Half of the participants were Hospice workers, tasked with the daunting job of helping a child grieve through the loss of a parent, grandparent, or sibling through death. The other half of the class were adoption/foster care social workers, tasked with the daunting job of helping children deal with the trauma of abuse and neglect that ultimately resulted in a figurative death of the relationship between parent and child. It was not long into the class when questions and differences emerged between the two groups of professionals --- the main difference centered on the ability to define the loss through death as a permanent loss, where the loss felt in foster care and adoption was often an on-going and recurring loss as the child moved through the system and even after an adoptive placement. As one caseworker aptly stated, "the grief associated with recurring rejection may be harder than the loss of

a loved one through death." With that being said how do we help children traverse the gauntlet of grief?

The first step is to recognize the signs of grief in a child. The normal response to grief can be found in physical, emotional, behavioral and cognitive responses. Physical responses can include, dry mouth, lack of energy, muscle weakness, shortness of breath, tightness in the throat and chest and over sensitivity to noise. Emotional responses, which may be recognized more easily, include sadness, anger, loneliness, guilt, self-reproach, fatigue and helplessness. These emotional responses may be manifested in behaviors such as changes in sleep and eating patterns, nightmares, recurring dreams of death, crying, and social withdrawal. Changes in the ways that a child may think during grief can be seen in disbelief, confusion, and preoccupation. Magical thinking

may be prevalent in a younger child during grief. The child may seek to blame anyone BUT their offending parent for the removal from their home and the termination of rights (TPR). The blame can be focused on a sibling, the foster parent, the social worker or even the judge. The younger child may also refuse to accept and understand the finality of the court decision to place a child in foster care and to TPR the birth parent's rights, thus creating a death in the relationship. It is also important for foster parents to be aware that the child may also experience grief that is not associated with the TRP of their parents, but with the inherit changes in the daily life of a foster child. When an older child is moved away from their current setting to their new home, the child experiences the loss of former caregivers and friends, the loss of familiar objects, and the loss of familiar routines and habits, thus causing some of the same responses of grief. The adoptive or foster parent needs to acknowledge how these often times abrupt changes can trigger grief.

Another important key in recognizing grief is to look for visual cues over verbal cues. Children are not always able to talk about their feelings, thus using their actions to speak louder than their words. Younger children may exhibit physical symptoms and/or regression which are also a common reaction to loss and grief. Children may revert to thumb sucking, rocking, tantruming, or enuresis. A loss of concentration and mood swings may also occur in older children. In addition, some children fluctuate between withdrawal and aggression. Others may exhibit guilt about getting a new family, resembling survivor guilt. This is most common when a sibling group is separated and some of the children are not adopted.

It is also important to note that as children go through certain developmental stages, the feelings of loss and grief may be more prevalent. The children's level of thinking and reasoning go through progressive stages, culminating in the ability to process complex material. As a child's ability to reason progresses, higher order questions evolve about the reasons behind their placement and their birth family. This may cause the child to "circle back" to some previous issues of loss and grief that the foster/adoptive parents thought had been resolved years earlier. Consequently, the issues of loss and grief can be linear, curricular and developmental. REMEMBER--- there is not a statute of limitation on grief.

Is there any one underlying premise when working and living with a child that is suffering loss and grief? The MOST important thing that we can do for a child is to be honest and answer their questions when they are asked. Children learn by asking questions. We must be sensitive to the child's need to understand what has happened that has changed their family dynamics. For example, why am I not with my parents? If termination is not completed by the court, the foster parent may say, "It is the court's job to make sure that you are safe and you were not in a safe place and had to be moved to a safe place to live." If termination has been accomplished, the child needs to understand that being reunited with their parent is not a possibility. This is a critical step in being able to grieve and to get through the loss. An initial part of adoption preparation must focus on the finality of the termination of parental rights. This needs to be reinforced by the foster family and social worker. This will have to be done knowing the level of the child's comprehension and the circumstances surrounding the adoption plan. It is also important to help the

child understand that the adoption plan was not the result of any fault or issue that the child had. This is very important when the adoption plan was made due to abuse of the child. Without a firm understanding about the finality of the TPR, children can emerge into the world of magical thinking, which can include the ability to go back to their family of origin ---- or the blaming of siblings or someone else for their removal, rather than understanding the loss and the right to move forward with another family.

As parents, social workers, and caregivers, what are other ways that we can help children resolve their feelings of loss and grief regarding adoption?

- Acknowledge times that you have felt loss and grief and how you dealt with it.
- Suggest for older children to keep a journal to write about their feelings that they may not want to share with anyone else.
- Keep open ended art supplies for the younger child to express their feelings. Use open ended color books that can promote the expression of feelings through art.
- Read books to your child about others who have experienced loss and grief and have lived through their losses. Use gentle questioning about how their situations may be alike or different. Some suggestions include: A Taste of Blackberries, Badger's Parting Gifts, Bridge to Terabithia, First Snow, Missing May, Annie and the Old One, Ten Good Things About Barney, Nadia, The Willful, and Tiger Eyes.
- Be prepared to discuss some issues about the placement plan over and over again as the child matures and has a deeper level of comprehension of the initial facts. Remember that loss and grief issues can be circular as the child's development progresses.
- Seek out other resources such as an adoption support group for adoptees and counseling for the adoptee and for the entire family unit. Be aware of how the child's loss and grief issues may be affecting the bonding between you and your child.

Loss and grief is a normal part of all life. Each of us will suffer loss and grief at some time in our life. The ability to deal with the loss and grief with a supportive caring family can help a child move forward to know that his losses and grief can be replaced with a loving forever family on whom he can depend! Remember that positive grief leads to healthy relationships and moving beyond the past hurts.

June Bond earned a BA in psychology and a M.Ed. in early Childhood Education from Converse College. She has published over 40 articles that relate to adoption, education, and family issues and speaks nation-wide on adoption-related issues. She was South Carolina Adoption Advocate of the Year in 1995. In addition, she has worked with the Presbyterian Church of the United States to develop a portion of the nation-wide curriculum – Wee Believe. She is the 2006 Congressional Angel of Adoption recipient. She serves as Chairman of the Spartanburg County Foster Care Review Board. June is currently the Executive Director of Adoption Advocacy of South Carolina. Adoption Advocacy is a not for profit agency that works with families that want to enlarge their families through adoption. The agency focuses on being the adopting family advocate and has a special grant program through the Dave Thomas Foundation and Adopt America Network to assist families who want to adopt children and sibling groups, age eight and older, who are currently legally free and residing in foster care. This special grant program has assisted South Carolina families to welcome 576 children to their forever homes. Mrs. Bond has been a certified adoption investigator for over 25 years. She is the proud mother of six children, ranging in age from 21 to 34. She is also the very proud grandmother of four of the most awesome grandchildren on the planet!

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RUNNING FOR THOSE WHO WAIT

Marathoning *for Those Who Wait.*

Last year The Adoption Exchange welcomed Laura as an intern from the University of Utah. Laura was put in charge of The Adoption Exchange's annual 5K: Running For Those Who Wait. She took off running, so to speak. Laura said, "This internship was so much fun. I worked alongside the amazing ladies of the Utah office, and learned a lot from the year I spent there." As a part of the planning process, Laura was able to obtain a free entrance into the Salt Lake City Marathon for a hopeful participant. Laura hoped to use the entrance as a way to generate awareness of and participants in The Adoption Exchange's 5K. Unfortunately there were not too many eager takers. In fact, there wasn't even one. Laura didn't want the entrance to go to waste, however, so she decided to run the half marathon herself. This is her story.

April 17th, 2013, was when I was told I still had the entry, and decided to run the marathon which took place on April 20th, 2013.

At the time, I was really scared. I mean, I knew I could run...but I definitely did not foresee me running 26.2 miles and making it to the finish line. But I figured, what harm can it do? I didn't tell anyone about the race except my husband. I really did not want people to know I was running, only to then tell them I stopped at mile 15 and was taken away in an ambulance.

I was pretty nervous the night before the race, but morning came, and I felt fine. I knew there was no pressure, and just wanted to have a good time. The atmosphere was incredible. Everybody there was so excited and positive. It was a gloomy, rainy morning and yet spirits were through the roof. The start was at the Legacy Bridge at the University of Utah. Families and friends were cheering on their runners at 7AM in the rain- it was the coolest thing! I was just loving it. I immediately found some pacers to run with. I thought that might keep me going if I knew what time I was running. I started with the 9:15 per mile pacers and stuck with them for the first 17 miles of the race. It was incredible! The two I ran with were seasoned runners; one was running his 100th marathon that day. I chatted with them about food, technique and shared connections until I just couldn't keep that pace anymore. It was when I hit the flattest, straightest part of the run where I lost it. It stopped raining, was getting warmer, and mentally, my brain just couldn't handle that part of the course. All I could see was never ending Vine Street. It was so hard. I got back into the swing of things when my husband met me on 45th South near Highland. He forced some Cliff Shot Cubes down my throat and encouraged me on.

There was an ambulance at this point of the race picking someone up, and though I was tempted to climb in the back, I refrained and pushed on.

There came a point near mile 24 when I thought, "I can't do this". I knew I only had two miles left, but man, I was done! This also was the point where my feet were so cramped, that I wanted to walk, but walking hurt way more than running, so I just had to force myself to run. The runners around me were great; I was so close to finishing but my feet felt like they were in a meat grinder, so I stopped to stretch them on the curb and other runners were so quick to ask if I was ok, to encourage me on. It was awesome. People I didn't even know.

As I rounded the corner to the finish line I heard familiar voices...Husband...In-laws? Siblings? Dad? Nephews and nieces? This can't be. I thought to myself, am I hallucinating? But there they all were. My husband figured that after I told him I was at mile 20, that I might finish and he invited all our family to come cheer me through the finish line. I was dazed. My legs were rubber. I was so happy. I had envisioned myself crawling through the finish line as they were sweeping up the garbage from the race. That marathon was an experience I will NEVER forget.

So now I have that marathon entry again. I am running this year for those who wait. The name of the annual 5K is "Running For Those Who Wait" and so this year, I am "Marathoning For Those Who Wait" in an effort to bring awareness to The Adoption Exchange, the 5K, and the kids that are still waiting. I am going to try to beat my time from last year which was four hours, 40 minutes, and 32 seconds. Wish me luck!



To follow along on Laura's marathon journey go to: www.marathoningforthosewhowait.blogspot.com

If you would like to register for the annual Running for Those Who Wait 5K and Family one mile walk,

www.adoptex.org/5K



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