



## Living With Children

By John Rosemond  
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Feelings are a wild card. On the one hand, the ability to experience deep emotion is one of the things that defines us as human. On the other, feelings can be and often are destructive to relationships and even to self. Like thoughts and behavior, feelings begin in chaos (check out the toddler), and like thoughts and behavior, feelings require firm discipline lest they become ever more chaotic.

In the 1960s, the profession of psychology – my profession – began to focus on and obsess about feelings, especially children’s feelings. In graduate school, I learned that children raised in the 1950s and before (me!) had not been allowed to express their feelings freely. Their “bottled-up” feelings, starved of ventilation, rotted and became putrid, causing all manner of problems, most notably low self-esteem. Through various bogus therapies (e.g. hitting their parents with foam rubber bats as encouraging therapists looked on and asked the parents how they felt about being hit by their

child), children were supposedly assisted toward “getting in touch with” and liberating their long-repressed emotions, thus cleansing their psyches of accumulated flotsam. (It is true, by the way, that we baby boomers were not allowed to express our feelings freely. For that, we are forever indebted to the common sense of our elders.)

America is now forty years into this movement, enough time to have figured out that not one speck of good has come of it. Ah, but the mainstream mental health community has yet to figure this out. Its true believers continue to encourage children to talk about their feelings. The answer to “How do you feel about that?” is, apparently, more important than the answer to “What is the right and proper thing to do about that?”

This sort of approach verifies that the child’s emotions are in some way valid. Now, hear me clearly: I am not saying that a child’s emotions are never valid. I’m saying that children are, by nature, soap opera factories.

As such, giving a child the impression that every emotion that wells up inside of him is worthy of serious discussion (and that people should adjust their behavior accordingly) is destructive to the child. Just as children must be told that certain behavior is inappropriate, so must they be told that the expression of certain emotions is inappropriate.

These days, it is psychologically incorrect to say to a child, “You’re being silly. There are children in the world who have real problems, like not having enough food. If the worst problem in your life is that someone called you a name, well, sorry to tell you, but I’m not going to give that the time of day. I’ve got much better things to do. Get a grip, kiddo.”

Those approximate my mother’s words to me on occasions when I was making emotional mountains out of molehills. Most people of my generation can testify to similar experiences, for which we are thankful.

Which is the happier, more well-adjusted child: one who expresses his feelings freely when he doesn’t like the way things are or one who has learned to accept that things will not always be as he would wish? The latter, of course!

# Kansas teen to get high school, Harvard diplomas in 1 month

Associated Press

A 16-year-old Kansas boy will soon earn his high school diploma — and a few days later he’ll travel to Harvard to collect his bachelor’s degree.

Ulysses High School senior Braxton Moral will attend both commencement ceremonies in May, becoming the only student to successfully pursue a four-year high school degree and a bachelor’s degree from Harvard at the same time, The Hutchinson News reported.

Harvard has changed the rules, Braxton’s father Carlos Moral said, so his son will “the one and only” reaching that milestone. Braxton Moral will be 17 when he gets his diplomas

Carlos Moral said they began to realize their son was special when he was in the third grade.

“They told us: ‘You need to do something. He’s not just gifted. He’s really, really gifted,’” he said.

Braxton Moral skipped the fourth grade.

The Ulysses school district allowed him to take some high school classes while he was still in middle school. Before high school he took a class offered at Fort Hays State University. Then he was admitted into Harvard.

Braxton Moral simultaneously studied at the high



**Ulysses High School senior Braxton Moral sits for a portrait at the school in Ulysses, Kansas, on Wednesday, Dec. 12. The 16-year old said his fellow students at the high school often treat him just like any other student, although they do like to tease him about his expected graduation from Harvard University a few weeks before he graduates from high school. Moral works on his Harvard studies three hours each day at high school. He also participates in other school activities such as weights, scholars bowl, debate and tennis.**

(Sandra J. Milburn/The Hutchinson News via AP)

school and the Harvard Extension School. The program typically serves adults who work and can’t attend classes on campus full time.

Ulysses High School math teacher Patsy Love served as the proctor for the Harvard program, administering Moral’s tests in Kansas. Moral spent the summer before his junior year at Harvard’s campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

“We constantly are monitoring Braxton to make sure he is not too overwhelmed,” said Julie Moral, Brax-

ton Moral’s mother. “No achievement is worth him being unhappy.”

Braxton Moral is on track to graduate from the Bachelor of Liberal Arts program, with a major government and a minor in English, said Harry Pierre, associate director of communications for Harvard’s Division of Continuing Education.

Braxton Moral said he hopes to attend Harvard Law School next.

“Politics is end game for me,” he said, though he’s still too young to vote.

## THE WICKER REPORT

By: United States Senator Roger Wicker



### Wicker Hopeful About Reforms in ‘FIRST STEP Act’ Legislation Targets Recidivism to Improve Criminal Justice System

A few weeks ago, I joined President Trump in Gulfport for a roundtable discussion on prison reform. Then, on December 19, I voted for the federal legislation discussed at that meeting, the “FIRST STEP Act.” This important bill does as its name implies, taking a constructive step to fix our criminal justice system while strengthening law and order over the long term.

It was encouraging to see Democrats and Republicans rally around the legislation, which earned the support of the Trump Administration and a wide range of outside groups. One of the bill’s primary objectives is to reverse the problem of recidivism – when offenders are rearrested after their release. Studies

Parents routinely seek my counsel concerning the former, describing children who become apoplectic at, say, the word “no.” Invariably, the parents in question are attempting to solve the problem by talking to their kids about – you guessed it – their feelings. And, predictably, the more they talk, the worse the problem becomes. When they stop talking and begin to demonstrate calm, purposeful intolerance – in the form of penalizing consequences – for inappropriate emotional outbursts, the outbursts gradually stop and, lo and behold, the happiness quotient of the children in question begins to rise.

Which is a good thing for all concerned, especially the child.

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have shown that rearrests happen for nearly half of federal prisoners.

#### Preventing Future Crime

The “FIRST STEP Act” seeks to break this cycle of incarceration by encouraging prisoners to participate in programs that have been shown to reduce recidivism. These programs are potentially life-changing for participants. They also offer benefits to society as a whole, preventing future crime and prison overcrowding – not to mention the associated financial burdens that crime and incarceration put on taxpayers. The programs can also provide educational opportunities and vocational training, readying inmates to find a job when they leave prison.

The job environment that prisoners face after their release matters to their successful transition back into society. Today’s thriving economy has created more jobs and an attractive market for job seekers. Job programs in prison could help lower the high unemployment that currently exists among working-age men with a criminal history. In the end, employers would have more skilled applicants to fill available positions and our economy’s productivity would remain strong.

#### Sensible Adjustments to Sentencing Rules

Another important reform in the bill is the slight modifications it makes to current sentencing rules for nonviolent prisoners. Moreover, it empowers judges to decide appropriate sentences rather than forcing them to apply mandatory ones. As the son of a circuit judge, I appreciate the bill’s attention to the critical role that judges play in determining a fair punishment. Another provision provides inmates the opportunity to participate in programs to demonstrate good behavior and potentially earn earlier release.

In addition, the “FIRST STEP Act” addresses the controversial “three strike” rule that was implemented during the Clinton Administration. Although intended to deter crime, it often left those with only minor drug-related offenses facing lifetime prison sentences. Minority communities, in particular, have been disproportionately affected. The “FIRST STEP Act” reduces these life sentences for nonviolent drug offenders to 25 years.

A federal law to reform the criminal justice system will not transform every prison in the United States, since many more prisoners are incarcerated in our state prisons than in our federal ones. However, the “FIRST STEP Act” is a starting point for constructive dialogue across party lines that recognizes the power of redemption and policies that can help encourage it. Above all else, these discussions should prioritize the safety and well-being of our communities and our nation.

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GOODMAN CAMPUS

JAN. 7, 9 A.M.-6 P.M.

YAZOO CENTER (YAZOO CITY)

JAN. 7, 4-6 P.M.

GRENADA CAMPUS

JAN. 8, 9 A.M.-6 P.M.

ATTALA CENTER (KOSCIUSKO)

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