



Living With Children

By John Rosemond

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"People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of proof but on the basis of what they find attractive."

So said 17th Century French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal. He meant that people are more likely to form opinion based on emotions than evidence.

I thought of Pascal's insight as I read several excerpts from "PARENTSPEAK: What's Wrong with How We Talk to Our Children—and What to Say Instead" (Workman, 2017) by California parent educator Jennifer Lehr.

The gist of "PARENTSPEAK" is that seemingly innocuous things parents often say to children—"Say thank you," for example—are actually psychologically harmful. Other such apparently toxic comments include "Say you're sorry," "Give Grandma a kiss" and "Be careful!"

Lehr asserts that comments and instructions of this sort "are all about control." Rather

than taking time to understand children's feelings, thoughts, and motivations, parents focus on obedience. What's to understand? Children do not know what is best for them. Their feelings and thoughts, often a muddle, require as much direction as their behavior. They need adults who will take charge when taking charge is called for.

Lehr relates an incident when she instructed her 4-year-old daughter to thank a friend for having her over for a playdate. Although she did eventually mumble thanks, the daughter looked "kowtowed." Lehr is convinced she caused her daughter to feel "demeaned and resentful" and to conclude that how Lehr looks to others is "more important than her [the daughter's] dignity."

How does Lehr know this? She doesn't, of course. Pascal would say that Lehr's psychoanalysis of her daughter's response to "Say thank you" is based not on evidence but rather

nothing more than Lehr's own emotional state. Furthermore, it's the sort of thing that often reflects a lack of emotional boundary between parent and child, also known as co-dependency. My mother—definitely not the co-dependent type—gave me similar instructions when I was a child. I don't recall feeling demeaned or resenting her for lowering my sense of personal dignity. The simple fact is that when it comes to proper manners, children require tutoring until the manners become habit. Proper manners demonstrate respect for others. Therefore, instructing a child in proper manners is good and more accurately called direction, not control.

Besides, there's nothing wrong with obedience to legitimate authority, no matter one's age. Research finds what commonsense confirms: obedient children are happy children; disobedient children are not. In other words, obedience is of great benefit to a child. The inescapable, albeit shocking (to some), conclusion: Children should do what their parents tell them to do, including saying thank you and giving Grandma a kiss before she goes home.

WEST REPORT

by West Civic Club

On Tuesday there was a surprise 93rd birthday party held for Ms. Helen Smith at her personal care home. Her son Larry Smith, daughter-in-law Tricia and sister-in-law Carol Black had dinner, ice cream and the main treat was her beautiful birthday cake. She was truly surprised.

The citizens of the area would like to thank our highway commissioner, Dick Hall, for sending his crew to make improvements to the railroad crossing at Highway 19 and, hopefully, the railroad will replace the rails when funds are available. We are very appreciative to the commissioner and his crew for the needed work.

Mississippi Archives and His-

On her website, Lehr identifies as one of her influences the "democratic decision-making principals (sic)" of psychologist Thomas Gordon, author of "Parent Effectiveness Training," published in 1971. Yep, the professional community has been recommending this sort of hogwash for more than forty-five

tory is sending staff members on Thursday to advise and approve the board members on much needed repairs at the Alexander Brock Building.

Dr. Charlie Long, interim pastor of the West Baptist Church was Rep. Jason White's guest on Wednesday to open the House of Representative session with prayer. He was joined by his wife Sandy.

Collin Parkinson and John White served as pages last week to Rep. Jason White. We are so proud of these young guys.

Dr. Charlie Long and wife Sandy also had friends Fred and Joyce Martin of Austin, Texas visiting with them at West Baptist Church on Sunday. The

years, during which time child mental health has gone down the tubes. Ironically, the more parents have focused on their children's feelings, the more difficulty children have had keeping their feelings under control.

Family psychologist John Rosemond: johnrosemond.com, parentguru.com.

couples met many years ago in Germany where Fred was in the service and Joyce was pianist in the church which the Longs pastored.

USM released honor rolls

The University of Southern Mississippi has released its President's and Dean's Lists for the 2016 fall semester.

The President's List includes full-time students who earned a perfect 4.0 grade point average (all As). Dean's List scholars are those with at least a 3.5 grade point average, but less than a 4.0.

Students recognized from the local area include the following:

- DURANT
- President's List: Kaneesha Kiana Roby.
- Dean's List: Kijana O Potee.
- GOODMAN
- Dean's List: Cheley Moore.
- LEXINGTON
- Dean's List: Lamonica Antanet Jordan.
- PICKENS
- Dean's List: Terrell Lane Wynne.
- TCHULA
- Dean's List: Ayana Kanakki Linya Love.

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