



Living With Children

By John Rosemond
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Q: You seem to be opposed to putting children into any sort of psychological therapy. That’s curious, especially given that you’re a child psychologist. What is your explanation for this and are there any situations in which you would be in favor of therapy for a child?

A: As I said in a recent column, I was trained as a child therapist, to talk to children about problems they were having or were a part of. Rather early on in my career, however, I concluded that such conversations were largely unproductive and potentially counterproductive. Parents never – no exceptions – told me that problems with their children abated after I talked with them. The question then became: Was that due to something about me or was the process itself problematic?

I eventually concluded the latter, but before the reader begins laughing out loud, let me explain.

What the average layperson does not know is that no consistent body of research done by people who, as we say in the South, have no dog in the hunt confirms the reliable efficacy of any psychological therapy. Outcome studies consistently find that about as many consumers report dissatisfaction with therapy as report satisfaction. Studies on outcomes with children are lacking (not to mention that they are difficult to measure), but over the years a significant number of parents have reported to me that putting their children in therapy made the problem(s) in question worse rather than better. My personal finding has been that therapy with children

is a general waste of not only everyone’s time but also parents’ money. (Before I go any further, I must mention that my thoughts on child therapy are not regarded as mainstream in my profession.)

The problem begins with training and philosophical biases that dispose therapists to talk to children about their feelings. Such conversations are very likely to give children the impression that their feelings concerning certain issues or topics are not only legitimate but should also govern their parents’ behavior.

Children’s emotions are as undisciplined as their thought processes. Just as children think incorrectly, so do their feelings often reflect nothing more than immaturity and an inclination toward self-drama. To this one can add two further truths: children (a) often misinterpret events and (b) are highly susceptible to suggestion. When all is said and done, the rather inescapable conclusion is that a child’s emotions (or opinions

of how adults in his life conduct themselves in certain situations) are rarely a valid indication of anything more significant (or presumably obvious) than his need to grow up.

A process – therapy – that involves the risk of confirming a child’s feelings, of assigning credence to them, is potentially counter-productive if not downright harmful. It is, in my estimation, a risk that therapists should undertake with great caution, if they undertake it at all.

I will concede that there may be a small minority of situations involving a small minority of children in which child therapy can be justified for a conservative length of time. But child therapy is not, in my estimation, justified when the problem is primarily the result of the child’s refusal to accept the legitimacy of adult authority, the child’s immaturity (which explains most childhood fears and anxieties), or parents who have not insisted, from a relatively early age, on emotional self-control (frequent tantrums occurring past the third birthday, for example).

UPWORDS

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Sleeping Trouble

Millions of Americans have trouble sleeping! You may be one of them. Only one other living creature has as much trouble resting as we do. They are woolly, simpleminded, and slow...sheep. Sheep can’t sleep! For sheep to sleep, everything must be just right. No predators. No tension in the flock.

During my private practice years, I would sometimes consent to see a child in a private session if the child expressed what I thought was a sincere desire to talk to me. I must add, however, that the kids in question rarely had anything of note to say, and I was not about to ask them how they felt about something. As a result, said conversations turned out to be nothing more than costly one-offs.

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



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DEADLINE: 4 p.m., FRIDAY

THURMOND CEMETERY
The Thurmond Cemetery Club will hold its annual business meeting on Saturday, February 17, noon, at Sunny Mount Baptist Church in Lexington. Members and anyone with relatives buried at Thurmond Cemetery should attend.
2-8,15

DATCC
Do All Things Children Circle, Inc. performance arts program will hold its first Black History Program on Saturday, February 17 at the Holmes County Arts Council Building at 2 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.
2-8,15

SECOND PILGRIM REST
Second Pilgrim Rest Church will celebrate the seventh year anniversary of Pastor Joe Bridges and First Lady Linda Bridges on Sunday, February 18 at 2 p.m.
2-8,15

WAYSIDE NBCD
Wayside New Beginning Church of Deliverance in Lexington will host its Tenth Year Pastors Appreciation for Pastor Stanley Dixon and Co-Pastor Cynthia Dixon on Saturday, February 17 at 5:30 p.m. and Sunday, February 18 at 3:30 p.m.
2-8,15

GUIDING LIGHT COGIC
Guiding Light Church of God in Christ will hold its first Black History Program on Sunday, February 18 at 5 p.m.
2-15

WEST GROVE M.B.C
West Grove M.B. Church in Lexington will have its Black History Program on Sunday, February 25 at 11 a.m.
2-15,22

LEX. M.H.C.
The Lexington Mayor’s Health Council will meet on

Thursday, February 15 at 10 a.m. at the Lexington Multi-Purpose Complex.
2-15

LEBANON M.B. CHURCH
Lebanon M.B. Church will host the Women of Faith Ministry birthday luncheon on Saturday, February 17 at 11 a.m.
2-15

GOODMAN H.C.
The Goodman Health Council will host its Healthy Heart Event on Saturday, February 17 at noon outside the Goodman Post Office on Main Street. Information on heart health and goodies will be available along with a balloon release at 2:30 p.m.
2-15

CSLC
The Community Students Learning Center in Lexington will host its annual scholarship banquet on Saturday, February 24 at Holmes County Central High School in Lexington at 6 p.m. For more information call 662-834-0905.
2-15,22



Tyler Diffey is pictured having won Supreme Bull at the Delta District Show in Greenwood. Tyler is assisted on the far left by his dad, Steve Diffey. Tyler is the son of Dayle Diffey of Lexington. (Photo by Betsy Padgett)



Pearce Edwards is pictured with his Simmental Bull after having won the 15 year old division of Beef Showmanship at the Delta District Show in Greenwood. Pearce is the son of Randi and Steven Edwards of Ebenezer. (Photo by Betsy Padgett)



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Sheep need help. They need a shepherd to lead them and help them lie down in green pastures. Without a shepherd, they cannot rest.

Without a shepherd, neither can we! Psalm 23:2 says, “He, (the Shepherd) makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. Who’s the active one? Who’s in charge? The Shepherd! With our eyes on the Shepherd, we’ll get some sleep. Isaiah 26:3 reminds us of the promise, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You.”

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UpWords, with Max Lucado is a popular daily Bible devotion. This Max Lucado devotional offers wisdom and insight for applying Biblical truths to the ups and downs of everyday life.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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The *Holmes County Herald* reserves the right to edit or refuse to publish any letter deemed inappropriate.

MEMBER



MISSISSIPPI PRESS ASSOCIATION
(USPS 247-680)
HOLMES COUNTY HERALD

Periodicals postage paid at Lexington, Mississippi by East Holmes Publishing Enterprises, Inc., Lexington, Mississippi.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Holmes County Herald, P.O. Box 60, Lexington, MS 39095. Published each Thursday at 308 Court Square, Lexington, MS 39095. Telephone 662-834-1151; Fax 662-834-1074; Email hcherald@gmail.com; Website www.holmescountyherald.com
Bruce Hill.....Publisher
Matthew Breazeale..... Editor
Julie Ellison.....Gen. Mgr.
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