



# Living With Children

By John Rosemond  
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There is child raising and there is "parenting." America replaced the former with the latter in the 1970s and it's been downhill ever since.

My mother – a single parent during most of my formative years – was not parenting me. She was raising me, bringing me up. She did not, therefore, "get down to my level" when she spoke to me. Both literally and figuratively, I looked up to her. That's where I wanted to be; up there, where she was.

As did nearly all 1950s parents, Mom raised me according to traditional understandings of children and parental responsibility that had been handed down, relatively unchanged, from generation to generation since the dawn of human history. She was the boss, for example. She was not trying to be liked by me

much less my friend; nonetheless, she was affectionate, funny, and always there when need arose. Largely because it was clear that she was my superior in every sense of the term and that I depended on her as opposed to the other way around, I respected her. I don't think today's mothers are clear on how important it is that their children, especially their sons, see them as powerful, capable, albeit loving, women. But then, today's parents are "parenting," which is all about being liked by your child.

In the 1970s, as parenting pushed child rearing to the margins, bogus psychological theory replaced common sense and traditional wisdom and people with capital letters after their names replaced family and com-

munity elders as sources of child-rearing advice. Everything is topsy-turvy in parenting. For example, child who was merely raised was expected to pay attention to adults, beginning with his parents, and do what adults told him to do. By contrast, the "parented" child is the center of his parents' attention and they are constantly looking for Facebook-worthy things to do with and for him. These same parents often complain that their child does not pay attention to them unless they act momentarily insane; furthermore, he does not "cooperate."

Cooperate is parenting word. In the pre-parenting age, when child mental health was far, far better than it has been since, children were expected to obey (and generally did). Then, psychologists claimed (without evidence, as usual) that obedient children were nothing more than mindless robots who weren't learning to think for themselves. This appeal to emotion worked

and ever since, parents have been trying to get children to cooperate. The parents in question often complain that their children do not obey. Needless to say, they fail to see the connection.

The raised child was expected to be a responsible member of his family. So, for example, yours truly was doing chores like washing floors when I was four years of age. My friends all had chores too. We couldn't play outside until we had done our chores and done them properly, and we lived for playing outside. If we didn't do our chores properly, we had to re-do them. Even then we couldn't go outside because our mothers found more chores for us to do and so we learned, quickly, to do our chores properly. Today's children, parented, have after-school activities that will, for the most part, serve them no good when they are adults. In most cases, parents who are parenting claim their children have no time for chores or won't cooper-

ate in doing them.

Raising children was about their future citizenship. The guiding principle was "good citizenship begins in the home." Those parents taught proper manners. Parenting is all about a child's grades in school and other accomplishments. As such, today's parents do on a regular basis what parents sixty-plus years ago rarely did: they help their kids do their homework! Since parents began helping with homework because they want their kids to get into the "right" colleges, school achievement has been steadily declining.

Kids reared/raised in the pre-parenting era were expected to entertain themselves, solve their own peer-group problems, survive being called names, eat what was put on their plates, wear itchy, tight-fitting clothes without complaint, and so on. Kids who are parented are not expected to do any of that. Their parents solve all their problems. So, they get into the "right" colleges,

ask directions to the nearest "safe space," refuse to eat what's put in front of them and complain that their clothes itch.

The moral of this column is, "If you want THAT outcome (as well you should), you gotta do THAT." Quite simple.

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## N.A.

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### 7th April

#### ACROSS

- 1 "Catwoman" prop
- 5 Yo-Yo Ma's ax
- 10 Director Kurosawa
- 15 Mischief-makers
- 19 Part of the Hebrides
- 20 Pizza topping
- 21 Malign
- 22 Ephron or Roberts
- 23 Airplane turmoil
- 25 Chooses by chance
- 27 RLS classic
- 29 Reflected
- 30 Love, to Pedro
- 31 CIA's parent
- 32 Armless couches
- 34 Kindly
- 38 Always, in poems
- 40 Model wood
- 41 Unaided
- 42 Canvas shoe
- 46 Comparing word
- 50 Nailed on a slant
- 51 Do some tailoring
- 52 Nanette's school
- 53 "Othello" bad guy

#### DOWN

- 43 Industry-wide spec
- 44 Prepare leftovers
- 45 Hockey misdemeanor
- 47 K sound
- 48 Part of a shekel
- 49 Trio of trios
- 51 Tennis great Arthur
- 56 Singer Laine et al.
- 57 Boxer Max
- 59 Tau cross
- 60 Payola payer
- 62 Anglo-Saxon laborers
- 63 Dionne quints' father
- 64 Rattan worker
- 65 Axis opponents
- 66 Walk in wooden shoes
- 67 Cat's "go away!"
- 69 Barnum's exit
- 70 Blaring
- 73 Corrodes
- 74 Frau's negation
- 76 Quaintly dated
- 77 Belgian waterway
- 78 Jaffe and Peckinpah
- 80 Aussie greeting
- 81 Sentimentality
- 85 Korbut of gymnastics
- 86 Kenyan tribe
- 88 Rank
- 90 Inquiry about a job
- 91 Word on a maze puzzle
- 92 Hood's ammo
- 93 Moses' desert
- 94 Anytown, USA address
- 95 Actress Evelyn
- 96 Insect herded by ants
- 97 Realm, poetically
- 99 CIC: abbr.
- 100 '60s civil rights gp.
- 101 Word on an Irish euro
- 102 JFK landers, once
- 103 Virginia, to Fifi
- 104 Factory
- 105 Fashion designer-entrepreneur Marc
- 107 Mrs., in Malaga
- 108 JFK's UN ambassador

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18					
19				20					21					22								
23				24					25					26								
27									28					29								
				30					31			32	33									
34	35	36	37				38	39				40										
41						42	43				44	45			46	47	48	49				
50						51					52			53								
54						55					56			57								
				58	59				60					61								
62	63	64						65	66					67								
68								69						70								
71								72				73	74			75	76	77	78			
79								80						81			82					
83								84						85			86					
								87	88					89			90					
91	92	93										94	95			96	97					
98									99					100	101			102	103	104	105	
106								107	108					109								
110														111					112		113	
114																			115		116	117