

# Living With Children

By John Rosemond

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Q: On several occasions over the last six months or so, our 12-year-old son has told us he's been thinking about suicide. Apparently, he's been the target of a couple of school bullies and sometimes feels like life is too much. We've talked to him, tried to help him express his feelings, and tried to help him figure out how to solve these problems, but do you have other suggestions? Other than these three episodes, by the way, things in his life seem to be great. He has lots of friends, is liked by his teachers, and doesn't act generally depressed.

A: I have one suggestion, but first, a fact: Over the past fifty years, child and teen suicide has increased, per capita, more than ten-fold, and that may well be an underestimate. Two questions ensue:

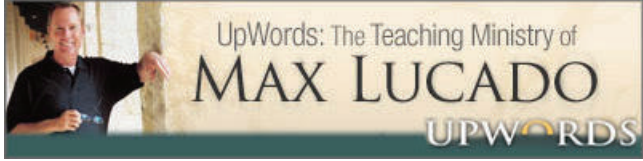
First, what's going on? The short answer is that post-1960s parenting – informed as it is by bogus psychological parenting propaganda – leaves many young people inadequately prepared to deal with the challenging realities of life. That objective requires that parents, by and large, expect children to solve problems of their own making (and even a good number of the ones they don't make), say "no" to at least 99 percent of a child's requests for indulgence and entitlement, enroll children in more household chores than after-school activities, and insist, from a relatively early age, upon good emotional control. That's merely the short list.

Beginning in the 1960s, people in my field (including an earlier version of

yours truly) told parents that children should be allowed to express their feelings freely lest they "bottle up" their emotions and develop all manner of psychological malfunctions. The result of this atrocious advice has been children who have no governor on their feelings. To all too many of today's kids, every feeling is a valid state, worthy of expression and deserving of attention. For proof of this, one need only understand that social media has become, for many teens, a stage upon which they perform their personal soap operas, one of which involves the "my life isn't worth living" meme.

The second question is, what should parents do? The best advice I can give along that line is "If and when your child begins talking about suicide, even in a veiled way, make statements as opposed to asking questions." Asking questions is likely to lead parents down one emotional rabbit hole after another.

In a situation of this sort, questions have a way of validating the child's feelings. Despite what many therapists will advise, that is NOT the proper approach. Much better to make statements, such as: "To be honest, suicide is an inappropriate response to a problem, no matter how big the problem seems at the moment, so let's talk about real solutions rather than dwelling on your feelings," "The problems you are dealing with are not unusual and they certainly aren't forever, but suicide is most definitely forever," "You're thinking entirely too much about yourself. Perhaps you need to do some service work,



## God's Mission: Adoption

When we come to Christ, God not only forgives us, he also adopts us. Through a dramatic series of events, we go from condemned orphans with no hope to adopted children with no fear. Here is how it happens. You come before the judgment seat of God full of rebellion and mistakes. Because of his justice he cannot dismiss your sin, but because of his love he cannot dismiss you. So, in an act which stunned the heavens, he punished himself on the cross for your sins. God's justice and love

something that will take your mind off the subject of you and your troubles," and "Let's talk about solving these problems, because if you commit suicide, they will not be solved. The kids who are picking on you will simply start on someone else because the problem is them, not you." Even, "That's not the intelligent response to a problem, ANY problem, and you are, in fact, an intelligent person. You can tough this out. Let's talk about how."

The child in question does not need to be engaged in a personal pity-party that lends authenticity to his/her out-of-control emotions; but rather led to think correctly. Another way of saying this: When a child lacks a governor on his/her thinking and emotions, the child's parents (or some other emotionally competent person) need(s) to step in and be the governor.

It's become cliché, but it's truth nonetheless: The most powerful love is tough love.

Family psychologist John Rosemond: [johnrosemond.com](http://johnrosemond.com), [parentguru.com](http://parentguru.com).

are equally honored. And you, God's creation, are forgiven. But the story doesn't end with God's forgiveness.

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our Spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8:15–16 NASB).

But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons (Gal. 4:4–5 NASB).

It would be enough if God just cleansed your name, but he does more. He gives you his name. It would be enough if God just set you free, but he does more. He takes you home. He takes you home to the Great House of God.

Adoptive parents understand this more than anyone. I certainly don't mean to offend any biological parents—I'm one myself. We biological parents know well the earnest longing to have a child. But in many cases our cribs were filled easily. We decided to have a child and a child came. In fact, sometimes the child came with no decision. I've heard of unplanned pregnancies, but I've never heard of an unplanned adoption.

That's why adoptive parents understand God's passion to adopt us. They know what it means to feel an empty space inside. They know what it means to hunt, to set out on a mission, and take responsibility for a child with a spotted past and a dubious

future.

If anybody understands God's ardor for his children, it's someone who has rescued an orphan from despair, for that is what God has done for us.

God has adopted you. God sought you, found you, signed the papers and took you home.

Read more from *The Great House of God*.

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## Pre-veterinary major nabs local scholarship



Lexington student Tyler Branch was recently named the Dr. Arenia C. Mallory Community Health Center 2019 Scholarship winner. Branch (pictured second from left) is pictured with (from left) Charlie M. Luckett, Planning and Development Committee chairperson, Alice Scott, board of directors chairperson, and Dr. Rozell Chapman, CEO of MCHC. Branch, who received the \$500 scholarship, is the son of Angela Love and plans to further his education at Mississippi State University this fall 2019 where he will major in pre-veterinary medicine. Branch was required to submit a typewritten essay, three letters of recommendation, have a grade point average of 2.75 or above and him or a family member having been a clinic patient in the past six months.

(Photo submitted)

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