



Living With Children

By John Rosemond

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The Portal. It sounds like something out of a science fiction novel, the gateway to an alternative universe that lures, then traps the unwary in its nefarious web of illusion, where things are never what they seem.

If the previous sentence sounded to you like Rod Sterling intoning the intro to "The Twilight Zone," then you too are old enough to thank your lucky stars that The Portal did not exist when you were in school.

The Portal, for the blissfully unaware, is a website

the techno-hip Twenty-First Century parent visits at least once daily to get the very latest updates on her child's grades, upcoming and incomplete assignments, test results, and anything else the child's teachers deem important, like "Billy seemed distracted today." If you're a parent and you've never visited The Portal, I have one word of advice: DON'T!

One school's Portal advertises itself as providing parents with "important, up-to-date information" concerning their children's

progress in school. No, the information in question is not important. First, in days gone by, when there were no Portals, kids achieved at much higher levels. Second, the best research into parent involvement finds that regardless of demographics or ability, children do best in school when their parents do NOT monitor and help with homework. But then, America's education establishment pays no attention to research in education.

The Portal either turns parents into micromanagers or pushes already existing parental micromanagement over the edge. Micromanagement is driven by anxiety, always. Parents who visit The Portal on a regular basis are not simply curious.

They are anxious control freaks. They are also their kids' (and their own) worst enemies. Micromanagement NEVER improves the performance of the person being micromanaged. It ALWAYS produces stress, an unwillingness to communicate, and various manifestations of pushback. Sometimes, the pushback is subtle, sly, covert, and sometimes it is blatant, even belligerent, as in, "LEAVE ME ALONE! I'M SICK AND TIRED OF HAVING YOU LOOKING OVER MY SHOULDER! GET A LIFE WHY DON'T YOU!"

Yes indeed, the micromanaging parent needs desperately to get a life of her own. There is no emotional boundary, you see, between

the Portal-obsessive parent and her child. To paraphrase The Beatles, she is him and he is her and they are all entangled. (And yes, I'm using the female pronoun purposefully because in probably nine of ten instances – and that may be a conservative estimate – the mother is the micromanaging, anxiety-driven, Portal-obsessive in question.) Over the past two generations, co-dependency in the mother-child relationship has become normative, and this is yet another manifestation.

Being in a co-dependent relationship has nothing to do with being a woman, however. My mother was not in a co-dependent relationship with me and my peers testify likewise concerning their moms. This is all about the post-1960s Good Mommy Club, which demands

of its members that they be crazy about their kids (not crazy happy, mind you, but truly crazy) if they want to remain in good standing.

Without any evidence that The Portal is working to do anything but transport mothers to a Twilight Zone where they begin to believe their real name is "Mom," public and private schools nationwide are pushing Portal participation like it's the next best thing to tablets (which the research also says are counterproductive). It's as if they say to themselves, "Let's build The Portal and find out later if it's working!"

Come to think of it, I did have a homework Portal when I was in school. It was called the "blackboard."

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Trojans end run in 2019 3A MAIS High School Football Playoffs against St. Joe



The Central Holmes Christian School Trojans ended their run in the 2019 3A MAIS High School Football Playoffs after falling to the Fighting Irish of Greenville's St. Joseph High School on Friday, November 8. Trojans Head Coach Jim Crowder said the team "played like champions." "I could not be more proud of this team and the effort they gave Friday night," said Crowder. "They gave it absolutely everything they had, and we just came up a little short. Sometimes that happens in sports, but they played like Champions. The Trojans finished their season 7-5, ranked 202 in the state. Senior players pictured above are (from left): Brad Robinson #12, Owen O'Bryant #3, Coach Jim Crowder, Pearce Edwards #65, Elijah Steen #99, Robbie Rogers #64, Wykece Johnson #20 and Pacey Thompson #1. (Photo submitted)

Dropping temps could mean raising fire risks

Heating equipment to blame for 15 fire deaths in 2019

Press Release

Mississippians should check their heating equipment now to make sure it's safe to use, as the temperature may dip into the 30s and 20s across much of the state in coming days. Using the equipment as it is intended and following safety guidelines cuts your risk of fire in your home.

There have been 52 fire deaths in Mississippi so far this year. Fifteen of those deaths were caused by placing flammable material too close to space heaters, plugging heaters into malfunctioning extension cords, or using equipment as a heat source when it was not de-

signed for that purpose. "We are going to see cold days and nights in the near future and some people may be getting out their space heaters for the first time this year," State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said. "National reports show the leading factor in home heating fire deaths was heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses, or bedding."

Every home should have multiple smoke alarms. If you need smoke alarms, ask your local fire department.

The State Fire Marshal's Office recommends the following heating fire safety

tips:

- All heating equipment should be UL® approved and cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional prior to being used each year.
- Remember to keep clothes, drapes, and anything else combustible at least 3 feet away from all heating equipment, especially space heaters.
- Inspect the space heater's power cord for damage, fraying or heat. If the cord inspection reveals any of these issues, the heater should be replaced. Proper cleaning is essential and should be done regularly.
- Never use space heaters while you sleep or in areas where children may be without adult supervision.
- Do not leave space heaters on when you are away from home.
- Always unplug space heaters when they are not in

use. The heater should also be equipped with a tip over shut-off switch.

- Never use a stove or oven to heat living spaces. Kerosene is a poor choice for heating as it will give off poisonous fumes.
- Have chimney flues cleaned and inspected by qualified personnel.
- Have a spark screen that is age appropriate for all individuals if using a fireplace.
- Burn only approved materials in a fireplace or wood-burning stove; never burn paper or trash in a fireplace or wood burning stove.
- Should a fire break out in the home, have an emergency evacuation plan for the family to follow and have a designated meeting place for all family members. Once everyone is outside the burning home, call 911 and don't go back inside the home under any circumstances.

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