

Graduation is a shift for parents too

Graduation is often wrapped in celebration, speeches and photo ops, but beneath the caps and gowns lies a quiet, seismic shift—for both the student and the parent.

As a high school senior walks across the stage, it’s not just an academic achievement; it marks the end of a very significant era of childhood and the undefined beginning of adulthood.

For the graduate, college marks a thrilling leap into independence and self-discovery.

For parents, it’s a heavy transition. After years of driving kids to practices, feeding them late night snacks while studying up late and packing them the same lunch over and over, you find yourself at a strange crossroads.

You are no longer behind the wheel but still trying to help them steer their path ahead with confidence.

The transition between high school and college is more than logistical—it’s deeply emotional. Many teens feel excited but secretly terrified. They’re aware that they’re supposed to feel ready, but few truly do.

And parents, in turn, may find themselves ricocheting between pride and panic, wondering if they taught enough, prepared enough and loved enough.

This is where both parents and their graduates can harmoniously navigate the season of becoming. For students, it’s about growing into yourself as an adult—more independent and less defined by high school roles.

For parents, it’s about being a little lenient on control—no longer



Purvi Desai Parenting in Oconee County

the manager of daily life, but the mentor who stands back while still lending a guiding touch.

What makes this in-between time so complex is that everyone is changing, often silently. Parents might hover because they’re unsure how to let go and want to spend as much time as they have left.

Teens might pull away not out of rebellion, but because they need to feel capable—even when they aren’t sure they are.

The best thing parents can do is start the quiet practice of trusting: trust their teen’s instincts, their preparation and their right to grow through mistakes.

That doesn’t mean stepping back entirely. T

his is the moment for more meaningful check-ins and gentle conversations, not micro-management.

A simple question like, “What are you most excited or nervous about?” can open the door to real conversations.

Creating a communication rhythm, whether it’s weekly calls or morning/evening texts, helps maintain connection without crowding their space and independence.

And it makes them feel connected to home.

Summer, often seen as a pause, is really a bridge.

It’s the time to pass along practical life skills like how to budget, make simple meals and schedule appointments without making it feel like a crash course in adulthood.

These small acts of teaching are, in truth, acts of love.

Just spending time in each other’s company like taking walks, visiting restaurants and attending events can also be refreshing before going off to college.

Parents, it’s okay to grieve this shift.

It doesn’t mean you’re not proud or supportive.

It means you’ve poured so much of yourself into raising a child that watching him or her take flight is both beautiful and bittersweet.

Let yourself feel it.

Let yourself grow, too.

Now is when you can pursue that hobby you have been delaying for years or visit that person/place you have been meaning to for so long.

Graduation isn’t an end or a beginning.

It’s a threshold. Your teen is stepping forward, and so are you. With trust, space and steady love, you will both find your firm footing on the other side of this new chapter of life.

Purvi Desai is a resident of Oconee County and a graduate of The University of Georgia Grady College of Journalism. She has two sons in Oconee County Schools. Opinions expressed are those of the writer.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The following are Oconee County events taking place from May 29 – June 5. To submit a calendar entry for June 5 — June 12, email editor@oconeeenterprise.com

THIS WEEK

- **KnitLits** May 29 at 6 p.m. at the Bogart Library.
- **Meet & Play for ages infant to 6 years old** May 30 at 10:30 a.m. at the Bogart Library.
- **Crafting** May 30 at 1 p.m. at the Oconee County Library.
- **Movie in the Park** May 30 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Wire Park. Bring your own chair.
- **Yoga on the Lawn** May 31 from 8-8:45 a.m. at Wire Park. This is free yoga hosted by Lotus Yoga.
- **Oconee Farmers Market** May 31 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Wire Park. More information on vendors, special activities and music can be found at oconeefarmersmarket.net.
- **Fun with Board Games** May 31 at 2 p.m. at the Bogart Library.
- **Live music featuring Stratton James** May 31 from 6-8 p.m. at Wire Park.

NEXT WEEK

- **Teen Writing Hangout** June 2 from 6-7 p.m. at the Oconee County Library. Bring a journal, story or anything you are working on.
- **Oconee Board of Commissioners meeting** June 3 at 6 p.m. at the Admin Building.

Gardening is a love of complexity, fun

Intense winter freezes alternating with balmy weather make my azaleas fail. I’ve tried all kinds. It’s also my hard red clay on our farm. Amend all I can, but no success. And yet, when we bought our farm over 40 years ago, a large 20-by-8-foot tight cluster 6-feet high of small bright orange azaleas bloom every year without fail. And it is on a steep slope in red clay facing south in the hot sun. It is arrestingly beautiful. I cut out briars from time to time.

I write this so we must all realize that gardening is a mystery. Actually, it is a love of immense complexity. It is a challenge with every plant to see how to grow it beautifully for a season or year after year.

Here’s a recommendation that will be a big help in this journey. Buy the 765-page “The New Southern Living Garden Book.” The 2004 edition has been updated with changes of zones, new plants and layout that make this the most important book in your gardening life. I have so many books, but I tend to stay away from too many pretty pictures where much is totally lost that is critical to get any kind of a handle on just what is going on with your plant choices.

But don’t get me wrong. Different sections of this masterpiece will blow you away with landscapes one could just die for.



Jane Bath Garden Memo

The beginning is just one of the most helpful sections in the book. You are looking for a plant for a particular interest: Showy Perennials Bulbs, Landscape Plants with Showy Flowers, Flowers For Cutting, Fragrant, Color Fruits and Berries, Colorful Foliage, Autumn Foliage Color, Deciduous Plants for winter Interest, Trees, Vines, Ground Cover, Grasses, Vegetable and Fruits, Herbs, Tropical Effects, House Plants, Southern Natives, Tolerant Shade, Drought, Deer Resistant ... with a picture, sun condition and the page book for instant look up.

And it only gets better. Only Southern Living can bring to you the most clearly written details on every aspect of every plant you want found in just this one book. Page 124 to 649! And more goodies at the end. It’s a dream book with total muscle power.

Jane Bath of Bishop is the author of “The Landscape Design Answer Book,” former nursery owner and designer of thousands of landscape plans. The opinions expressed are those of the writer.

PETS OF THE WEEK

Adoptable

at the Oconee County Animal Shelter



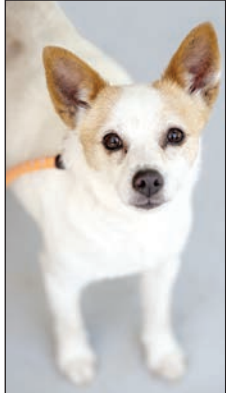
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Suzy



Lucy



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Good News

Harmful words and tone are often indicators of an unrighteous heart

I recall the following saying from my childhood: “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Though this phrase has a nice ring to it, nothing could be further from the truth.

A more accurate statement, especially in our day of cyber warfare and political division, is the African proverb, “Words are like bullets; if they escape, you can’t catch them again.” Truth be told, throughout time, careless words have done more damage than bullets.

I’m aware of a situation in a family in which two siblings rarely speak because of hateful words that were spoken years ago.

You’ve no doubt seen such occurrences in your world as well.

After 41 years of marriage, careless words are more likely to get me in hot water than any other offense (you’d think I would have learned by now).

As seems to be the norm these days, we are in the midst of a heated political climate.

Caustic quotes, comments and speeches pour down like a hailstorm, spewing out from both sides.

Keenly recognizing the poisonous potential of words, King David, a discerning politician in his day, voiced this petition to the Lord 3,000 years ago: “Set a



Todd Gaddis Keeping the Faith

guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips (Psalm 141:3). ”

I get a little uneasy at times when people around me start taking videos with their phones. And then I realize God hears everything I say. He’s the one I really need to be most concerned about.

As Jesus said, “I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it on the day of judgment. F

or by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:36,37).

The Bible also says, “If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man’s religion is worthless. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison” (James 1:26, 3:8).

As you consider these verses, ponder these points.

First, as my mother often reminded me, “It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it.”

The tone of our speech can do

more damage than the words themselves. I’m prone to turn up the volume when I get passionate about an issue or want to get my point across.

Also, harmful words are often an indication of an unrighteous heart. As Scripture challenges, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Proverbs 4:23).

Addressing a person’s speech specifically, Jesus said, “For his mouth speaks from what fills his heart” (Luke 6:45).

In other words, we’d better get our hearts right if we expect good words to flow forth from our tongues.

On a windy hillside near an English country church sits a gray tombstone with the following words fading with age: “Beneath this stone, a lump of clay, lies Arabella Young, who on the twenty-fourth of May began to hold her tongue.”

Hopefully, it won’t take such drastic measures for us to begin to hold ours.

These words of wisdom will help: “He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles” (Proverbs 21:2).

Todd Gaddis is a semi-retired minister living in Athens. He continues to serve as an interim pastor and can be reached at jtoddgaddis@gmail.com.

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