

JUNE 6, 2017

THE PRODIGAL SON... GRADUATES!

Source: Herding Chickens and Other Adventures Blog

This is a day I never thought I'd be able to see. Don't misunderstand, I've always believed he would finish his high school degree. This is a point I hotly debated with the many social workers, and clinicians involved over the years. "He won't want to graduate from high school when he is almost 20. He's missed too many credits. He'll probably just get his GED," was something a clinical consultant on his case said to me once. What he meant was "Marcus will surely drop out." But I knew better. Marcus, our children's oldest biological brother, never backs down when he's determined about something.

It's just that after he decided he didn't want us to adopt him, he left and swore he'd never return. So I believed that I would have to miss the day he got his diploma. I stupidly tried to comfort myself with thoughts of seeing his pictures on Facebook or being there "in spirit." Marcus eventually made contact with us and we managed to forge a new kind of relationship. Despite this, I didn't think he would want his "old parents" at his high school graduation. But he did. He asked us to come when he contacted me to say "Happy Mother's Day." Man can that kid make me cry!

For me, he will always and forever be my eldest son. For him I'm probably one of the many "moms" he's had through his years in the foster care system. He often felt like a throwaway kid. Marcus felt out of place being loved by a family. So he pushed back. He got suspended, kicked out of schools, sent to a group home, disrupted many foster placements and did a stint in "juvie."

Social workers cautioned us from the beginning against getting too attached to this "troubled teen." But attachment was just what he needed. Unconditional love, acceptance, and ultimately the ability to ride out his struggles. No, we never got to adopt him. He aged out of foster care. But eventually Marcus returned to the house of his first foster mom. He wasn't "in the system" anymore. She had long since retired from fostering kids. But Marcus? He always had a place with her.

Marcus often felt that no one wanted him. [CONTINUE READING](#)



LOVING A TRAUMA SURVIVOR: UNDERSTANDING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA'S IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS

Survivors of childhood trauma deserve all the peace and security that a loving relationship can provide. But a history of abuse or neglect can make trusting another person feel terrifying. Trying to form an intimate relationship may lead to frightening missteps and confusion.

How can we better understand the impact of trauma, and help survivors find the love, friendship and support they and their partner deserve?

HOW PEOPLE COPE WITH UNRESOLVED TRAUMA

Whether the trauma was physical, sexual, or emotional, the impact can show up in a host of relationship issues. Survivors often believe deep down that no one can really be trusted, that intimacy is dangerous, and for them, a real loving attachment is an impossible dream. [READ MORE](#)



12 TIPS TO BUILD A STRONGER SIBLING BOND

By Dr. Laura Markham

If your children are having a hard time with each other, it's natural that you focus on helping them learn to resolve differences peacefully. But it's important to remember that their incentive to work things out happily with each other depends on how much of a positive balance they've built up in their "relationship bank account."

How do siblings build up a reservoir of good feelings to draw on? Mostly, by having a good time together. Dr. John Gottman of the Seattle Love Lab has found that couples need five to seven positive interactions to counter-balance one negative interaction. This ratio has been repeated in multiple studies, from couples to workplaces. As far as I know, there hasn't been parallel research done with siblings. But that's not a bad ratio to aim for.

This might make you feel despairing—after all, if they fight six times a day, how can you help them create 36 positive interactions? Remember that a smile counts as a positive; these don't all have to be major interactions to have a beneficial effect. Why not simply adopt the goal of helping your children have as many positive interactions as you can? [CONTINUE READING](#)

HOW TO HANDLE BACK TALK AND DISRESPECT LIKE A PARENTING WARRIOR

"I started digging. And what I discovered was startling. Behind the child, who whined and refuted every seemingly inconsequential thing happening in our home, was a child who was asking me for one thing..." [CONTINUE READING](#)

TRAINING

COMING TO SPENCER!

Saturday, June 24 (9am-4:30pm)
Iowa Lakes Community College

Family Matters - Working with Birth Families in the 21st Century

During this class, we will explore the history of working with birth families and the expectations that exist today. We will explore how trauma impacts individuals, families, and the process of moving through the system and engaging the change process. The class will focus on specific practical tools for communication, documentation, and goal setting that will help to de-mystify the birth family foster family relationship. [REGISTER FOR CLASS](#)

TRAINING

COMING TO RED OAK!

Saturday, June 24
at Montgomery County Hospital

9am-12:15 p.m.

The Brain: Normal Development Vs Brain After Trauma

We will discuss what can be done for those who have a brain that has developed through trauma.

1:15 - 4:30 p.m.

The Magic of Healing the Brain and Fostering a Secure Attachment

Together we will explore activities that will work towards healing the traumatized brain and towards creating a healthy secure attachment. Activities will be taught and practiced.

[REGISTER FOR CLASS](#)