

Spring 2017

Artwork in
progress

My child and I

xxx For parents who care



ook beskikbaar in Afrikaans

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Spring 2017

Editorial

Dear Parents



Have you ever noticed how fragrances can recall memories? Like maize porridge which makes one taste the farm. And the aroma of soup and cinnamon that can fill your winter home with reassurance. There is early morning bathroom aromas of soap and shaving cream that make one miss your dad. Or the aroma of jasmine or sweet peas that recall memories of a first love.

We are all familiar with the gentle fragrance of a baby; the sweaty odour of your running toddler or the perfume fragrance of your budding young teenager. I wonder about the fragrances we create for our families. The delicious aroma of food, coffee, flickering candles? A “braaivleis” fire or tasty bake in the oven?

As parents we create memories and keep them alive. “Braaivleis” fire means a relaxed get together. A pot of soup means be together in simplicity. For your child, flickering candles may always recall memories of being calm...and maybe frying Marshmallows. Fragrances always bring along special times of being together. And even in the rush of driving to and thro, nothing should prevent us from building those special times to be remembered forever.

The negative things that remind us about the bad times in our lives will always be around. But as parents we should ensure that we create enough positive memories to fill up the little tanks of our families time and again. The core of loving relationships is being together, doing things together, chatting together, eating together... Make sure that this forms part of your families' existence.

Erna

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The family ● A Family communicates and listens

A family communicates and listens. D. Curran wrote a book titled: "Traits for a healthy family." His 15 traits have been scattered throughout this edition. See if you can find them all...and make it part of your family life! *Ed.*

Wounded Healer

Another authentic story written by a member of the editorial team.

My story

Lindy Jordaan

I will never, ever forget the evening I was sitting in the bath tub, planning to end my life!

Two months later, I was quite surprised to read how medication that I have taken that Monday, causes suicidal tendencies. Now, eight years later, I can sit and write about what I've learnt – grace!

To me, every day means lots of effort. The golden rule is that I allow myself two weeks when the darkness in my heart wants to conquer my thoughts. My plan? I quickly do stock taking of my life and change one thing. Nothing major – only one small



change. I investigate the following:

- ◆ Sleep: Am I sleeping too little? Too late? Do I get up too early? Do I watch TV until too late at night?
- ◆ Exercise: Do I exercise regularly? (I only walk a bit) Do I make time for it?
- ◆ Eating: Do I eat breakfast? Do I eat

healthily and regularly? Do I drink enough water?

- ◆ My soul: Do I read something inspirational? Do I watch a good movie? Do I listen to good "TED-talk"?
- ◆ Friends: When was the last time I enjoyed a cup of coffee or a good lunch with a friend?

The plan remains to make one small change. By doing that I ensure that I do not disappear into a dark hole.

It is not always easy: it remains a constant effort, every day, but as time goes by I do see the beauty of life again.





- A family confirms and strengthens one another

Me and my primary school child

Tests and exams:

Issé de Villiers how can I support my child?

All of us learn and study differently. Various factors contribute, e.g. which part of your brain is dominant, what type of personality your child has. It takes time for your child to discover his or her own unique way of studying. You have to support your child.

Explore together what the best study skill or –method for your child is. Some children study easier by making headings or vertical summaries; other learn through mind maps, or learning diagrams or by memorizing or others by visualisation.

What can I assist my child with in preparation for a test or exam?

- † A time table / roster to accommodate specific study times.
- † A quiet place to study – your child's bed is not a study place.
- † Equipment to study with - a desk and chair, paper, a study file for summaries, coloured pens, pencils, etc.
- † A family that understands the child's needs during study times is crucially important (reduce noise, refrain from family gatherings during exam times, etc.)
- † Your child should get sufficient sleep – between 8 and 10 hours per night
- † Ensure a healthy diet, especially a healthy breakfast, as your body uses energy while sleeping and your child needs to replenish the lost energy.
- † Exercise also helps to relieve stress that go hand in hand with preparation for the exam.



Tips for learners on writing a question paper:

- † Learn to use your time efficiently. It is advised to wear a watch so that you keep track of the time still available.
- † Skim read the whole paper. Mark the questions that you find easy and start by answering them.
- † Read each question carefully and underline the key words that indicate which type of information is asked.
- † Look at the mark allocation for each question: that will determine how much information needs to be provided. Plan your answer. Do not deviate from that what is asked. Do not repeat yourself.
- † Learn not to linger too long on one question. You can always return to a question after you have completed the remainder of the paper.
- † If time allows it, read through your paper again and ensure that you have answered all the questions.

How do I, as parent, handle test results and other feedback?

- † Primary school years is a phase during which your child learn how to write tests.
- † Learning include failures and successes.
- † Praise and encourage your child. Do not suggest rewards or promises for tests and results – you will only increase the tension in your child.

- † Turn test results into a positive, constructive experience.
- † Your child should feel proud of what he/she has achieved, and not feel bad about the results, unless they did not prepare well enough.
- † Focus on the positive. Your child is still busy learning – it is a continuous experience.
- † Should you not be satisfied with the results, discuss it with your child.
- † Refrain from asking questions such as: “How did you do?” or “How did so-and-so do in the test?”
- † More appropriate questions would be: “How did you find the test?” or “Could you answer all the questions and finish on time?” or “Is your teacher satisfied with your results?” or “What could you do differently to be more prepared for the test?”
- † The taking of tests and examinations remains a learning process.
- † Allowing yourself enough time to prepare, is the key to success.

The most valuable inheritance that we can give our children, is a few minutes of every day. – Battista.



In the following issue we will give more information on how different children can benefit from various study methods. Ed.

- A family teaches respect for others

Me and my teenager

my countless
dreams

**Sandrine Lutonadio
Mengawako**

Every morning, I wake up with a dream. This seems to be my habit because the things I dream about are very big, bigger than the Mount Kilimanjaro. My mom once asked me: "What is your dream? What do you dream of?" I replied to my mom that my dreams are the biggest thing in the world.

My dreams are uncommon and rare, because not all teenagers dream this big. Telling people these dreams is like telling them fairytale stories, because they think it is 'just' a dream that will have the "drama aspects" in a night's dream.

I dream of achieving all my goals with faith and hard work. As a school girl I want to finish with high school, pass with excellent marks and go to university. I dream of being a presenter in a radio show when I'm still in high school, in order to help my parents because of the financial problems they are facing.

I dream of writing books that will have lots of reads from teenagers and adults. I want to be the youngest successful writer and public speaker. I also dream to be part of the list of best African and World authors and be recognized by many writers in the world.

Parents need to realise that their children have dreams, even though most of them don't share it with them. This could be out of fear that their parents will not accept their dreams.

God created dreams and talents and put it in all of us and with these dreams and talents, we will go very far in life, because they are blessings. Parents should not go against their children's dreams because with these dreams, they will be able to do well and benefit more than doing only what their parents want them to do.

I am unfortunate of dreaming to be rich and all-fancy, but I am fortunate of dreaming to be a good exemple; a helping person and to have a brighter future. My dreams are countless and with God and faith everything is possible. 🙏🙏

- A family has a sense of play and humour



Athletic dreams

Dominique Fuchs

During my primary school career I hated athletics. Before every race my stomach turned and I felt like crying. My parents never forced me to take part or to win a race. I just could not handle the pressure. I decided to drop athletics and rather focus on tennis and netball.

At the annual interhouse athletics in grade eight, I

decided to allow athletics another opportunity. My brother ran the 400m excellently, and everyone thought that I should be able to run well. I was too happy that it was not the 1500m – it caused nightmares to me – and I agreed. To my own surprise I achieved my WP colours for the 400 m.

I am in grade eleven this year, and only now realize how not to put too much

pressure on myself and to enjoy the athletic events.

Athletics widened my horizons. I have met scores of new people and made friends, learnt self-discipline and lessons that I will always keep in mind. Athletics is a type of escape, a time of the day to only focus on the practice, to relax and chat with your training partners and to forget all the negative things.

● A family develops a sense of trust

Unfortunately all teenagers or children do not experience it in the same way than I do. I have seen time and again how parents simply put too much pressure on their children and by the time they reach high school, the children are nowhere to be seen, burnt out and tired of doing sport.

Sometimes I shudder when I hear the degrading remarks coming from parents.

My parents always knew when to pressurize me. My mom is a supporter (always carry with her a picnic basket with sandwiches and energy bars, and her mantra always remains: "Enjoy it, whether you score first or

last place, I will love you like always"). My dad too, but he will always motivate me to run faster: "Run, Girl!" and only put enough pressure on me to make a success. The golden rule has always been to enjoy it and that is what I do.

Without my parents who always encouraged me next to the athletics field, I would often not have enough go in me to achieve my best many times. Parents should be there, their voices should be heard. It means a lot to the children.

To all parents: encourage your children to take part in sports, but remember the golden rule and often remind them: To take part

in sports is about enjoying it, friendship, self-development and – discovering, not to win each time and to get a first place.

Both Sandrine and Dominique took part in the National Front Page Father Essay competition in 2016 and indicated a love for writing. We are encouraged by teenagers who still dream and have ideals and therefore included these two pieces of writing. Parents can learn so much from teenagers! Ed.



To take part in sports is about enjoying it, friendship, self-development and – discovering, not to win each time and to get a first place.



Dads

What my father means to me

“Do not doubt your dreams. Go and pursue every one of them and remember I will be right behind you.”

My father has a character to build on. He was raised by a single parent and it seems the apple does not fall far from the tree. He grew up with two brothers and they all got along like a house on fire. That was till high school. They chose their paths and headed for the limelight, while he headed for a cliff. Their prosperity brought up dirt from under the rug. He resorted to trouble and fell in with the wrong company.

I guess everyone is a master of something. His frequent jail holidays made him numb to the world. He drinks a lot and whenever he is fully charged, I go to school with a blue eye and bruised lips. Better yet a broken heart from a hero who tells his daughter how ungrateful and what a mistake she is, how she was never planned yet appeared.

Our relationship is limping. My dad tells me how he is blessed to have me; how I am a girl in his life; that is till he has had a glass or two. He has instilled great fear in me and I can hardly get in a word. Whatever challenge I face, he does not have time - either he is late for a meeting or has an important call to make.

My dad is very wealthy and gives me all the money I need, but a girl does not need money; she needs her father's love and time. In front of the public, he is a hero, but to me the truest villain.

I aspire wholeheartedly to be great, but how when I have no one to look to?

lina

This essay was written by one of the finalists in the 2016 Front Page Father Essay contest.

- A family admits to and seeks help with problems



Parenting

A mother's worst fear

A Good Mother



This is not when little Buddy goes home with a snippety-snip fringe after they have played hairdresser-hairdresser. Neither is it when Boy-with-such-good-manners shows Auntie Louise how long his tongue is when she greets him pleasantly. And no, it is not when Sis brings home a report which starts with the letter D in all her marks...

No.

It's the beautiful warm day that suddenly changed as does a desert wind. When you could not look anyone in the eye; the shame came out in red blotches; your heart skipped a few beats and "no, no" were the only words you could utter. In the blink of an eye your life changed to a theatre production not even you wanted to see.

I was busy with all things house – like any other good day. Silence suddenly knocked. That was strange.

Cars downhill became silent, and on the opposite uphill too. I just knew! As I rushed out so did my friend Felicity, as they lived on the same property as us. Silent terror propelled us forward in the race. Running was not her forte. It was not far. Then we saw it, saw them... and the row of cars. Some drivers had already got out...

The two of them, on their little red kick bikes, in the middle of the busy street. They looked around in astonishment at all the people who had now gathered around them. They were only two years old, still in nappies.

Felicity and I stormed through the wide-open gate. Again, of course, one of the youngsters who knows nothing about children and gates and cars and had carelessly left it open, was the last thought through my mind. Each one of us had a

wriggling little body, who still wanted to ride the bike, on the hip and the kick bike in the other hand, as we tried to save the day.

There were broad smiles, but also the many eyes we tried to avoid, the accusing eyes, about 'bad mothers, who don't look after their kids! They could have been dead!' No need to remind us that they could have been dead; why else would we have dropped everything and rushed out!

Well yes, it happens at least once in the life of each good, responsible mom who has taught her children well and takes care of them. A split second and they are gone, from the ever-watchful eye of the very best of mothers.

Naturally Dolla also had her turn – at the wooden cottage at the seaside. The holiday-hired house had no fencing and all of us watched so carefully and yet, one day...

Good friends had come to visit and between the time of greeting, “How are you?” and hugs, she was gone! Young brother raced to the caravan park on his bicycle; we searched up the street and our friends down the street, and we called her. To no avail – no Dolla around.

And then I heard my inner voice. The beach! Our Dolla loved the sea and the waves. We usually had to pick up the squirming little body and take her away, because strong waves was such fun water!

We ran, across the street, through the caravan park, down the wooden steps to the beach...

Then we saw them. The unknown woman with the little body on her arm, chatting away on the almost deserted beach. Again the red-faced shame, frozen heart and a string of excuses...

The little one is handed over and the angel-woman smiles and comforts with: “Not to worry, it happens to all of us some time. Their guardian angels just do overtime.”



- A family has a balance of interaction among members
- A family respects their members' privacy
- A family shares a spiritual core



The two of us

Beware the pitfalls



Dear Jacques & Shona

Jacques, by now you have probably told Shona how much I love avocados. Well, one day your mom and I had an argument about a rotten avocado. She has the habit of wrapping the avocados that she buys in sheets of newspaper, especially if they are unripe. The advantage is that it speeds up the ripening process, but it also makes you forget about the avocados because they are out of sight.

On that particular day I looked forward to an avocado on my sandwich - but when I unwrapped the last one from the newspaper, I saw that it was completely bad. I must say your mom takes care of everything in our house wonderfully, but that day things took a bad turn. I was very upset, because I couldn't understand why she didn't check on the avocados every now and then, so that we could eat them before they are spoiled and have to be thrown away.

I went straight up to her and wanted to discuss this disappointment immediately. You guessed correctly - we had an argument that spoiled the entire day. Only later did I realise that I should never try to talk about something that I feel strongly about when I am angry or upset. It is simply too difficult. A family fosters family table time and conversation! believe this is one of the pitfalls that catches many couples by surprise. I found that one way to avoid this pitfall is to take time to allow my emotions to cool down. I do this in prayer, by taking a walk or by doing something else for a while. Once I am calm, I am more predisposed to talk about the issue constructively.

Another pitfall that hinders our attempts to discuss our issues successfully is the wait-and-see approach. When we avoid talking about an issue, silently hoping that it will solve itself over time, we are left with an unresolved issue that acts like a landmine in our marriage relationship. Whenever we then discuss something related to this issue, we end up

arguing about it again - and this difference of opinion has the potential to get very heated indeed. Over time we end up avoiding all discussion of the issue or anything remotely related to it. Well, we have found that the only way around this pitfall is that we simply have to learn to talk about the issue successfully. As we learned to process our issues, our relationship remains a safe place where we can continue to enjoy each other and our journey.

The third pitfall relates to the different ways that we process the world. When presenting our communication workshops, I often explain that I process the world like a glass of marbles. Yes, I love the fact that each marble represents a specific aspect of my life. I then continue to explain that your mom processes the world like a glass of water. You see, in her mind the world is not compartmentalised into different aspects, but rather is an undivided whole where everything is connected.

When I work on my computer, I'm busy with the computer marble and all the others seem to disappear for me. In other words, I focus on one aspect of my life at a time. It doesn't matter what marble I'm busy with; that would be the one that I focus on. When I think about a particular aspect of my life or our relationship, or when I discuss it with your mom, I focus on that particular one only. Your mom does it differently - for her everything is connected and there's no focusing on just one aspect at a time when she talks about something. That's why she can talk about many things at once. This difference between us gets particularly challenging when we experience a disappointment (when one of us doesn't live up to the other's expectations) in our marriage. For me a disappointment would be like an unwanted black marble that fell into my glass of marbles. It affects only the two or three marbles that it touches and to get rid of it, all I have to do is think about it for a while, find a solution and then simply remove it from the glass. For your mom a disappointment is like a drop of unwanted black ink that plunges into her glass of water. It affects the colour of the entire glass and there's no easy way to remove the black ink: it takes quite a few conversations as well as my willingness to take part in these conversations for her to filter out the unwanted black ink. Well, when we started to understand all of this, we found that the only way to avoid this pitfall is to talk about it regularly and to accommodate each other's differences instead of expecting that we process the world in the same way.

I call the fourth pitfall the communication death trap. It may sound a little melodramatic, but I want to prove a point. During the first years of our marriage we discovered that whenever one of us disappointed the other, there were typically five phases we went through





before we could carry on with our relationship. These five phases became a devastating cycle that repeated itself regularly; we started to call it the communication death trap. The first phase, the disappointment, involves one of us experiencing a disappointment in our relationship. The second phase, the talk, involves our attempt to talk about the disappointment, but because we are ill-prepared or not sufficiently equipped, the conversation is a failure. That's when the third phase, which is the argument, begins. Eventually one or both of us withdraw from the argument, because it gets us nowhere and the fourth phase, the withdrawal, starts. Finally, a few hours - or sometimes a few days - later we manage to make peace and continue with our relationship. We call this final phase the false peace, because we realise that the issue is still unresolved and that it will surface again and again in future arguments. As these five phases repeated themselves whenever one of us experienced a disappointment, it not only gradually started to destroy our ability to communicate, but also the special connection we have.

We knew we had to find a way to either avoid or break out of this death trap before it caused too much damage. It helped us to realise that disappointments are normal in any marriage, but that we had to be prepared and equipped to talk about them successfully. This led us to the conclusion that the best place to break out of the death trap was during phase two. And that was why we started to develop the necessary conversation skills that would enable us to successfully talk about not only the disappointments, but also about the many other important issues in our marriage.

And here is the good news. If you study and discuss the letters that we will be sending you, you will receive all the tools necessary to help you break out of the death trap during its second phase, should you ever encounter one.

Please be aware of these pitfalls so that you can avoid them and enjoy a sparkling and rewarding marriage relationship. I know it will take some effort, but like they say, "nothing worthwhile comes easily".

Talk to you again soon.

Love you both

Dad

Grandpa and Grandma

Packing up, away and in

Anita Joubert

Overwhelmed by uncertainty, I wondered how I was going to put these three words into practice. The only thing I knew for sure was that it was inevitable.

Do we ever consider the wealth that lies in the action? Pondering on the matter, I realized that life is like a coin. 'Heads'... here we work and build a life before retirement. We amass knowledge, skills, self-knowledge; we buy the necessary and unnecessary and we hoard. To get to 'Tails' on the flip side of the coin, we have to retire, have to drastically reduce, start dreaming new dreams and face new realities.

We bought a place for retirement, amongst older people. What a strange idea it was, until the concept of Senior Citizens started fitting as snugly as a second skin.

As I wondered through our house where we raised our 2 children and lived for the past 37 years, a magnificent amount of memories seemed attached to each small thing and each moment. Some



beautiful, some less beautiful and then those that move one to tears. And everything, yes everything, even a pin in my sewing kit, was carried in through one of the doors.

Then there is each word, each token of care, each laugh, each tear, worry, loved one, friend or stranger that came over the threshold. With a wry smile I wondered how many unmatched pairs of sheep, cows, and chickens were devoured in this house!

It is a godly privilege and lip-smackingly pleasant to do it slowly. At once everything that has become forgotten and dust covered, is held between the hands, turned over, even smelled and remembered with great compassion. Each item was important and therefore it was still there. Yet suddenly there was that which had to be packed away

forever. It felt like treason! Things that were still needed yesterday, were suddenly no longer needed. Things collected in love, do not have a place in the new house, because it has three rooms less and no storeroom.

The packing-in things are the nicest because they will be going along with us. Beautiful pieces like the snow-white Royal Albert tea service with the gold rim, only taken out of the sideboard for special occasions, shall be unpacked in the kitchen and we shall serve tea in them to family, old friends and new friends every day. The grand dinner service and cutlery set shall also go to the kitchen! The Persian carpet shall not be hidden in the lounge; barefeet shall tread the luxurious surface every day, as the new house has no separate lounge – only an open-plan kitchen and living space. Beloved CDs from long ago, favourite books and ALL the photos are going with us. I am so excited about little treasures which will now come into their own in our new home. Just there I decided that I would pack in only the memories I want to have with me. The others will never disappear, but I don't need to cart them along too. When they go by, I

shall see them, but stand still... no!

Now that everything is packed up, packed away and packed in, that which remains has no sentimental value to us: the swimming pool pipes that get knotted, the lawnmower, the garage doors that always needed man-power to operate and the vacuum cleaner! I know that when we finally close the doors behind us, raw sobs will break the silence, as we don't just leave behind the breathing in and breathing out. We close the doors on the echo of children's voices, the power of youth and the dreams of yesterday. And my beloved Antjie-Patat (the best domestic worker and person ever)!

When we drive around the corner for the last time and the house disappears from sight, I shall cast my eyes up to the same God who has 'Heads and Tails' in His loving hands.



Why were Adam and Eve created differently, Dad, Mom?

Lomé Louw

"Mommy, Mommy!" Lily calls out as she bursts into the kitchen after school. Lily is eight years old and in grade 2.

"Guess what Mom, Miss Louw gave homework to you and Daddy", Lily laughs, full of excitement. "This morning we read about Adam and Eve and one of the children asked our teacher why God made Adam and Eve differently. She answered that if they were the same, there would only have been those two people on earth and she reckoned that each mom and dad should explain this difference to their children. Please Mommy, I am so curious and wish to know the answer."

Mom kisses Lily on the forehead and smiles. "Let's wait for Daddy, because I think he would like to be present when we tell you this story."

Fortunately Daddy comes home fairly early. "Daddy, our teacher gave you

and Mom homework today", Lily blurts it out. Dad puts his laptop down and lovingly hugs Lily.

"OK, let's start immediately. Is it something that we must build?"

"Noooo," Lilly laughs. "The two of you must tell me why Adam and Eve were created differently."

Mom comes and greets Daddy and asks him to switch on his laptop. "Please look for the photos telling us where our story began," Mom requests. I will make us some tea." Mom makes it sound as if this is about Adam and Eve's story; the story where it all began...

Mom and Dad shows Lily pictures of when the two of them were still very young. "Here Mom and I are on holiday in Cape Town with Granddad and Grandma. I loved Mom so much that I no longer wanted to be alone. On this beach I asked her to marry me!" Lily

laughs. Her mother and father were probably the only people getting engaged in their swimsuits!

"Lily, the body parts that our swimming costumes cover are our private body parts. At this stage Mom still helps you to bathe and sometimes a doctor needs to examine you. But these parts of your body are meant to be private and one day when you get married, you may share these with your partner." Lily feels awkward with Daddy's explanation. She did not expect this. "You needn't feel ashamed of this, Dearie. It is part of Adam and Eve's wonderful story about why we are different. This creation story can only have its origin with God. Daddy was created in the same way as Adam with a penis and as you and Mom each have a vagina, the same as Eve."

Dad shows Lily pictures of their wedding day. Mom looked like a princess and Dad still had his head covered with hair! "Wow, just look at all your presents! I wish I can marry tomorrow!" Lily giggles. "It is lovely that you see the gifts, Lily, because on our wedding day God gave the two of us the biggest gift of all. We call it sex."

Lily is not sure whether she wants to hear this story, but Daddy persists. "It is a gift that God gives to a husband

and a wife, something they can enjoy together for the rest of their lives. After the wedding the man and the woman's bodies belong to each other. They like to touch, hug and hold each other. If a man lies very close to a woman, his penis can fit in her vagina. God made us this way; as if it is two puzzle pieces fitting in each other. This is also the way in which a baby is conceived. And Lily, that is how you were created." "OK, is this then why my teacher said that if Adam and Eve were made exactly the same, there would only have been two people on this earth?" Lily asks. "Clever girl!" Dad replies smiling, "A man cannot make a baby on his own, neither can a woman. All this is part of God's plan!"

Dad shows Lily pictures of when her mom was pregnant. Mom continues to say that she and Daddy were so thrilled when they heard that she was pregnant, "Would you like to hear more?" Lily nodded. She knows that if this is God's plan, she does not need to feel shy,



"When a man and a woman have sex, the man secretes semen. Millions of tiny sperms swim in this semen. Sometimes the semen is secreted in the woman's body at the exact time that her body produces an egg and her body is ready to receive a sperm. The sperm enters the egg and together they form a new cell. That is when a baby is conceived. You might wonder about this little egg, Lily?" Lily nods again.

"Inside a mother's body there is a womb. Once a month this womb grows thick and becomes soft. A tiny egg, no bigger than a full stop passes through the womb. The time is now right for the body to receive a baby. And that is why babies are little miracles, Lily. The sperm and the egg must meet each other at the exact right time in the mother's womb. A baby is not created each time a man and a woman have sex."

Does this also happen to me, Mommy?" Lily asks.

"Not yet Lily. It will only happen once you are a little older, when you become a teenager. But even though your body then becomes ready to receive a baby, God wants us to wait until we are married", Mommy answers.

The womb is an incredible organ, Lily.

Normally it is as big as one's fist. But once a baby plants in, it stretches and it grows as big as a big watermelon. An umbilical cord latches the baby to the womb and that is the route along which the baby receives food and oxygen. Your navel is the place where the umbilical cord was attached to your body before birth. That is where you and I were connected to each other during the pregnancy. After nine months the baby is big and its organs strong enough to be born. What an amazing and perfect plan!"

Lily looks at the pictures of the day she was born: she, Mom and Dad. Mom is right, Only God can orchestrate such an amazing plan about how a sperm gets into a mother's body and how a baby is created. She hopes that all the children in her class will have such a beautiful explanation to understand why Adam and Eve were different!



- A family teaches a sense of right and wrong

Things to do together as a family

Play family games outdoors

The Meek family

Play outdoors

It's easy to spend too much time indoors in winter. The wet weather and menacing winds can put you off, but shouldn't. Fresh air cleanses the mind and body; it will certainly blow the cobwebs away and leave you feeling invigorated. Asking the kids to go outside can sometimes be met with moans and groans, so make it a tempting proposition. It doesn't have to be gruelling walking in the hills – although that is good too!

Games are great ways to have some family fun and exercise together. Take a ball or some equipment outside and learn a few simple team games. Here is one that we tried this week that practises some techniques and game skills linked to volleyball.

How to play

Split into two teams. Each team stands in an area that is divided by a volleyball net. Don't worry if you don't have one. We didn't – we just had a dividing line. The ball is then thrown between the two areas. It is allowed to bounce once before being caught. Players are allowed to pass the ball to other team members before throwing the ball over to the opponent's side, but it must be thrown over before 5 seconds has passed.



Points are scored if:

- someone on the team catches the ball without it bouncing
- the ball bounces twice or more in the opposition's area
- someone on the opposing team fumbles or drops the ball
- someone on the opposing team throws a ball out of the area of play

Ensure that there are a few rules. Tell players that they are not allowed to run with the ball and insist that the ball is thrown overarm to ensure it flies in an arc through the air. This happens automatically if playing with a net. You can play around with the rules to suit the ability of those playing, but be consistent once they've been decided.

The winning team is the first to score 11.



- A family relaxes together

Loveletter



In this painting colours depicting joy, love and forgiveness have been used. The painting consists of spiral shaped lines and it does not really have a beginning or an end – it is continuous. And the same applies to God's never-ending and unconditional love.

- A family has a strong sense of family, in which rituals and traditions abound.
- A family exhibits a sense of shared responsibility



- A family fosters family table time and conversation



Diary

The au pair is wearing blue gloves

by Amanda from Belgium

My hubby and I had to go somewhere for an appointment which would not take very long. It was one of those appointments where it would not be a good idea to take Dolla with. Usually she accompanies us wherever we go. We were new in this foreign country and did not know who to ask to help look after her for a short while.

Well, our 14 year old Handsome had to help, and fortunately he was willing to.

After a quick visit to the toilet and a clean nappy, Dolla was very happy to stay with her brother because they like each other. After giving instructions of what is allowed and what not and armed with our telephone number (which he knows any way) in case of an emergency, we set out.

We had not even boarded the metro yet, when the emergency call came...

"Mom, help! You must

come quickly!"

We still wanted to ask more, but the fear in his voice was enough to make us realise that there is a huge crisis and we had better get home. We caught each other's eyes and immediately turned around to go home. Forget about the appointment.

Immediately my heart pounded in my throat and all the worst case scenarios played out like episodes in a nightmare. Fortunately we were still fairly close to our apartment. I cannot remember who reached the front door first. The door banged behind us and we stormed up the noisy wooden steps to the fourth floor where our apartment is.

We prepared to knock, but the door was flung open ...

Two huge frightened eyes, filled with relief to see us, met ours. Blue rubber dishwashing gloves gesture "hands up" in the air. Dolly appeared behind

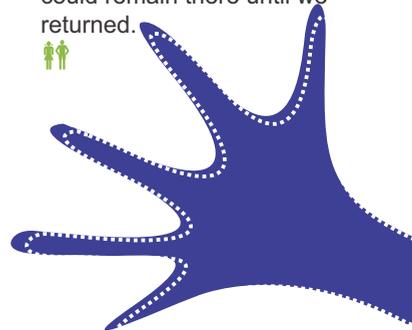
him, full of giggles: always glad when people come to our front door!

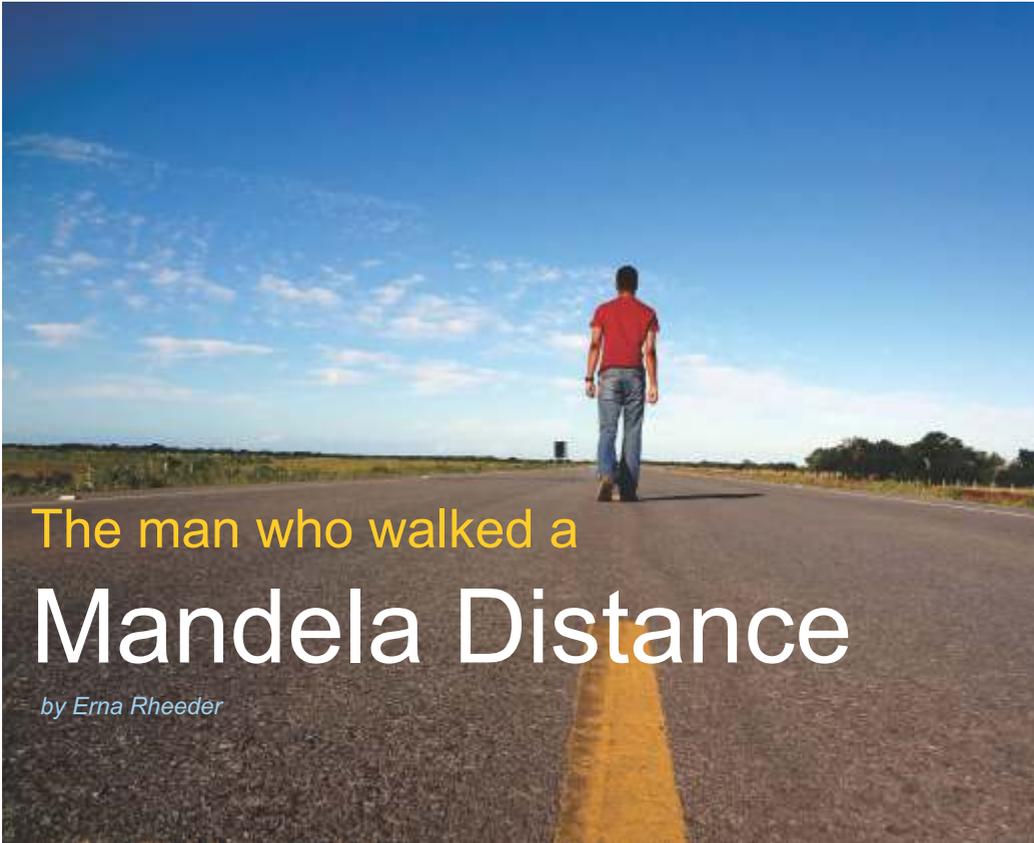
The lower part of her body was stripped naked and the rest of her clothes folded upwards and knotted neatly around her neck – safe!

We were stunned.

"Mom. She poed in her pants and I cannot get her bum clean." The fear still lurking in his voice. "I really tried...!" And Dolla? She laughed overjoyed that we were back home.

I had forgotten to tell him that she was wearing a nappy and that whatever happened in the nappy could remain there until we returned.





The man who walked a Mandela Distance

by Erna Rheeder

Sam had a court case coming. He decided to walk to court...a whole one hundred kilometres. It is not that he didn't have a car or couldn't afford public transport. No, he was a man walking with a purpose!

Recently Sam's wife died as the result of a car accident. Her parents took the two children into their care. At the same time they cut daddy Sam out of his children's lives.

As much as Sam tried, more than a month passed since he last saw his children. This is why he walked to court...to fight to be part of his children's lives.

He walked for what is right. A child needs both parents in his life. Sam was the only parent left and has always been involved. How they must have felt the loss of their mother and the need to feel safe with their father.

They have been denied this basic need. Sam walked to put a spotlight on the most basic core system in society - involved parenting.

His walk started before sunrise. Similar to parenting, it was painful and tiring, but worth it. When the late afternoon traffic picked up, the police pulled him off for safety reasons. By then he had walked 67 kilometres – a Mandela Distance for a



strong purpose!

Children often don't understand a father's absence. The reasons could be death, work, the father's choice ... or the mother and her family acting as gatekeepers. The only thing the child knows, is Dad is not here!

Whatever the reason, the child suffers bad effects. Studies show that the effects are sadness and depression; emptiness which could result in teenage pregnancies, drug and alcohol abuse; anger and violence, poverty and health related problems.

Gatekeeping by parents is crucial, because parents have the responsibility to keep their children safe.

Safe from dangers, temptations, bad influences, exposure. But gatekeeping against the other parent? It doesn't make sense...!

Why do Gatekeepers keep Dad away?

- They close the gate, because of pain.
- They close the gate to get him back.
- They close the gate as power tool.
- They close the gate - poisonous.

Maybe it is all they know...because they had no father in their lives; or because gatekeeping is what families do. They still cry at night, because their fathers were not present. They know and understand their own father pain. Yet, they don't allow today's child to enjoy the love, security, protection and leadership of the father in his life. All focus is on their own pain...not on the pain they can prevent in their very own children's hearts.

We are proud of fathers who walk the Mandela Distance! Who stand up,

speak up, take up the responsibility of caring for a child. This is what every child needs: a father and a mother who care, protect and raise them well.

We are extra proud of Gatekeepers who open the gate and invite the parents who stand outside. It takes guts to put aside memories of relationships which did not work out. It takes maturity to put your feelings aside. It takes a mind shift to move from what you want, to what is the best thing for the growing child. (But if you were strong enough to keep the gate closed until now, you are strong enough to make this mind shift!) You will raise a happy child with a bright future, if you allow his father to be part of his life.

The court decided that the Gatekeepers must open the gate for Sam to his children.

Courts have the ability to cut out the gatekeepers and even send them to jail. Rather open the gate yourselves! The payoff is tremendous! 🧑🏿🧑🏿

Finances

and my child

Lindy Jordaan

As parents we often assume our children know things. Recently I had to complete a questionnaire for someone doing his doctorate at UNISA. I was shocked that I could only answer yes on one of the questions.

Below are a few questions which could act as a guideline for a conversation on finances with your teenager:

1. Do you know what a budget is?
2. Why is it better to save money than to buy something on credit?
3. Why is it important to plan what you want to spend your money on?
4. What is the effect of owing money?
5. Why is it important to save money?
6. What are the risks of taking out a loan?

Motivate your child to decide how to use his/her money. Praise him when he make good decisions regarding money. Be honest about your own finances. They can learn valuable lessons from your mistakes. Include your child in conversations regarding e.g. budgeting for the water and electricity account, buying groceries, investments and inflation. Explain when you cannot buy something he requests. These are lessons to learn early in life.

When your child leaves home at 18 and only then learns about budgeting and savings when you are not around anymore, you have missed a huge learning opportunity! Carpe Diem!



A Prayer of benediction

for you

Source unknown

I bless you with the knowledge that your Abba Father loves you, despite what you have done.

I bless you with the knowledge that He knows your identity, He shaped you, He knows how you think, why you act in certain ways, He knows everything about you; you cannot hide anything from Him. I bless your spirit today with the blood of the Lamb.

I bless you that the Holy Spirit will teach you all His ways.

I bless you: may you be cherished in His love.

I bless you in your development and growth, that He will complete the work which He has begun in you.

I bless you that you will be open and ready to be taught and led by the Holy Spirit.

I bless your spirit with healing that you may overcome your brokenness and be able to live fully in your healing.

I bless you that you may know what God is calling you for, and that you will be able to be true to that calling.

I bless you with the anointing of love and peace that is your heritage and that God Himself may cherish and teach you every day.

I bless you with the joy of the favour in the Lord's eyes, but also in the eyes of your fellow-men.

I bless you with the people crossing your path and surrounding you and who hold your hand up high as they journey with you.

I bless you with Godly friendships, people who will encourage you and share your dreams with you.

I bless you with a kind heart, a heart filled with love.

I bless you with the wisdom of God in every decision you have to make.

I bless you with God's direction, may His favour and His grace be with you.

I bless your talents, your gifts and your relationships.

I bless your finances, your business and your thoughts.

I bless your spirit, your soul and your body.

I bless you that your calling may rebound with joy, harmony and love.

I bless your marriage, your family and your dreams.

I bless you that you may find your identity in Christ.

I bless you with the knowledge that you have a Father who loves you infinitely; that nothing you do can make Him love you more, neither less.

I bless you to experience His provision on a daily basis, His total protection and His dream for your life.

I bless you with the knowing that nothing in your life, neither in the past, nor in the future, can separate you from the love of God.

Blessed are you, o beloved of God.

Ek en my kind/My child and I

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