

MORE THAN MONEY

Timeless themes & personal stories | Exploring the impact of money in our lives

Archive Edition

Money and Children

Issue Number 39

MoreThanMoney



"Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you."
—Robert Fulghum

INSIDE:
Child Honoring: An Interview with Raffi
Raising Financially Fit Children
What is Money for if You Don't Have Children?

Money and Children



Issue 39

A Complimentary Giving Resource
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Welcome to More than Money Journal

More Than Money Journal, published quarterly from 1993-2006, was one of the first public forums where people shared personal stories about the impact of wealth on their lives. Groundbreaking for its time, each issue is filled with examples of ordinary people struggling to align their money and values in their spending, investing, giving, legacy, and relationships. The themes and stories in these journals are timeless and ring as true today as when they were first published.

More than Money Journal was a project of More Than Money Institute, a nonprofit peer educational network that touched thousands of people through its publications, presentations, gatherings, journal discussion groups and individual coaching. When More than Money Institute closed in 2006, its founders Anne and Christopher Ellinger (whom you'll see in More Than Money as Anne Slepian and Christopher Mogil) went on to launch another initiative called Bolder Giving. Individual articles from the journal were archived online with the Project on Civic Reflection.

Today, Bolder Giving is thrilled to be able to offer full back issues of More than Money Journal as a resource for families with wealth, philanthropic advisors, and all those exploring the impact of money in their lives. On the Bolder Giving website you can download issues individually.

Online, you can also order beautiful bound copies where 6-10 issues of the journal are compiled by theme:

- Giving
- Lifestyle, Spending & Investing
- Money and Values
- Children and Inheritance
- Money and Identity

(See full listing on back page of this journal)

We hope that More than Money Journal brings you fresh ideas for aligning your money and values, and that you use the stories to start conversations with your own clients, family members, and friends. (Note: We have removed many last names from the personal stories in the journals, to protect the privacy of those who gave us permission before the days of internet).

About

**BOLDER
GIVING**
Give more. Risk more. Inspire more.

More Than Money Journal roams the full territory of money and values. Bolder Giving has a more pointed mission: to inspire and support people to give at their full

lifetime potential. A national, non-profit educational initiative, Bolder Giving invites you to help create a culture of greater generosity and to take your next step in becoming a bold giver.

At www.boldergiving.org you will find interactive tools and resources to help you explore three ways of being bold:

- Give More:** explore your lifetime giving capacity.
- Risk More:** step beyond your giving habits.
- Inspire More:** spark conversations about bold giving.

Bolder Giving's resources include:

Stories of Inspiration- The Bolder Giving website features stories of over 100 remarkable givers who have given at least 20% of their income, assets, or business profits. We host monthly teleconferences and web chats for informal conversations with these bold givers. Bolder Giving's stories have been featured widely in the press - on CBS and ABC evening news, in People and Inc. Magazines, The Chronicle of Philanthropy and elsewhere - and speakers are available for presentations and media interviews.

Support for Donors- Bolder Giving provides giving tools such as personal coaching, referrals to donor networks, workshops, the Bolder Giving Workbook and other publications, and a content-rich website. Please see the list of publications in the back of this magazine.

Resources for Advisors- Bolder Giving offers presentations, workshops, and publications for fundraisers, financial professionals and philanthropic advisors.

We invite your participation and support.

Thanks to the financial support of a few foundations and many individuals, Bolder Giving is able to offer free downloads of More Than Money Journal on our site. If you receive value from this publication, we invite you to donate online or contact us to explore ways of being involved as a donor, partner, or volunteer. Bolder Giving is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, so all contributions are fully tax-deductible.

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MORE THAN MONEY JOURNAL WAS A
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ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS.

For the Children, For Ourselves

By Pamela Gerloff

When I was in college I spent a semester studying in France, in the city of Rennes in Brittany. It became my routine that every Sunday morning, when traffic was practically nil, I would ride my bicycle to the center of town. It was a particularly pleasing ride for me because a portion of it was on a downward incline. At a certain point in the trip, all I had to do was stop pedaling and I would sail down several long city blocks until I came to a flat section of the street. I never traveled *too* fast because it wasn't really much of a hill; it was just *smooth*. Happy. Freeing.

The thing of it was, though, that in order to do that, I would occasionally have to run a red light. This sounds worse than it seemed, I suppose. After all,

I was on a bicycle, not in an automobile, and bicycles didn't necessarily seem to abide by the rules of the road. And every time I approached an intersection, I would look very carefully to be sure no one was coming from either direction. And there was *zero* traffic. *Zero*.

Except for one day.

One day, as I approached the red light at the end of the incline, pulling to a stop after a smooth and exhilarating ride through several other lights, a car pulled up from behind me. The driver, an elderly gentleman sporting a classic blue French beret, wagged his finger at me and called out sternly, "*Et quand vous serez ecrasée...*" Translation: "And when you get run over..." *What then?* was his implication, which came



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experience of seeing or hearing children adopt the language or behavior of an adult they have observed—and of recognizing that it doesn't always look becoming on them. Sometimes, to be sure, it's cute; but sometimes, when we see what a behavior looks like when children are wearing it, we realize with new awareness that it isn't very healthy—either for them or for our society.

I think this is beginning to happen on a wide scale. Children are taking on the behavior of adults, at younger and younger ages. And many adults are noticing that it isn't always pretty. It isn't always safe. And it doesn't always bring the children happiness. It doesn't help them live a life of value.

When it comes to money, the culture of children has taken on a kind of grotesque exaggeration of the choices we adults are making as a society. Children are bombarded with pressures to buy, buy, buy; to get the latest and the coolest; to seek material and monetary riches, not build a life of contribution and value. They are told that they must have and be the best or they are worthless.

The effects on children, as a whole, have been devastating. In the United States, anxiety, depression, and suicide are increasing, and occurring in children at younger and younger ages. Drugs to control such conditions are now prescribed for children as young as preschool. Overscheduled, highly pressured children are stressed out, irritable, and exhausted, reporting that the thing they most want

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“When we honor children, we become more like them, in their purest form.”



FRANK MONKIEWICZ

Pamela Gerloff, Ed.D., is the editor of *More Than Money Journal*. Her life passions have focused on learning, growth, and

change, with a special interest in children. Her professional experience includes working as an editor for *Highlights for Children* magazine, a French and English teacher, and a consultant for individual and organizational change. She holds a doctorate in human development from Harvard University. She may be reached at pamela@morethanmoney.org.

through loud and clear as my eyes met the innocent faces of the three children riding with him. They peered through the windows, attentively observing my potentially dangerous transgression.

Instantly, I was filled with pangs of guilt, understanding what most adults eventually come to learn: children copy our actions, not our words. They learn our values by observing and absorbing the ones we exhibit. I was teaching these children values that could bring them harm—even get them killed—if they were to follow my example. It is not as though I hadn't been aware of this previously. But in that moment, the knowledge became ingrained me. Suddenly I understood that *in every moment* I am making choices that may have consequences for children.

Probably most of us have had the

Pamela Gerloff *continued from p. 3*

that money can't buy is time just to be a kid. [See p. 10, "What Really Matters? Letting Kids Be Kids," *An Interview with Betsy Taylor*.] In less economically developed countries, children are being orphaned at an alarming rate, and thousands die daily of hunger and treatable diseases, when the economic choices of more developed countries could easily help alleviate those problems.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way. Not everyone is living by the standard cultural playbook. Some are choosing carefully, thoughtfully, and respectfully, as they examine their own values and the legacy they want to leave to children—and not just their own families' children, but everyone's. They are creating what the acclaimed children's singer Raffi calls "a child-honoring society." [See p. 6, "Turn this World Around: Creating a Child-Honoring Society," *An Interview with Raffi Cavoukian*.]

The individuals on these pages are some of those people. As you read their reflections, take what is meaningful to you; and as you apply their wisdom in your own life, may you be reminded of this happy little secret: When we honor children, we become more like them, in their purest form. So our own journey actually becomes lighter, not heavier, and we ourselves become more whole. Of course, none of us are perfect and all of us will make mistakes. But the reward of aiming high for the children is that we get to touch our own greatness. As the Chinese philosopher Mengzi said in 400 B.C., "Great is the human who has not lost his childlike heart."



Editorial Policy: The views expressed in *More Than Money Journal* are not necessarily those of More Than Money. We encourage and support respectful dialogue among people of diverse viewpoints. In each journal issue, we provide a range of perspectives on a topic to stimulate reflection, conversation, and inspired action.



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More Than Money is a national nonprofit education organization serving people who measure their success not by the money they are making but by the good they are doing. We aim to bring out the best in individuals and society. Through a national dialogue about the impact of money on ourselves, our families, and our communities, we seek to foster new understanding of the purpose, potential, and challenges of money.

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Spring 2005

Letter to My Son

By Bob Kenny

My sister died recently and very quickly from an aggressive form of cancer. She was only 52, just 18 months older than I. Her death made it clear to me in a new way that none of us knows when we will run out of time. Since then, I've asked myself, if I were given the opportunity, what would I want to say to my son about values and money? Here is what I came up with.

Dear Son,

Some of the most difficult decisions that you have to make in life will be concerning your values and your money. It is surprising to me how often the two can conflict. The apostle Paul said that all wrongdoing can be traced to an excessive attachment to material wealth, which people sometimes shorten (not quite accurately) to "Money is the root of all evil." Henry David Thoreau said the majority of men lead lives of quiet desperation. I think there may be a lot of truth in both statements and I think they are related.

The most important thing I can tell you is to get clear about your personal

values. Know at all times what is really important to you. Don't make it a one-time event; make it ongoing. You will need to check in with yourself on a regular basis. Find people in your life whom you respect who can talk about what is really important to them and who will allow you to do the same.

When you know what is really

Money can help you do lots of good things. That is its purpose: to help you do what you value. If money is not helping you to do what you really value, then stop and figure out why. Money is a means to an end; it is not an end. Try never to forget that, but be aware that it is incredibly easy to forget. If you forget, then money will end up hurting you rather than help-

**"If money is not helping you
to do what you really value,
then stop and figure out why."**



Robert Kenny, Ed.D., is the executive director of More Than Money. He is known for his work training young people to develop political and citizenship

skills. A co-founder of the New England Conference for Democratic Schools, Dr. Kenny's publications include the book Preparing for Citizenship: Teaching Youth to Live Democratically (Praeger, 1994). He may be reached at rakenny@morethanmoney.org.

important to you, follow that with all of the passion and enthusiasm you can muster. Don't let anyone tell you that you have to put it off until you have enough—enough time, enough money, enough whatever. It is that simple.

But you need to be careful out there. Be careful of people who use "shoulds" when they are giving you advice about money. There are very few shoulds when it comes to money.

Be careful when people try to tell you that your discontent or unhappiness will be relieved by more money or more stuff. It rarely works that way. Be wary of people who want you to believe that they are happier than you because they have more stuff. (If they are happier than you, it isn't because of their stuff.)

ing you. I've seen people use money to ruin their health, ignore people they love, fight with people who love them, and do all kinds of appalling things—leading lives of desperation because they didn't think they had enough.

Money can take the life out of life or it can help you get closer to what you really value. It can help you forget what you think is important or it can help you remember how fortunate you are. Money can make you a stranger to yourself or allow you to know yourself and realize your dreams. You are a terrific person. Get to know yourself. Follow your dreams.

Love,
Dad

Turn this World Around

Creating a Child-Honoring Society

An Interview with Raffi Cavoukian

Interviewed by Pamela Gerloff

MTM: You've said that your dream is to embrace child honoring as a central organizing principle in society—

RAFFI: Oh, yes!

MTM: And you often ask people to imagine the benefits of a child-honoring society: “one whose love for its children is manifest in every aspect of its design and organization.”

What do you

imagine a society that truly honors children would look like?

RAFFI: It would be a society where the primacy of the early years would be well understood by everyone. People would understand that we are formative creatures; we grow from a little tiny baby whose brain after birth is still forming—and it forms with all of the impressions that the child perceives: of love or its absence, of connection or its absence. If we, as a society, were to understand this, I think we would change all of our institutions to support giving the best start possible to every child in our society.

This would be a non-partisan understanding. Of course, people would differ about how to provide that support for every child, but there would be a tangible sense that we would detoxify the air, the water, and the soil; that foods would be

grown without pesticides; that corporations would serve the common good. It would be a revolution of values—and I use those words consciously. A child-honoring society evokes, for me, the saying, “It takes a village to raise a child.” Every sector of society would understand and respect the irreducible needs of the very young. You might say that there would be a truly compassionate, family-friendly agenda to politics. A child-friendly world would be our goal—a world that is hospitable to newborns; as they say in some circles of the United Nations, “a world fit for children.”

MTM: You've said elsewhere that you don't mean a society where children rule.

RAFFI: Not at all.

MTM: People sometimes feel fearful when we start talking about honoring children. They're afraid we're going to turn over the world to them.

RAFFI: Right—and I don't mean that at all. That would disrespect the child, actually. Children need our guidance. They need to test our strength, but to know that our strength is superior to theirs. They have their own power—their power to inspire our love.

The best kind of conscious parenting sets reasonable limits (reasonable to the adult, I mean!). In the best parenting, warm bonds are there, but they're there because the child feels not only cared for, but secure within the limits that are firmly set and held.

That's why I haven't called this initiative “child centered.” It's not child centered. Child honoring is, of course, a children-first approach to healing



Raffi Cavoukian, known around the world as “Raffi,” is an internationally renowned children's troubadour whose award-winning recordings have played in millions of homes, schools, and libraries. A generation of fans in Canada and the United States has grown up with his children's classic, “Baby Beluga.”

Raffi has been a longtime champion of children and ecology and his original songs have been sung in premiere concert halls, at the Kyoto Global Forum, and in the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Raffi is a member of the Order of Canada, the Order of British Columbia, and the Global 500, as well as a recipient of the United Nation's Earth Achievement Award. He was recently awarded an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Victoria and will be awarded an honorary doctorate from The University of British Columbia in May, 2005. He is a member of the board of advisors of More Than Money.

President of the “triple bottom line” company Troubadour Music, Raffi is also the founder of child honoring, an original philosophy and unifying principle for restoring the human and natural communities. He has published an autobiography, The Life of a Children's Troubadour (Homeland Press, 1999) and written “A Covenant for Honoring Children,” an expression of society's duty to its young.



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“This is the defining moment in the history of humanity.”

communities and eco systems. But that’s very different from a society where children rule.

MTM: It’s really about a change of perspective, isn’t it?

RAFFI: That’s right. Not only the change of perspective that comes when you don the child-honoring lens—when you look through a child-honoring lens, the world

looks very different—but also, it’s what a lot of ecological economists have been talking about: moving from a “bottom line society” to a “triple bottom line society.” In a triple bottom line society, instead of money being the sole, or even the most important, concern, other profit and loss pictures become equally important. A triple bottom line economy would be one in which social and environmental, as well as financial, considerations are

at play. The word “responsibility” comes to mind. In all three spheres, we need to behave responsibly.

MTM: Would you say more about how money relates to creating a child-honoring society?

RAFFI: At the very basic level, those who have more money, as opposed to less, have more choices, and enjoy the power that comes with that choice-making ability. We who have more choices need to remember that money is supposed to serve us. Money is a symbol and it should not turn tyrant. A monetary economy is supposed to serve the people—and by that I mean all the people, every child and every child’s family. If I were going to playfully invent something called capitalism, I would probably call it goodwillism, so that the maximizing wouldn’t be about maximizing capital; it would be about maximizing goodwill.

I’ve been an entrepreneur of a triple bottom line company—Troubadour Music—for almost 30 years and am now the chair of The Troubadour Foundation, which is working with a number of child-honoring initiatives. What I’ve learned about money is that money has a phantom power, which, if not directed toward good, can wreak havoc. For example, the stark truth is that if people have savings in a bank or a credit union (let’s say a teachers’ association credit union), most people have no idea what the bank or credit union is doing with those savings. Unless there are stipulations as to how that money is invested, it can go to all manner of investments that are opposite to the values of the people who have invested their savings there.

MTM: So intentionally aligning our money with our values can help support a child-honoring society.

RAFFI: Yes, definitely.

MTM: What are some other practical steps that we as individuals can take to help create a child-honoring society?

RAFFI: I can give you an action list of 12 things to do, continued on p. 8

Raffi *continued from p. 7*

but I prefer not to. I prefer that people reflect on the child-honoring covenant that I wrote. [See sidebar, this page.] I invite people to read the covenant and the principles and, if they feel so inspired, to *live* the covenant and principles—make them a part of their lives.

The first principle is *respectful love*. We can begin by showing respectful love to every child we know or encounter. Of course, we can do that with adults as well, but it's so important with the child. It's so important that the love we give the child be respectful. Essentially, the covenant is about seeing the innate brilliance of every child, and, with our actions, behaving in ways that respect the living world we all share.

“Money has a phantom power,
which, if not directed toward good,
can wreak havoc.”

MTM: You're suggesting that the solutions will naturally emerge from the people themselves.

RAFFI: Yes. People can figure out what to do. This is an invitational process, not a prescriptive one.

Children are impacted by personal, cultural, and planetary conditions. When I say “personal” I mean in their personal and family lives. Cultural conditions can mean such things as the economic model that we live by, the educational system and how it regards the child, or how religions regard the child.

The first question we ask is, *How do we regard the child?* And then, *How do we treat the child?* How we treat the child comes from how we regard the child.

Essentially, child honoring requires a process of “seeing”—seeing the child for who she or he is. That's why the first line of the covenant says, *We find these joys to be self-evident, that all children are created*

whole, endowed with innate intelligence, dignity, and wonder, worthy of respect.

By our very birth, by being here, we are blessings to the world. That's not a view held by a majority of humanity at this point. But it shall be.

How's that for optimism? It reminds me of a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt, who said, “If a thing must be done, it can be.”

MTM: It also makes me think of an article I just read, which pointed out that some of the great cathedrals of Europe took 800 years to build.

RAFFI: We may not have that much time to turn this world around, actually.

MTM: Would you say more about that?

RAFFI: It's what other people are saying.

I've had conversations with people such as Maurice Strong, who was the chair of the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992; Stanley Greenspan, the premier child psychiatrist in Washington, D.C.; and chimpanzee researcher and environmentalist Jane Goodall. When I have talked with them about what we need to do to turn this world around, they've said, “You know, we don't have much time.” There is a sense that this is the defining moment in the history of humanity, that we have perhaps but one generation to decisively set humanity's course.

Entrepreneurs are saying this, too—such as Ray Anderson, the CEO of Interface, the carpeting giant in Atlanta. More and more people are understanding that the turn toward sustainability is one we need to make now. The 1990s were called the turnaround decade, but we didn't see the turnaround that we needed. We fell further and further behind. That brings a certain urgency to

the situation, not only in our own countries, but to the world culture—because we're such an interconnected world now.

I think that one thing we'll need to do in moving toward a child-honoring

A Covenant for Honoring Children

By Raffi

We find these joys to be self-evident: That all children are created whole, endowed with innate intelligence, with dignity and wonder, worthy of respect. The embodiment of life, liberty, and happiness, children are original blessings, here to learn their own song. Every girl and boy is entitled to love, to dream, and to belong to a loving “village.” And to pursue a life of purpose.

We affirm our duty to nourish and nurture the young, to honor their caring ideals as the heart of being human. To recognize the early years as the foundation of life, and to cherish the contribution of young children to human evolution.

We commit ourselves to peaceful ways and vow to keep from harm or neglect these, our most vulnerable citizens. As guardians of our prosperity, we honor the bountiful Earth whose diversity sustains us. Thus we pledge our love for generations to come.

Child-Honoring Principles

The words of “A Covenant for Honoring Children” suggest nine guiding principles for living. Taken together, they offer a holistic way of restoring natural and human communities, thus brightening the outlook for the world we share. They form the basis for a multi-faith consensus on societal renewal.

- Respectful Love
- Diversity
- Caring Community
- Conscious Parenting
- Emotional Intelligence
- Nonviolence
- Safe Environments
- Sustainability
- Ethical Commerce

For an elaboration of each of the nine principles, please visit www.troubadourfoundation.org.

society is to change what we measure in our economy. Right now we have the Gross Domestic Product [GDP]. It's a very crude and, in some ways, dangerous measure, because it only counts the money, and it adds indiscriminately! It doesn't look at how the money was generated, whether what was done in generating the money is useful or not, whether we want those activities to grow or not. It asks no questions.

We'll need to come up with something like a quality of life index or an index of well-being that measures what matters most in life. That would be a Smart Domestic Product, not a Gross Domestic Product. That would be a measure that shows us that the things we want to grow are growing and the things we want to shrink are in fact diminishing. That kind of index would be a child-honoring index, hopefully, because the criteria regarding the well-being of children would be factored in. In other words, the child-honoring lens would be applied to that index.

The good news is that, in Canada, a number of my colleagues are working on exactly what I'm talking about.

MTM: Our most recent issue of *More Than Money Journal* was on the topic of money and happiness. In it, we published an article on Bhutan; it discussed that country's shift away from the Gross Domestic Product as a measure of economic well-being to an index it calls Gross National Happiness. [See "*A Wealth of Happiness: Bhutan's Economy of Well-Being*," by Karen Mazurkewich, *More Than Money Journal*, Issue #38, *Money and Happiness*, pp. 14–16.]

RAFFI: The Gross National Happiness index is kind of what I was talking about—goodwillism. It's an economy that values intangible currencies.

MTM: It's interesting that people who have been to Bhutan say that people do seem happier there—especially the children.

RAFFI: That *is* interesting. Often, when you ask children about the world *they* want—when you ask them who would have food and shelter and clothing—almost universally, you will hear from them that they want those things for everybody. As one six-year-old said to me, "Nothing ought to cost more than 20 dollars!"

The world children want is the world that child honoring tries to express. Children don't want their beluga whales going extinct and being riddled with toxic chemicals. They don't want their eagles to be endangered and to become extinct. They want a natural, pristine, beautiful world. Now, who doesn't want that?

But I will say, in the conflict of interest between the power of corporations to do good or harm, and in the reasonable right of every child to breathe and to be fed—to be nourished—the child's

"The world children want
is the world child honoring tries to express."

needs must prevail. I mean, this is such a reasonable statement! Just to have to make it says a lot about us.

MTM: It does seem kind of peculiar that we even have to talk about child honoring.

RAFFI: I know. I think of it this way: In the film *The Corporation*, the filmmakers have looked at the behavior of the publicly-traded corporation and come to the conclusion that it's the behavior of a psychopathic entity; that is, the traits that corporations show in their behavior are psychopathic. That calls to mind Erich Fromm, who talked about the pathology of the normal—the idea that what seems normal can actually be pathological, and the psychologist Abraham Maslow, who said that healthy individuation requires resisting unhealthy enculturation. We are swimming in unhealthy enculturation at the moment. And, you know, corporate ingenuity

continued on p. 13

Raffi's Metamorphosis

MTM: You once wrote that you went from "a person totally oblivious to children to someone who learned to appreciate and love them." How did that happen?

RAFFI: It happened over a number of years, but it began one day in the mid-70s, when I was in a classroom in front of first-grade kids. (I used to take my guitar into classrooms and sing for kids before I did concerts.) Until that day, I was used to thinking of children as a group of kids—a group of second graders or a group of kindergartners. They were a group of kids to me. But that day, my eyes gazed across the group, and I beheld the children as individuals. A very important light went on, and I thought, "My goodness, every one of these people is an individual." Sure, they may share the traits of childhood, but they're individuals—and that was a key.

Beyond that, I needed to learn about how to entertain people who are not like adults. Children are not little adults. I had been an entertainer for grown-ups before—a folk singer—so I had to learn who my new audience was. In order to do that, I had to talk to people who knew children. I had to read books about children and child development. The child development reading and studying became a tremendous window of learning for me—not only about children, but about myself and how I grew to be the person that I am.

What Really Matters? Letting Kids Be Kids

An Interview with Betsy Taylor

Interviewed by Mara Peluso

MTM: What is different in our society for children growing up today that earlier generations did not face?

TAYLOR: Almost everything. One major difference is that children today are being saturated with the effects of media and electronics. They are spending more and more time in front of electronic screens and with electronic equipment. They are surrounded by commercial messages. They are seen as a market segment that has potentially huge financial benefit for sellers and corporations. As a result, children are being bombarded with messages that they are going to find happiness, friends, and excitement through buying



Betsy Taylor is the president of the Center for a New American Dream, a nonprofit organization that helps Americans consume responsibly to protect the environment, enhance quality of life, and promote social justice. Her two decades of experience in the nonprofit sector include serving as executive director of the Merck Family Fund and vice chair of the Environmental Grantmakers Association. Ms. Taylor is the author of What Kids Really Want That Money Can't Buy (Warner Books, 2003, 2004) and co-editor, with Juliet Schor, of Sustainable Planet: Solutions for the 21st Century (Beacon Press, 2002). She appears frequently in the national media and served as a member of the Population and Consumption Taskforce for the President's Council on Sustainable Development.



In the Art/Essay Contest “What Do Kids Really Want That Money Can’t Buy?” sponsored by the Center for a New American Dream, the most common answers were “love,” “happiness,” “peace on earth,” and “friends.” One child drew the “happy heart,” above. Significant numbers of children also wanted time with family, a clean environment, a world where people treat each other with respect, a chance to see lost loved ones, help for suffering people, health, and time to play.

—From www.newdream.org/kids/facts.php

“We did a survey asking children what they really wanted that money can’t buy. What amazed me was the number who said they wanted time simply to be a kid.”

stuff—which, increasingly, is electronic stuff. Marketers are now targeting children as young as one year old to get them to buy electronic toys and brand-name products. Advertising comes at kids through television, computers, radios, magazines, and even in school. In schools, children’s food products and sports equipment are often labeled with corporate brands (such as Coca-Cola and Nike).

Another major difference is that children today have less leisure time than children of previous generations. Seventy-five percent of a child’s time on weekdays

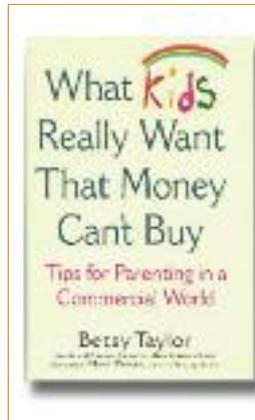
is scheduled with school and other structured activities; that is almost double the hours children’s time was scheduled in 1981. Kids today spend 29 hours a week in school—that’s eight hours more per week than in 1981. Children’s overall leisure time dropped from 40% of their day in 1981 to 25% of their day in 1998—and what’s considered “leisure time” includes things like getting dressed, sleeping, eating, and personal hygiene. Children have very little free time.

So, children today are dealing with huge amounts of advertising aimed at

them, while at the same time leading more structured lives, spending more time in school, and having more homework than previous generations. Many children living in urban neighborhoods can't play outdoors freely because their parents are afraid of what could happen. All of that adds up to a profoundly different experience than children had in earlier generations.

MTM: How does that affect children?

TAYLOR: Evidence shows that it's not making them happier. The number of kids on medication to help them cope with depression, anxiety, or hyperactivity is startling. [See sidebar, *this page*.] Children are becoming extremely materialistic; they are gaining their sense of identity through their activities and material things. At the Center for a New American Dream, we conducted a poll of



What Kids Really Want That Money Can't Buy

By Betsy Taylor

(Warner Books, 2003; paperback edition 2004)

What Kids Really Want That Money Can't Buy is an important resource for parents and educators who are concerned about overly commercial and materialistic children. The book provides practical tips for equipping children to resist the incessant advertising of a commercialized culture and to embrace life's non-material pleasures.

parents and half of those in the sampling said their children get their primary sense of self-worth through material things.

When I wrote my book, we did a survey asking children what they really want that money can't buy. What amazed me was the number who said they wanted time simply to be a kid. Because of everything they are inundated with, most chil-

dren today don't have time to experience the natural rhythm of life—in a relaxed way that is not highly structured. Parents are always overscheduling their children's time and pushing them to do more.

We are living in an insecure, fear-based time. Children are told that they need to be king of the mountain, that they better stay ahead of everybody else; there is tremendous competition within the school system. We don't make time to do the things that human beings have done for tens of thousands of years, like sit around the fire, hang out with Grandma, or pursue something for the pure pleasure of pursuing it. Instead, we have to achieve something or impress somebody.

MTM: What advice do you have for parents raising children in these times?

TAYLOR: First, there is no substitute for communication between a parent and a child. Beyond that, my main advice for parents includes the following:

Limit your children's exposure to advertising—not just to the materialism found in advertising (the kind that pressures high school kids into feeling that they need \$500 handbags), but also to other content in advertising and, generally, in the media, such as violence and sexuality. That can have a very detrimental effect. You need to really limit the amount of time your children spend in front of electronic screens.

Talk to your children about advertising while they are still young. If you haven't done this and you have teenage children, set aside

continued on p. 12

“Seventy-five percent of a child's time on weekdays is scheduled with school and other structured activities.”

Current American Culture

In the past ten years, the number of preschoolers taking ADD/ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) drugs has tripled; the number of school-aged children taking the drugs has multiplied by 20. Currently, more than two million American children are prescribed drugs for ADD/ADHD.

—From “A Drug Kids Take in Search of Better Grades,” by Rebecca L. Weber, *Christian Science Monitor*, November 30, 2004.
(Available at www.csmonitor.com/2004/1130/p11s02-legn.html?s=u1.)

The Economic Policy Institute reports that, in the past decade, white, middle-class, family working hours increased by 246 hours to 3,885 hours per year. African-American middle-income families' working hours saw a 500-hours-per-year increase to 4,278 hours per year. The typical suburban mom now spends almost three times as many hours in the car as she did just 15 years ago.

—From “The Politics of Time: Why School Reform Should Put Less Stress, Not More, On Children and Families,” by John Buell, *Independent School*, Spring 2001 (full text available at www.nais.org) and “Economic Indicators,” compiled by the *Progressive Review*, 2001 (available at <http://prorev.com/statsec2.htm>)

Betsy Taylor *continued from p. 11*

a couple of weeks or a month to have your children analyze advertising with you. Help them see what advertisers are trying to sell, through media such as magazines, billboards, and television. You can turn it into a game. When you're watching television with your children, ask them, "What are they trying to sell and how are they trying to sell it?" Have a conversation about it. (Don't do this for too long, though, or it will get tiresome for the kids.)

When you say no to something, say yes to something else. The key is to ask yourself, "What do my children really want that money can't buy?" The number one thing children say they want is time. They want time with you when you're not multi-tasking and are really talking to them. If you say no to television or a shopping trip, then say yes to Scrabble, or to making a pie, or to learning how to play Ultimate Frisbee—even if you don't really want to. Think about what gave you a sense of magic in your own childhood. Your teenage children may say they would rather go to the mall than go camping with you, but just try it! If they've never been, how would

A majority of American youth buy things in an attempt to improve their self-esteem. More than half of those surveyed (53%) say that buying certain products makes them feel better about themselves.

Twelve and thirteen-year-olds are particularly vulnerable. More than three in five (62%) say that buying certain products makes them feel better about themselves.

Among the vast majority of kids (81%) who ask their parents for money or permission to buy a product, 4 in 10 say they know in advance that their parents will disapprove of the purchase before they even ask. And nearly 6 in 10 keep nagging—on average 9 times—in the hopes they can get their parents to give in.

This "keep asking strategy" is paying huge dividends for kids and marketers alike: 55% of young people surveyed say they are usually successful in getting their parents to give in.

—From a poll commissioned by the Center for a New American Dream and conducted in May, 2002 by Widmeyer Communications. Based on a nationally representative telephone study of 750 American youth, ages 12-17. The margin of error is +/- 3.5%.

they know? Let them each bring a friend or turn the camping trip into a party and bring a few other teens, and it will be an experience they'll never forget.

Help your children connect to others. When there are opportunities for your children to make connections with extended family or with other support systems beyond your immediate family, take advantage of them. For example, if there is a family reunion, be sure your

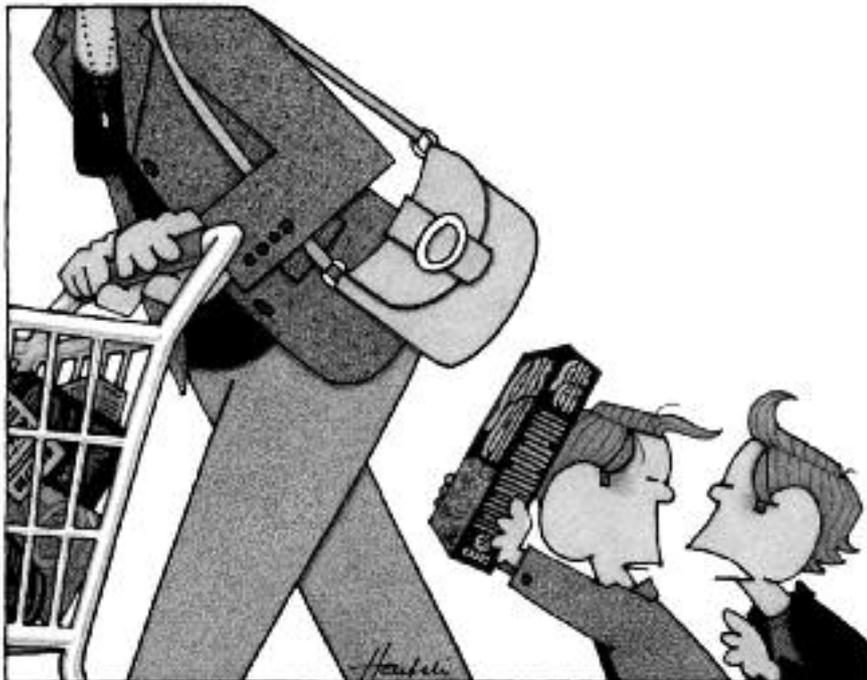
kids go, even if they say they don't want to. It's very important for young people to know that they have an extended support system.

Help your children become engaged in making the world a better place. Children say they want to help make the world a better place, but often, they feel they can't. Parents can help children learn how to volunteer and be more engaged. Children whose parents are trying to help solve societal problems will feel more optimistic about the future.

MTM: What can children themselves do about the pressures they're under?

TAYLOR: I think it's important for parents to help kids take a break and just stop sometimes. Because children are on an ever faster-moving machine, the most radical thing they can do is just stop. I recommend that parents build in "days of rebellion"—I think it creates good habits. Once or twice a year, when I can sense that my children are getting worn out, I take them out of school and we play hooky. Sometimes it means just spending the day together at home baking bread or reading a novel—just not doing anything that we *have* to do.

Above all, help your children learn not to overschedule. Children are under tremendous pressure to always be doing



"She'll buy it for us. We just have to stay on message."

more. Parents need to understand that their children will be O.K. if they don't have the "right" lifestyle. We do have to attend to their security, but do they really need to be a part of the rat race to the Ivy League? We as parents need to start saying no to *more*—more stuff, more activities, more accomplishments for their résumés. Universities are starting to send this message, too. I recently heard an admissions counselor from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) say that students are coming into their freshman year exhausted. The kids are brain-dead from trying to build the appearance of being ready for the Ivy League.

We need to stop and take time to ask ourselves, "What really matters?" If we knew we were going to be in a car crash six months from now, would we continue in this rat race? Or would we want to be having a potluck with our neighbors, playing Capture the Flag with our children, or gazing up at the stars? What really matters most? ■

Is your child doing too much?

There may not be a "right" number of activities for every child, but you can ask yourself these questions to help determine whether your child is getting enough downtime.

- Does he act grouchy, moody, or irritable?
- Can she fall asleep at bedtime?
- Are his grades slipping? Does he finish his homework?
- Has she started overeating?
- Does he zone out in front of the TV?
- Is she complaining of stomachaches, headaches, or mysterious illnesses?
- Does he grumble about being bored?
- Is she over-anxious about getting approval from authority figures?
- When you're heading out the door, does he throw a tantrum or lose equipment?
- Does she pick fights with her siblings or complain you don't love her as much as them?
- Can he keep track of where he's supposed to be?
- Is her schedule draining you or your family members?

If your child exhibits three or more of these behaviors on an ongoing basis, you may want to re-examine his/her after-school schedule.

—From "Overscheduled Kids! Heed these 12 signs that your child is doing too much," MSN Family. (Available at http://family.msn.com/tool/article.aspx?dept=raising&sdept=rks&name=sc_040904_overscheduled.)

Raffi *continued from p. 9*

can be directed towards good or not. Unfortunately, corporations, which, legally, are only mandated to serve the interests of their shareholders, aren't particularly good vehicles for being accountable to the public good. So, to the extent that there are competing rights between the rights of an abstract entity we call the corporation and the reasonable basic human rights of a being who is real flesh and blood—our child, this soul-encased, corporal being—this is the one whose needs must prevail.

MTM: Haven't you suggested elsewhere that in the history of humanity, we've never really had a child-honoring society?

RAFFI: I think what I've said is that we've never had a revolution inspired by the universal needs of children. But perhaps child honoring is an idea whose time has come. Many people around the world, including Nelson Mandela, are campaigning for the world of children. In 2000, Mandela

said that it is not enough for world leaders to spout empty rhetoric. He said, "What we need to do is to turn this world around for the children." I subsequently wrote a song called "Turn This World Around for the Children" and sang it for him in 2001.

I also spoke and sang at a conference at the World Bank called Investing in Early Childhood. There were a number of presentations there about how investment in early childhood saves many times that amount in socioeconomic costs later on in life. So financiers and economists, too, are coming to understand that we need to tend to the early needs of children as a proactive measure, not only in order to build the most productive societies, but also to save money in socioeconomic costs—the cost of neglect, you might say. The idea of attending to and meeting the needs of children is definitely gaining currency worldwide. ■

Raffi on Learning from Children

MTM: What's the most important thing you've learned from children?

RAFFI: Oh, that's easy—the importance of play.

MTM: Children do seem to know how important play is!

RAFFI: Well, it's the way they are. Their knowing is their being. I think it's astonishing that the very young learn the most important things in life—how to be a person, how to talk and eat and write—they learn all of those astonishingly complex feats while they are in a mode of play. That says two things to me: Play is important—because that's the mode children are in when they learn this stuff, right?—and it's important to retain play throughout life.... Almost any task done with a playful attitude becomes more do-able.

What I've Learned about Money

An Interview with Nadia

Interviewed by Mara Peluso

MTM: What is the most important thing you've learned about money?

NADIA: That you should *never ever* throw it away. If you are sick of it, you should just put it in the bank. That's important, because if someone comes to you and they don't have money—like they are poor or something—then you can take it out of the bank and give it to them.

MTM: Who taught you that lesson?

NADIA: All of my teachers since first grade. Ever since my first day of school, we have been learning about money—quarters, dimes, and pennies. When we got to dollars, we were confused, but we got used to it.

MTM: What have your parents taught you about money?

NADIA: My parents help me do a ton of homework about money. We do stuff like adding pennies. If you have, say, 10 pennies and you have to add 50 cents, that's 60 cents.

MTM: Do your friends talk about money?

NADIA: Well, I don't think they do. But sometimes people brag about their money and say how much money they have. I tell them to stop it—that it hurts people's feelings if they don't have money. Here, I'll give you an example. Today we had a book fair. I had \$25 and my friend had \$25, too. I wasn't bragging about it—I just told my friend who had \$25, too. We decided not to tell anyone how much



Nadia is eight years old and lives in Massachusetts.

“I wanted to give that girl
some of my money,
but we can't share money in school.”

we had. Some people had \$15 and they were bragging about it, but we didn't say anything. One girl had two dollars, and do you know what you can get at the fair for two dollars? *Nothing*. Nothing with two dollars! I wanted to give that girl some of my money, but we can't share money in school. I tried to do my best, but I couldn't give her money.

MTM: Why can't you share money in school?

NADIA: We can't share money because if people see it, then they'll ask for it, so we aren't allowed. So my friend only had two dollars and I couldn't give any money to her because everyone could see me if I did and I would get in trouble.

MTM: How do you decide how to spend your money when you go shopping?

NADIA: I just pick out everything I want, and then I sort it out. I pick a

spot somewhere and go through the things that I really want to buy. If I don't have enough money for everything, then I just pick the things I really, really want. Everyone says that is a good way to decide. At the book fair, my friend and I bought one book for my teacher, and I bought one for me.

“Sometimes people brag about their money and say how much money they have. I tell them to stop it.”

MTM: What is the best gift you ever got?

NADIA: Ooooooh! My laptop and my cell phone and my printer—because other people don't have things like that. I'm only in third grade and people don't have cell phones and laptops until high school.

MTM: What is the best gift you ever gave to someone?

NADIA: My dad and I bought my mom three purses—and they were all real: two real Coaches and one real Louis Vuitton. She wanted them really bad, so my dad and I tried to get them for her.

MTM: What happens if you ask your parents for something you really want?

NADIA: I ask, and if they say no, I try to do my best to save up my money so I can buy it myself.

MTM: What advice would you give little children about money?

NADIA: O.K., let me give you an example. In Slovakia [where Nadia was

Teenagers Speak

We asked some juniors in high school *What is the most important thing you've learned about money, and how did you learn it?* Here are a few of their answers.

“The most important thing I've learned about money is that money isn't everything. At the same time, life does become a lot more difficult without it. I've learned this partly through my parents and through certain life experiences. There have been times when my family had money and other times when we had next to none. When you don't have something like that you realize what is really important in life, and while money is necessary to a certain extent, it is not even close to being one of the most important things in my life.”

—Janet Brandano

“The most important thing that I have learned about money is that it is hard to attain but easy to spend. I found this out on my own when I got a job. I worked for 10 to 12 hours every day for two weeks until I got my paycheck. I would spend that money I worked so hard for in one day.”

—Ashley Doherty

“Money is the lifeblood of our society. You need money for food, a job for money, an education for a job, and money for an education. Money is a thought that constantly runs through every person's head. The majority of the world's population worry about not having enough of it, but others worry about losing the abundance that they possess. Watching the never-ending panic over money, I have realized that, although money is necessary to life, I don't want it to consume my thoughts and fears. I think I have learned this by being around people who have become slaves to it.”

—Britney McCollem

“Money equals power. This phrase is quite self-explanatory. To have power, you need money. However, there are other forms of power. A teacher has power over his/her students. A teacher has the ability to tell a student what he/she must do for homework. But if you own a business, you have more power because you have more money.

“I was taught this by simply being a citizen of the United States. It almost seems like it is known that the more money you make, or the more things you own, such as companies, buildings, cars, etc., the more power/respect you have.”

—Jackie Reppucci

“Over the years I have learned that money is something that everyone covets. I have also learned that it never truly makes you happy. Money can buy you all the possessions in the world but not the essentials. What are these essentials? Friends and family who love you, how you are admired by others, how you have gained respect for your accomplishments, and how you act—those are what you need in life.”

—Michael Lepore

born and spent the past summer], the money is different. They have all cents. When I was in the store in Slovakia with my cousin, who is three years old, I tried to teach her about money. When she wanted something, I tried to show her how much money she needed. It

only worked one time. I kept telling her to try her best and she was like, “No, I'm too little.” Let me tell you about teaching three-year-olds about money: Trust me, it's not worth it. ■

Raising Financially Fit Children

Tips from Joline Godfrey

From a conversation with Pamela Gerloff

We talked to Joline Godfrey to learn her advice for raising financially fit young people. Here's what she told us.

Talk to Your Children

Don't be afraid to talk about money with your children. As adults, we have our own unresolved issues about money, and so we put off talking to our kids about it. I like to think of talking to children about money as a vaccination: If we don't inoculate them against the messages being sent by the culture, they are prey to whatever society says about money. If we don't talk to them, there will be a vacuum, and the world will fill it—because the world, of course, *is* talking to them.

Start with Values

If you are clear and explicit about your values, you're less likely to get into the kind of family dramas that arise when your children's ideas about money conflict with yours. Let's say your daughter wants you to buy her a pair of expensive designer jeans and you don't want to send the message that in order to "be somebody" she has to have name-brand clothes. Instead of arguing about it, you can discuss the values that are guiding



your decision. When you get into "can I" or "can't I" power struggles with your children, it's hard to win, because kids are excellent negotiators. Raising the conversation to a higher level (e.g., asking, "How does this choice reflect who we are as a family?") often helps defuse the power struggle; and it helps young people make choices based on their values

instead of on peer pressure. Your values may differ from your children's, but if you don't at least talk about values with your children, then the world will get there first.

Start Early

Start early, start early, start early! So many parents say, "I don't want to burden my children by introducing them to money too soon." The point is not to burden them; you want to start talking about money early because learning about money is like learning a language—easier to acquire the earlier you begin.

Take Your Time

Teaching children about money is like teaching a language: it's an iterative process. Children are not going to become financially fluent in a few days or weeks. If you share information and



Joline Godfrey originated the concept of financial apprenticeship as a distinct stage of life [see sidebar, p. 17], giving families new tools for raising children in an affluent society. She is the CEO of Independent Means, which offers financial education programs and consulting services for families and the companies that serve them. The author of four books, including Raising Financially Fit Kids (Ten Speed Press, 2003), Ms. Godfrey has been recognized in features for The Today Show, Oprah, Fortune, Business Week, The New York Times, and Working Mother magazine. She is a popular speaker and the subject of a Harvard Business School case history.

The Apprenticeship Years (ages 5-18)

Age/Stage	Appropriate Money Skills to Master
Stage One: Ages 5-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counts coins and bills • Understands the value and purpose of money • Learns to differentiate between wants and needs • Begins to develop a sense of ethics
Stage Two: Ages 9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can make change • Shows initiating behavior and entrepreneurial spirit • Shows awareness of cost of things • Shows awareness of earned money • Can balance checkbook and keep up with savings account
Stage Three: Ages 13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can shop comparatively • Understands time-money relationship • Begins to earn money; initiates small ventures • Commits to saving goals • Has basic understanding of investment • Connects money and the future • Can read bank statement • Understands interest and dividends
Stage Four: Ages 16-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively saves, spends, invests • Connects goals and saving • Experiences responsibility for others and self • Able to talk about money and plan future • Understands money as power • Can read a paycheck, do simple tax forms • Shows developing capacity for economic self-sufficiency

The chart shows Joline Godfrey's stages of financial development during "the apprenticeship years," ages 5-18. Children tend to move through the stages in sequence, although they may begin a stage at any age. If your child is 16 and has not acquired the skills from an earlier stage, you can help him/her do activities appropriate to an earlier stage and move along from there. It's never too late—even for adults—to become financially fit.

For a more expanded version of this chart, please see "The Life/Money Map" from *Raising Financially Fit Kids* by Joline Godfrey (Ten Speed Press, 2003), p. 19.

teach skills as children grow developmentally, repeating in increasingly sophisticated ways over time, the knowledge and skills will become part of them. It's a lifelong process of learning.

Pay Attention to Developmental Stages

It's important to realize that money struggles with children are not an indication of failed parenting skills or financial ineptitude. Conflict that seems money-related often arises

because we forget that, just as children go through developmental stages in the process of learning motor, communication, and relationship skills, they go through stages in their financial development. The apprenticeship stage of financial development that I talk about simply refers to the years between 5 and 18, when children are able to acquire many financial life skills (such as saving, spending wisely, and philanthropic behavior) in increasingly sophisticated ways over time. [See sidebar, above.]

Focus on the Ten Money Skills

If you focus on what I call "the ten money skills" [see sidebar, below], raising financially fit kids becomes fairly straightforward. The skills themselves don't change over the course of the apprenticeship years, but the level of understanding of each skill becomes more sophisticated as the child grows. You can get people to help you, and divide up the tasks. For example, you can ask one adult to teach your child how to balance a checkbook, another to teach him or her how to do an

Ten Money Skills

- How to save
- How to keep track of money
- How to get paid what you are worth
- How to spend wisely
- How to talk about money
- How to live on a budget
- How to invest
- How to exercise the entrepreneurial spirit
- How to handle credit
- How to use money to change the world

Excel spreadsheet, and you can focus on developing the habit of giving. This makes the whole process manageable.

Don't Do It Alone

It's not possible for parents to raise a generation of financially fit kids alone; we need to involve extended family and others in the community. At Independent Means, we involve MBA students in our summer camps and programs because the kids think the MBA students are so exciting, so fun, so smart. We believe that those young MBA students have a responsibility to help raise a financially fit generation, just as parents do.

Create a Team of Money Mentors

We also coach families to set up money mentoring teams continued on p. 18

Godfrey *continued from p. 17*

for children. By building a network of mentors, you can amplify your voice. I work with one family who, once a year, places in a bowl the names of all of the cousins in the youngest generation. The adults choose names until every child has at least one adult mentor who agrees to spend time engaged with that child during the year. The mentor's job is to come up with resources to help extend that child's financial fluency. It doesn't have to be a deep bond or a promise to do something specific. It just has to be something that will help the child in some way.

For one mentor, it might mean taking the child to open a savings account at a bank; for another, sending an email once a month with information related to developing financial or philanthropic skills. The idea is to send the message that you take the subject and the child seriously and you expect them to develop these skills as a normal part of growing up—like learning the alphabet and brushing teeth.

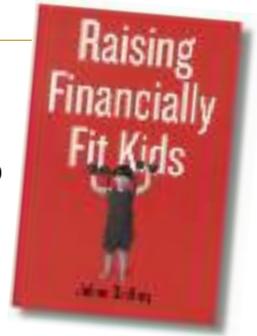
Prepare Children for a Global Economy

To effectively prepare young people for a global economy, we can help them develop their entrepreneurial spirit and acquire international awareness.

Raising Financially Fit Kids

By Joline Godfrey
(Ten Speed Press, 2003)

What financial knowledge and skills do children need in order to become independent, responsible adults who contribute to their families and communities? Godfrey outlines what's needed for each stage of development and shows parents, grandparents, and other mentors how to help children develop the necessary competence. Included are chapters on money and gender, raising young philanthropists, raising rich kids, and the adult child at home.



Children who grow up feeling that it is “normal” to start a business, learn about currencies, speak other languages, and think internationally will be better prepared for the complexities of their economy than children sheltered from these issues.

Don't be Intimidated

If you don't feel as financially fit as you would like your children to become, take heart. You can learn right along with them. You can, for example:

- Join your kids in the apprenticeship process. You can begin developing the Ten Money Skills whether you are 5 or 50.
- Get clear about your own financial values. Write them down.

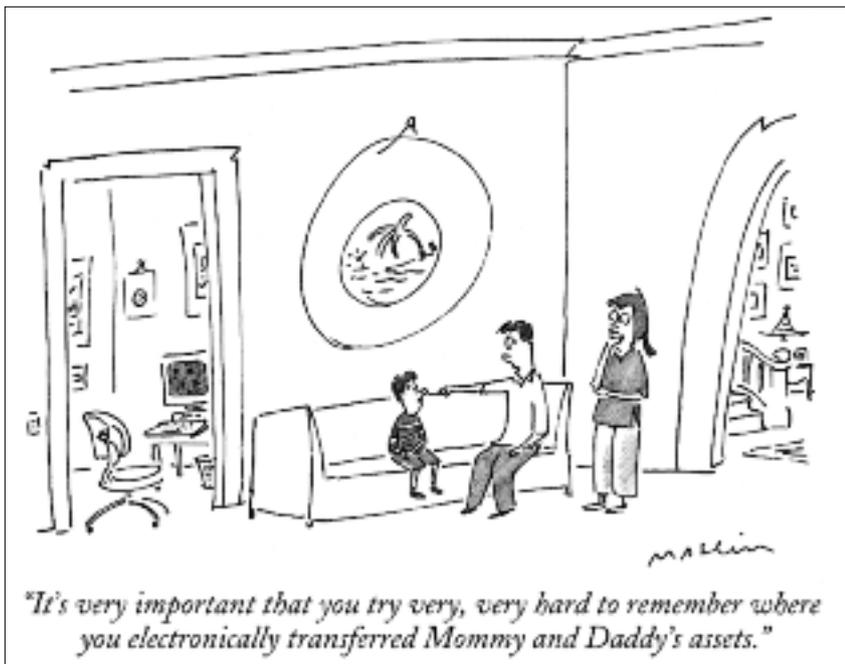
- Create a money-mentoring team for your own learning process.

Don't Forget Grace

I consider grace to be one of the money skills we all need to learn. By that I mean graciousness and gratitude. Birthdays, holidays, and other events where children are given presents or money often become times when young people “collect loot” instead of using the occasion to acknowledge and celebrate their life. When parents wake up one day and find they have mad little consumers, I think it's often because families forget to teach their children how to be gracious; they forget to teach gratitude. When Grandma or Aunt Susan send a gift, you need to teach your children that it's important to acknowledge that what they have done for them is special. This acknowledgement should be given whatever the income level or net worth of your family or theirs. It doesn't matter what families can afford; it matters how they behave. Communicating that thanking people for gifts shows love and caring is one of the ways you bring values into financial education.

Remember that it's More Than Money

Raising financially fit kids is not just about money. It's about launching great kids. Financial education is a great tool for developing the skills of independence, good judgment, and responsible habits. It's a tool for helping the next generation become contributing members of both family and community. That, I have learned, is what kids want for themselves—and what parents want, too. ■



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What is Money for if You Don't Have Children?

By Ruth Ann Harnisch

“What is money for?” That’s one of our favorite conversation starters at More Than Money gatherings, and I’ve noticed that whenever I ask that question, “My kids” is a popular answer.

A primary purpose of money, if you have children or hope to have them, seems to be to make life better for your children and their children. And why not? Money confers advantages beyond measure. It’s no wonder most parents intend their resources to benefit their young.

So, what is money for if you don’t have children? I’ve been a stepmother, a home-room mother, a school clinic mother, a mother figure, a mentor, a motherly type, a loving aunt, a good godmother, and any number of miscellaneous appellations that bind me in some way to some kid. But I’m nobody’s “real” mother. Most of the young people who might be remembered in my will are already well off, and any bequests would be gravy.

Without children to inherit my earthly goods, what is my money for? What uses of money inspire me the way parents are inspired by the thought of providing for their children?

1) My money can be for the kids who don’t have anybody else providing funds for them. I have some money available for charities that serve children who are not being served by loving parents. I can spend some on other people’s kids because I don’t have to spend any on mine.

2) I’m inspired by the prospect of helping to create groundbreaking social change. I don’t have to invest my philanthropic dollar in creating advantages for my children, so my money can be for “bigger picture” social investments. I don’t have a



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“I can spend money on other people’s kids because I don’t have to spend any on mine.”

vested interest in my child’s school. I’m not solicited by the hospital where my child had a tonsillectomy. I can invest in “upstream” solutions that serve many schools, many hospitals, many causes. My estate plan is chiefly designed to be a social agenda legacy.

3) Without children or grandchildren to spoil, I get a kick out of spoiling others. It’s fun to do something special for a grown-up who’s always tending to the kids, and with actual minors I can be Auntie Mame. I’m free to be a frivolous giver who comes up with something extravagant or fanciful that only a non-parent would give. (If I want to give something unusual to a child, I always get parental permission. It’s no favor to a child to outflank a reasonable parent. It’s no favor to anyone to outflank an unreasonable parent.)

4) It’s inspiring to take big risks. Because I don’t have a child depending on my money for basic necessities of life, I’m free to invest in more adventurous philanthropy and creative enterprises. I’ve boldly funded cutting-edge

work that might fail spectacularly. I wouldn’t do that if I had children as heirs or dependents. I’ve learned that there’s no telling when a child will be unexpectedly costly, so I wouldn’t commit major resources to philanthropy or high-flying ventures if there were a chance I’d need that cash for some unexpected child-related expense.

5) Finally, what is money for if not to meet a number of my own personal needs and desires? I’ve noticed that many parents, regardless of how much money they have, seem to think money is for their children’s needs and desires only. I enjoy spending money creating environments that inspire me to be my most grateful, spiritual, productive, healthy, active, generous, loving, and alive self. My philanthropic activity makes me painfully aware of the deprivation in the world, so from time to time, I immerse myself in the most beautiful life imaginable. That helps me work harder to create a legacy that will make life more beautiful for children of all ages. ■

The True Thank You Choosing My Own Way

By Michael Huang

The end of my junior year was looming closer and closer, and I did not know what I wanted to do after graduation. I have always been a “science person,” but medical school just wasn’t appealing enough to me to be worth enduring four more years of schoolwork, and I was losing interest in my laboratory research. As I was walking to dinner one evening, I had an epiphany: Perhaps the ideal choice for me would be veterinary school. It would combine both my love of science and my love of animals.

To confirm the soundness of my new career choice, during the summer between my junior and senior years I worked at two veterinary clinics. Having enjoyed those experiences, I applied for veterinary school in the fall. Life, however, is never that simple. My parents, who I hoped would be my biggest supporters, instead have become obstacles to veterinary school.

My mother has explicitly stated that she has less respect for veterinarians than she does for human doctors. My parents will not financially support me as much as they did my sisters if I am “only going to become a vet.” My mom wonders aloud why she bothered sending me to Yale. My father also disagrees with my choice to apply to vet school, which has now become the cause of numerous household conflicts. My parents assiduously emphasize the lower salary and respect for vets in our society as compared to medical doctors. They do not comprehend that I understand that these are the realities of veterinary medicine, but I consider them to be easily outweighed by the rewards of the profession. Furthermore, these negatives do not reflect the inherent value of the profession, but rather the skewed priorities of our society.

I understand my parents’ history. I



Michael is 21 and a senior at Yale University.

“My mom wonders
aloud why she
bothered sending
me to Yale.”

know that, as Chinese-Americans pursuing the American dream, they have worked and sacrificed for me. Both of my parents grew up poor, but through hard work and auspicious timing, they have achieved their dream. They have made a remarkable climb up the socioeconomic ladder. My grandfather embarked on a one-way, two-week-long journey to America with \$60 in his pocket and his ten-year-old son, my father, at his side. My mother spent her childhood living in the laundry service that her father owned

in San Francisco’s Chinatown. She showered under cold water that poured from a hose propped above the door. Her grandfather had come to America in the first wave of Chinese immigrants to build railroads. From the railroad to the laundry, my ancestors exemplify the stereotypical Chinese immigrant story.

The struggle of my ancestors has allowed me to acquire a good education and the opportunity to find and pursue my passion in life. I feel that if I do not live a productive and meaningful life in my own eyes, it would be egregiously disrespectful to my family and our history. Now is my chance to do more than succeed financially.

Yet, my parents’ concerns about veterinary medicine are not just financial. They simply do not believe I will be happy. They don’t understand that I could become a lawyer or a doctor or any other kind of professional and they would be happier, continued on p. 23

Mixing Money and Mentoring A Unique Set of Challenges

By Phil Coupe

“Of those to whom much is given, much is required.” Those simple words changed my life, leading me to become a mentor to at-risk, disadvantaged children. When, about 10 years ago, I came across those words in a speech by John F. Kennedy¹, I decided I had an obligation to make an inventory of the major gifts I had received in life: a loving family; a comfortable, middle-class upbringing; a first-rate college education; and modest financial success. Much indeed had been given to me, which made it easy to decide to become a “big brother.” [See sidebar, page 23.]

The wonderful paradox I’ve discovered about mentoring is that the mentor benefits from the relationship just as much as the mentee. This is one of many revelations that have come from my

experiences working with boys living in group homes and in foster care situations. I have also discovered that mentoring presents its own unique set of challenges, particularly around the issues of money, values, and relationships.

I know that the gift of my time is more valuable in the world than the gift of money or material objects. This concept, however, can be much harder to grasp for a 10-year-old boy who—as has sometimes been the case with my mentees—has become intimate with feelings of want, due to the lack of both love and material things in his life. As a big brother, I want to give to my little brother in every way possible, without having gifts of money and material objects supersede my gifts of time, energy, and love.

Over time, I have learned how to walk

Phil Coupe is the executive director of The Saltwater Institute, a nonprofit educational foundation focused on creating values-centered leaders, systems, and cultures. He is also the creator of Water Corps, a program to expose at-risk youth to positive environments while providing them with job training and social interaction skills.



The greatest danger, for me, has been the temptation to allow material gifts to dominate our relationship as a result of my failure to balance material gifts and gifts of time. Although I want to bring a nice gift or take my little brother to

“The greatest danger, for me, has been the temptation to allow material gifts to dominate our relationship.”

this tightrope. One important lesson has been to be mindful that money can have an overpowering effect that harms a relationship indirectly. For example, it is easy to hurt the feelings of a mother and/or father if my gifts are so extravagant that they diminish what the parents might be trying to do for special occasions like birthdays and holidays. Then, not only can the parents’ relationship with their child be undermined, but the parents may become less supportive of my relationship with my mentee as well.

something that costs money every time we meet, I have to exercise restraint and make sure that our bond is grounded in the deeper relationship that comes from spending quality time engaged in activities like biking, hiking, playing basketball, or working on homework. Even though my little brother could always use something new (shoes, a coat, clothes, a bike, toys, etc.), I’ve found it important to remember that the non-material stuff will be of much greater value to him in the long run.

continued on p. 23



Phil Coupe with his mentee

¹ Editor’s Note: President Kennedy’s statement is based on a passage from the Bible (Luke 12:48).

Babysitting the Great-Great-Great-Grandchildren

By Sera Thompson

One evening when I was in college, a friend asked me to take her babysitting job for her. I said yes, little realizing that I would soon be entering into another world. After ringing the doorbell to the children's house, I had a brief but meaningful conversation with their parents. I enjoyed getting the parents' perspective on the challenges of juggling career and family. The mother and father were relaxed and kind, settled into their life in a way that most of my young friends, searching to find their place in the world, were not.

After they left, I enjoyed a pre-bedtime conversation with two remarkable people. The 5- and 7-year-old boys played Legos with me and spoke about dinosaurs and tractors. It was fun for me to play again; I got to travel to an enchanted land where rivers and trees appeared just by speaking of them.

At the end of the night, I walked home through a snowy street and felt blessed. The experience brought me a stark awareness of how age-homogeneous my life had become. I realized that I spent time only with other young university students and that I was deficient in relationships with children and elders. I saw that to experience the fullness of life, I



Sera Thompson has lived and worked in Canada, the United States, and Southern Africa. Her work has been in environmental conservation, community development, and individual transformation. She was raised in Shambhala, an international community of meditation centers based on Tibetan Buddhism.

"I got to travel to an enchanted land..."

needed to have those relationships.

I've recently come to this same understanding through my work, but with even broader implications. I help coordinate Pioneers of Change, a global network of young adults (ages 25-35) who are trying to foster a better world. It is a learning community of individuals living in more than 70 different countries. We share experiences and learn together about how social change happens and what it means to start with ourselves.

In my work, I think often about a well-known Iroquois saying: "In our every deliberation we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations." To me, those words invite us to expand our intergenerational friendships even beyond our own lifetimes.

Recently, I was able to explore some of these ideas in a series of two intergenerational dialogues (in Halifax, Canada and Boston), which Pioneers of Change helped to host. The participants were aged 14 to 86.

We began with everyone arranged by age in a big circle, with the youngest

and the eldest sitting next to each other. As I looked around the circle, I sensed my own place in the cycle of human life. It was like seeing a map of the life journey. I remembered what it was like to be a teenager, to be brave and naïve enough to say exactly what I thought. From others in the group, I learned some of the dilemmas and questions that emerge for people at mid-life—questions about how to use the understanding and stature they have gained in order to make a difference. I listened to the gentle stories of a grandfather, no longer preoccupied with the rush of working life, and with still so much humor and wisdom to share.

Central to our conversation was always the question of action. When we really think about what is meaningful to us, and see ourselves as part of a greater whole, we naturally ask ourselves, what should we do with our lives?

In response to the challenge posed to the group, "What question, if asked here, would send ripples through this group, the entire conference," continued on p. 23

International Dialogue

The next intergenerational dialogue, called the Global Village Square, will be held June 22-24, 2005 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in conjunction with the Shambala Institute. For more information, visit www.shambalainstitute.org or www.pioneersofchange.net.

Thompson *continued from p. 22*

and even the world?” people asked the big questions, while grounding them in the practicalities of their own lives. We talked about how to approach work as a meaningful activity, about creating opportunities in our spheres of influence for new approaches, about learning to embrace dissonance and change. We discussed the importance of finding mentors (both older and younger) and the primacy of our individual roles in building sustainable societies.

In the circle, the imminence of my own death was palpable, and I thought about how short and precious our lives are. I saw myself flowing in a continuous stream and knowing that the current is picking up speed. I saw the future coming fast and felt a genuine and pressing concern about the world I am leaving to children who are not yet born. I could almost see their faces, trailing off into the leading edge of our circle. At the same time, I was pointed to the wisdom of the ancestors. They were present too, and the wisdom of human beings who have been living on this planet for ages seemed to become available.

The intergenerational dialogues took me to a new level in my understanding of the ancient advice to consider the next seven generations in our decision making. In the past, I have had a conceptual, and perhaps romantic, notion of stewardship. Now, my responsibility to the future feels concrete and absolute; it's something I feel in my heart and know in my bones.

I admit that my actions in the world are still not always aligned with that understanding. However, this awareness itself provides a motivation for me to think carefully about how I spend my resources and my time. I strive to help build cultures that operate from an underlying premise of long-term sustainability and to make my daily choices on behalf of the generations of children still to come. It's kind of like babysitting for our great-great-great-grandchildren. ■

Huang *continued from p. 20*

but I would not be happier. They think I could make a greater contribution to the world in another profession. The truth is that few people make great contributions to the world. While I strive to be one of the few, it is not required in my definition of success.

Veterinary medicine is an area where I know I can make a positive contribution, no matter how small. The animal population is a neglected community in our society. The lack of concern for animals and their welfare motivates me to dedicate my life toward their cause. Pain is pain, and the will to live thrives in all forms of life.

Particularly difficult for me is that every time I return from college, we have the same discussions. My parents

say they support me, and yet I must justify my choice to them every visit. I value my parents' opinions, but, like most others, I do not appreciate being told the same thing over and over again. Despite being a product of my parents, ultimately, I am a very different person from them. I know that we will not always agree (and indeed rarely do), but I want them to respect my choices.

With or without their approval, I know that I must do what I believe is right for me and what will most likely make me happy. To me, dedicating my life to veterinary medicine, a career I both value and respect, is the best thank you I can give them for all they have done for me. I hope they can see that someday. ■

“If I do not live a productive and meaningful life in my own eyes, it would be disrespectful to my family and our history.”

Coupe *continued from p. 21*

With JFK's words etched in my mind, community service is a personal value that I strive to keep at the top of my priority list every day. Money, of course, can be a great tool in this regard, because it has enormous power to create positive social change. At the same time,

in my own mentor/mentee relationships, I've found it wise to be attentive to those places where money and community service overlap, because money can also create unintended consequences that undermine the social value of my intentions. ■

Be a “Big”

Big Brothers Big Sisters is the oldest and largest youth mentoring association in the United States. From its founding in 1904, it has grown to serve more than 220,000 young people in 5,000 communities in all 50 states, through its network of nearly 500 local agencies. While there are an estimated 14 million children who would benefit from having a Big Brother or Big Sister (a “Big”), there are far fewer mentors currently available. The organization is seeking to grow to serve one million youth by 2010.

To find out more, including contact information for your local Big Brother/Big Sister organization, visit www.bbbsa.org or call 215-567-7000.

Public, Private, or Home School?

Where do you send your child to school? Public school? Private? Homeschool? What are some of the dilemmas involved and how do you make your choice? The parents on these pages reflect on their decisions.

People with the financial means to choose the schools their children will attend might automatically assume that private schools are better for them, or that they should send their children to schools historically attended by family members. I believe that *consciously choosing* a school for our children, based on our values as parents and on our chil-

dren's individual abilities, is critical to their educational success. When selecting the school that our daughters attended, my husband and I faced a very difficult dilemma. On the one hand, we are committed to citizenship and public education, and we strongly believe in the importance of enabling our daughters to interact with children from diverse backgrounds. On the other hand, we wanted to find a school that would provide our daughters not only with an excellent academic education, but also with strong citizenship and social skills. The dilemma was particularly poignant for me personally because I have spent much of my career working in and consulting to public education.

Ultimately, we chose to send our daughters to a private school committed to cultural and economic diversity. The school shared both our personal values and our educational philosophy of fostering a child's individual development, rather than attempting to mold a child into a given curriculum. With its low student-teacher ratio, teachers were able to know our children intimately—academically, socially, and emotionally.

Now that our daughters are grown, I am grateful for the lifelong love of learning and civic participation skills that they acquired in their school. Because of my strong belief in public education, however, I almost wish that we had originally moved into a community with a public school system that matched our educational philosophies. I think highly of families who deliberately live in a particular neighborhood so that their children can attend its public schools. In the long run, I think that supporting our public school system is essential to the greater public good. When we do send our children to private schools, I believe



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that we are obligated to be involved in supporting and improving the public schools of our community.

—Diana P.

Our elementary-aged children are both in public schools. We're lucky to live in a college town where a good tax base provides ample funding for schools and where parental involvement in the schools is very high (volunteering in the classroom, coaching, PTO, school committee, grants for special projects). We've been delighted with the teachers and curriculum; we feel very fortunate to have found a community with a commitment to strong public schools.

My wife and I are both concerned about the "in-the-bubble" effect that an all-private education may have. Our plan is to stay with public education through high school unless we feel that one of the children develops an out-of-the-ordinary need that only a private setting could address. We believe that our first responsibility is to our children's best interests, and that there are many effective ways to extend our concern for our own children's interests to other children as well.

—Win P.

Respectful dialogue among people of diverse viewpoints is a hallmark of *More Than Money*. *More Than Money Journal* readers vary widely in age, family history, politics, religion, net worth, source of income, geography, and other factors. We publish thoughtful commentary on topics of interest to our readers in order to stimulate lively discussion and creative reflection. The opinions expressed by the writers of *Viewpoint* are not necessarily those of *More Than Money*.

I believe that five elements contribute to the process of moving from childhood to adulthood: morals (defining what things are right and what things are wrong), values (identifying what's important to our family), ethics (behavior and how we conduct ourselves based on our morals and values), problem-solving (the ability to identify issues and outline steps to solve them), and decision-making (the highest level of maturity showing readiness for adulthood—choosing directions for action based on morals, values, ethics, and problem-solving ability).

Now consider this: In America, where the average child is in a traditional school setting by the age of five or six, they begin spending more waking hours of the day with their peers than with their parents. Yes, more awake time with their peers than with their parents. Consider also that children move from childhood to adulthood—and they will do it with you or without you. They will do it by spending time modeling their parents or modeling their peers. They will either bond with their parents or band with their peers. So, when it comes to learning values and ethics (not to mention such crucial skills as problem-solving and decision-making), the advantage of homeschooling is clear—which is why I homeschool, rather than send my child to any other school, public or private.

—Steve M.

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When my husband and I were deciding where to send our children to school, a dilemma arose: Do I do what is best for my child (which is my responsibility as a parent) or do I do what's better for a large number of people? I'm a true believer in public education, because it's a basic tenet of democracy. If people like me—with the financial means and the interest to devote time and attention to schools—opt out of the public education system, then good education becomes less available to all.

I attended good public schools and I wanted my daughters to do the same. But the decision became complicated when the state we lived in enacted large budget cuts for education. We began to consider private schooling, but instead ended up moving to another state. We deliberately chose an affluent town that was reputed to have great public schools.

We sent all three of our daughters to the local schools there, but we were disappointed in their quality, which seemed to result from a lack of money. Tax-cutting fever had struck; teachers were laid off and programs were cut. Although there was incredible teacher talent in our community, it wasn't being enhanced in our public schools. As a solution, my husband and I helped start a local education foundation, which provided money raised by parents for

teacher support—professional development, field trips, and creative teaching. (Many public school systems have established local education funds with various thrusts.) We set it up as a grant-making institution, run by parents, with a lot of accountability to the school board and the town. Our daughters remained in the public schools through fourth grade (the elementary school).

When our last child left public school, we gave \$10,000 to the principal of the elementary school to use in any manner that would show our appreciation for what the school and its teachers had given to our children, our family, and the community. That kind of philanthropy is not done in public schools, but it *is* done annually in private schools. From a philosophical point of view, I believe it's important to think about how we can support

“Do I do what is best for my child
(which is my responsibility as a parent)
or do I do what's better for
a large number of people?”

Resources

Donors Choose

Teachers post project ideas online. Donors can fund them directly through Donors Choose.
212-255-8570
www.donorschoose.org

Public Agenda Foundation

Offers nonpartisan information (pro and con) on current debates and policies in education, including programs to enable choice for all.
212-686-6610
www.publicagenda.org/issues/frontdoor.cfm?issue_type=education

teachers and public schools, whether our children are attending them or not.

—Ellie F.

I went to private school. My children go to public school. While I believe in our decision to send them to public school, I am never completely comfortable with it.

We live in a racially and economically diverse town that borders a major city. My wife and I believe that raising our children in a diverse environment such as this is about the best preparation we can give them to lead fulfilling lives in the global era in which they have been born. On a daily basis, they are navigating differences with their classmates in culture, learning styles, ability, financial means, family structures, and a variety of other areas. Through this experience, they are becoming continued on p. 26

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ever more caring, compassionate, and aware of the needs of others and of the world. And by being part of the public school community, we are contributing to the ability of the schools and the community to thrive.

At the same time, all three of our boys are students who, so far, can easily handle the required work. They seem rarely to be challenged or motivated to do better work. I am concerned that the demands on schools to meet the needs of students who need more attention take precedence. This often leaves my sons bored and uninspired, despite the schools' efforts at "differentiated learning" and our efforts to supplement their education at home.

Confronted with this on almost a daily basis, I continually wonder whether the challenge of a private school, with a disciplined learning environment and higher expectations, wouldn't be serving my kids better. I can (and do) go back and forth around issues of whether private school environments are too demanding, too competitive, too homogeneous, and too

charge of her education, just as I am totally in charge of mine. Both of us experience getting excited or inspired by something and diving head first into it, immersing ourselves until we are satiated, then moving on to the next subject. Isn't this how we all learn best, rather than being told to be interested in this subject for 45 minutes, then that subject for 45 minutes, etc.? In any topic she's interested in there are numbers, history and culture, science, writing, and reading involved. And she's totally eager to make use of all of these skills because it's in pursuit of a topic that moves her.

—Kathrin W.

I believe that public education is our nation's last remaining democratic institution. Public schooling should provide more or less equal and adequate educational opportunities to all American youth. Public schools should be places where these emerging citizens meet each other, regardless of family situation, and relate to each other as peers. If this is what public education were like in the large urban city where I live,

cross-section of our city's residents, in terms of race and class, than the students found in his former school (or most any public elementary school in the city). In short, I put my son in a Catholic school because it was the schooling option most emblematic of what democratic public education opportunities would be like in our city if our schools were adequately funded and popularly attended. While I could have sent him to a more elite, expensive, secular institution, I wanted him to grow up with friends and peers from all walks of life, not just kids from families capable of paying weighty tuitions.

The selection of a parochial institution represents a small ethical compromise, I suppose, made to remove him from a school environment where only the poorest of families find their children unfairly trapped, while not taking the more separatist route of leaving the neighborhood altogether for a more privileged independent school education.

Ethical principles are challenging to apply in an unfair world. Compromise turns out to be the best I can do.

—Jon A.

"From a philosophical point of view, I believe it's important to think about how we can support teachers and public schools, whether our children are attending them or not."

connected to a culture of wealth and consumerism. Perhaps it is those issues that keep me from pursuing that course, but the uncomfortable feeling still persists that my children's innate abilities and passions should be better nurtured than they are in even these very good public schools.

—Name withheld by request

My 16-year-old daughter is "unschooled," in the way pioneered by John Holt [leader of the home-schooling movement]. She is totally in

I would have left my son in public school. But public school here is unofficially segregated by race and class.

From an ethical standpoint of despising unfair privilege, I have chosen a very affordable Catholic school (even though I am Jewish) in our working-class neighborhood, where the children of immigrant taxi drivers learn alongside those of nurses and parents of more comfortable means. My son is still the only white child in his class, but the rest of the students represent a more diverse

I was arrested for civil disobedience at an Alliance for Quality Education protest. A year ago I would never have envisioned doing such a thing. However, last year my daughter's school suffered enormously due to budget cuts. This year we faced even more, but this time parents said, "No—arrest us if you will, but you cannot do that again to our children." Many people ask me why I bother, instead of sending my daughter to a private school. The answer is—I don't want to. I see in my daughter's classmates the same fierce intelligence and eagerness to learn that I remember from when I went to a public school. I want her to be with children with different backgrounds and perspectives. I want to be there fighting for them and for her. What I know for sure is that we have to start investing in the education of all children to prepare them and our country to succeed.

—Cynthia N. ■

Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture

(Scribner, 2004)

By Juliet B. Schor

Reviewed by Michelle Singletary

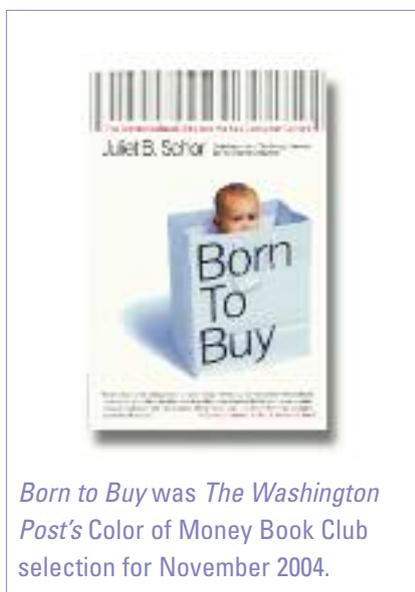
Michelle Singletary is a personal finance columnist for *The Washington Post*. She discusses personal finance on *National Public Radio's Day to Day* program on Tuesdays and online at www.npr.org.

Consumerism expert Juliet B. Schor has written what should be a must-read for every new parent, seasoned parent, aunt, uncle, and grandparent. *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture* frightened me, and it will you, too.

"American children are deeply enmeshed in the culture of getting and spending, and they are getting more so," writes Schor, a professor at Boston College. "The more they buy into commercial and materialist messages, the worse they feel about themselves, the more depressed they are, and the more they are beset by anxiety, headaches, stomachaches, and boredom."

Here is what Schor found, based on various studies and her own survey of 300 children (ages 10 to 13) in the Boston area:

- Children are becoming shoppers at an earlier age. It is estimated that children aged 6 to 12 visit stores two to three times per week.
- More children go shopping every week than read, go to church, participate in youth groups, play outdoors, or spend time in household conversation.
- Children's top aspiration now is to be rich. Forty-four percent of kids in the fourth through eighth grades now report that they daydream "a lot" about being rich.
- Nearly two-thirds of parents report, "My child defines his or her self-worth in terms of the things they own and wear more than I did when I was that age."



- One study found that nearly two-thirds of mothers thought their children were brand-aware by age 3, and one-third said it had happened by age 2.

Recently, my usually sweet and gentle 6-year-old boy got in my face about something he saw on television and wanted me to get for him. After watching a Saturday morning cartoon program, my son stormed into the kitchen and demanded that I take him to a certain fast-food restaurant so he could get a toy that was in a kid's meal. He stood there with his hands on his hips, asking: "When are you going to take me? How many times have you taken me?" Then he had the audacity to answer the question for me: "Zero times, Mommy, zero times," he said, forming two fingers into the shape of a zero.

Clearly, my son had lost his mind. Usually I just ignore it when my kids nag me for stuff. But there was something in my son's manner that morning that made me take notice. He was product-possessed, and after I stopped fuming, I got scared. I turned my son around and ordered him to go shut off the television. In fact, I went a step further. After that incident, I have severely limited his and his sisters' television watching.

In *Born to Buy*, Schor outlines the numerous tactics that advertisers are using on our kids, many of which turn them into disrespectful tykes and teens.

For example, there is an "anti-adult bias" in the commercials. "It's important to recognize the nature of the corporate message: Kids and products are aligned together in a really great, fun place, while parents, teachers, and other adults inhabit an oppressive, drab, and joyless world," Schor says. "The lesson to kids is that it's the product, not your parents, that is really on your side."

There is the practice of "trans-toying," or turning everyday items into playthings. "Child development experts worry that this trend leaves little space for imagination, as every item in the environment becomes a toy," Schor writes. How many times have you heard your kid say, "I'm bored"? What he or she really means is: You need to buy me something that will entertain me because I can't possibly be put upon to be creative.

Schor concludes that kids who are overly involved in the values of consumerism become problem children. "The prevalence of harmful and addictive products, the imperative to keep up, and the growth of materialistic attitudes are harming kids," she says.

People—parents—are under siege. And what's at stake isn't just a depletion of our assets to buy what our kids are brainwashed to believe they need. What's at stake is the well-being of our children.

Advertisers and marketers are turning our children into materialistic monsters. And sadly, we are aiding and abetting the enemy. We let the enemy into our house when we allow our children to watch endless programming surrounded by a steady stream of messages that communicate they aren't worthy—a somebody—without certain products. We deliver our children to the enemy every time we choose to entertain them by shopping.

I hope *Born to Buy* will motivate you to fight back, because our children—my children—weren't born to shop.

From "Material Girl and Boy" by Michelle Singletary, The Washington Post, November 14, 2004, ©2004 The Washington Post Writers Group. Excerpted with permission.

Charity Checks: Creating a Generation of Givers

How can you promote “charitable literacy” in children? Bruce Miller, a reader of *More Than Money Journal*, is hoping to create a new generation of givers by sponsoring a classroom program developed by Charity Checks, a nonprofit organization based in California. Thanks to Miller and other sponsors, children around the country are researching solutions to problems around them and identifying and supporting nonprofits that share their concerns.

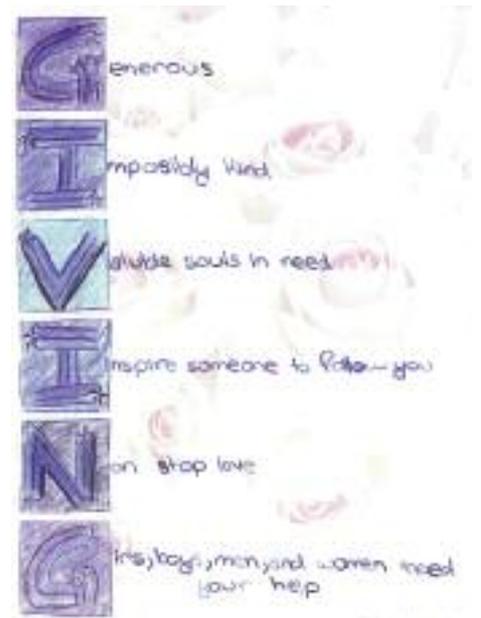
Charity Checks, founded by Lisa Sonne and her husband, Victor Dorff, have created a new twist in the philanthropic field with Giving Certificates. These certificates look like checks, are given as gifts, and are then made out to any eligible organization by the gift recipient. (Gift givers make a tax-deductible contribution to Charity Checks and receive Giving Certificates equal in value to their donation. The certificates are then passed on to family, friends, or business associates, who choose the organization to receive the donation.) Giving Certificates can also be used to give anonymously to charities. As Miller expresses it, “Charity Checks combine the altruism of Mother Teresa with the business efficiency of Warren Buffett.”

Charity Checks’ Charitable Literacy

Program incorporates Giving Certificates into school curricula. Each child in the program receives a Giving Certificate and then passes it on to one of the almost one million 501(c)(3) organizations in the United States. Classroom sponsors like Miller donate the Giving Certificates; after much research students choose their favorite charity, fill out the certificates, and perhaps even make a presentation to classmates about their chosen charity.

The reasons kids pick particular charities are sometimes heartbreaking, and often insightful. “I’d like to give my check to the Alzheimer’s Foundation,” said a first-grade girl, “because my grandmother doesn’t have any memories, and everybody should have memories.” Another student in the same class was not content to give to a group that helped the victims of a recent hurricane; he wanted to give to people who would stop hurricanes in the future, “so there will never be any more victims.” His Giving Certificate went to a nonprofit organization that is researching hurricanes. “With this level of understanding and empathy,” wonders Sonne, “what kind of philanthropists will these children be when they are grown?”

Sample school curricula and details on ordering Giving Certificates are available



A poem written by one of the children involved in Charity Checks’ Charitable Literacy Program

on the Charity Checks website (www.charitychecks.us). The curricula can also be downloaded and adapted for family use. ■

For more information call 800-554-5601 or email info@charitychecks.us.



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What Will a Dollar Buy?

- *At Nadia's book fair* (see "What I've Learned About Money," p. 14): Nothing
- *At CVS Pharmacy*: Trial-sized bottle of hand lotion
- *In San Francisco, California*: Groceries for a hungry family for one week—provided by St. Gregory's Food Pantry, with food largely donated by growers, manufacturers, and grocers (www.saintgregorys.org/Community/Outreach/FoodPantry)
- *In a developing country*: One fruit tree, planted by Trees for Life (www.treesforlife.org), an organization that plants trees to protect the environment and to provide low-cost food sources
- *In sub-Saharan Africa*: School lunches for five students through the United Nations World Food Programme (www.wfp.org)

Children's spending has roughly doubled every ten years for the past three decades, and tripled in the 1990's. Children aged 4–12 spent \$2.2 billion in 1968 and \$4.2 billion in 1984. By 1994, the figure had climbed to \$17.1 billion, and by 2002, children's spending had exceeded \$40 billion. Kids' direct buying power is expected to exceed \$51.8 billion by 2006.

—From: *The Kids' Market: Myths and Realities* by James McNeal (Paramount Market Publishing, Inc., 1999) and "The U.S. Kids Market," a 2002 report from Packaged Facts (available at www.marketresearch.com)

Extreme poverty threatens the lives of more than a billion children around the world. More than one billion children do not have access to at least one of seven commodities deemed essential: shelter, water, sanitation, schooling, information, healthcare, and food.

—From: UNICEF's "The State of the World's Children 2004" report, as cited in "Childhood is a Brutal Experience for Half of World's Children," December 9, 2004 (available at www.unicef.com.au/mediaCentre-Detail.asp?ReleaseID=571)



*"Nothing you do for children is ever wasted.
They seem not to notice us,
hovering, averting their eyes,
and they seldom offer thanks,
but what we do for them is never wasted."*

—Garrison Keillor



*"Before I was married, I had a hundred theories
about raising children and no children.
Now, I have three children and no theories."*

—John Wilmot



"Grown-ups love figures. When you tell them that you have made a new friend, they never ask you any questions about essential matters. They never say to you, 'What does his voice sound like? What games does he love best? Does he collect butterflies?' Instead they demand: 'How old is he? How many brothers has he? How much does he weigh? How much money does his father make?' Only from these figures do they think they have learned anything about him.

"If you were to say to the grown-ups: 'I saw a beautiful house made of rosy brick, with geraniums in the windows and doves on the roof,' they would not be able to get any idea of that house at all. You would have to say to them: 'I saw a house that cost \$20,000.' Then they would exclaim: 'Oh, what a pretty house that is!' . . .

"They are like that. One must not hold it against them. Children should always show great forbearance toward grown-up people."

—From *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, ©1943, renewed in 1971 by Harcourt Inc.



"Mommy usually reads me a story, then slips me a twenty."

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BolderGiving Resources

Available at www.boldergiving.org

Story and Video Library

Over 100 brief vignettes of extraordinary givers from across the economic spectrum. These Bold Givers have committed at least 20% of their net worth, income, or business profits toward making a better world.

Bold Conversation Series

Monthly teleconferences and online chats offer an informal chance to interact and learn from Bold Givers.

Explore Your Giving Potential

An invitation to explore in the coming year ways to become more bold in your own giving, and to take the next step that's right for you.

Give Half Pledge

Bold Givers, be counted! This pledge is for people of all financial levels who commit to giving 50% -- of income for three years or more, of business profits, or of net worth.

Bolder Giving Workbook

Through articles, exercises, and stories from outstanding givers, this workbook offers step-by-step guidance for people exploring their lifetime giving potential.

We Gave Away a Fortune

This award-winning book features stories of sixteen people who gave 20% or more of their wealth and highlights common themes among them.

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Explorations of the impact of money in our lives. Each 16-32 page issue includes personal stories, articles, and resources. Available in three different formats: free pdfs of each issue, print-on-demand books that compile 5-7 issues by theme, or separate articles you can browse online. (See list of 40 back issues in right column.)

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- #19 Women, Money, and Power
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