



The Albanian Prince: A Lesson On Joy..... 1

Perspective..... 4

The Wilds of Creation.....7

Nature Deprivation in Children?..... 9

Pictures from the Medieval Feast.. 11

The Weasel Farm..... 12

Parenting on Purpose..... 14

The Albanian Prince: A Lesson On Joy

November is here, and Thanksgiving is upon us. I have been spending much time in quiet reflection, considering the many things for which I am thankful and enjoying the people I’m blessed to share life with. I’ve been thinking a lot about my Mim, her life, her death, and the Albanian priest who officiated over her funeral.

It’s funny how the threads of life are woven together. An old woman dies and her family finds themselves face to face with a total stranger who is responsible for blessing her passage into the next life. In our case, a lovely middle aged man with a smile that lit up the room. At first trying to make sense of his thick accent was hard going as he told the story of his encounter with God through a missionary’s new testament, his subsequent nine mile swim to escape communist Albania and his journey to America, Catholic seminary and a life given back to the God who found him in a godless land and redeemed his soul. He is an amazing man. He delivered a eulogy over my grandmother’s dead body that was truly for the living and not a person in that church could have doubted that this man served the Living God. His preaching was good, but the real message I took away was delivered the day before her funeral, in his private sitting room as he told the story of his life:

“When I was in the seminary, I said to my friend one day, “Do you know that I am the Prince? I live in this beautiful building, like a palace, that my father the Bishop has had built, just for me. He hires teachers to teach me everything that I need. When I am hungry, I go to the kitchen and

REFORM IN EDUCATION AND LIVING INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

the cooks make for me whatever I like. If I wish to go somewhere, all I need to do is ask and my father gives me his nice car to drive. I am the Prince! And I did nothing to deserve this.” He went on to explain to us how happy he was to be in America, “When I travel around, I drive on wonderful roads that I did not build. They were built by someone else, just for me. They are maintained by someone else, just for me. When I get hungry and I go to a restaurant, someone meets me at the door and shows me a wonderfully comfortable seat that they have prepared for me, they have installed air conditioning to keep me comfortable, they cook me whatever I like and they have servants there to wait on me, because I am the Prince! Of course, I give them a little money in exchange, but it is only right, it is only what a good prince should do!” He continued this lecture on his life and experience with the biggest smile on his face and blue eyes that fairly danced. It was impossible not to be drawn in and begin to see it his way. Here is a man who was raised under the dull grey communist skies, found the Lord and risked everything to escape to freedom. He arrived here with his wet clothes on his back and nothing more, he struggled every day to learn the language, adjust to the culture, and get an education, yet he saw himself as the Prince. He is here to do God’s will and for God’s good pleasure, and everything else is here as a good gift of that same God, to him personally, because he is the loved son of the King. What a fabulous way to look at the world.

So there we stood, by Mim’s coffin, listening to old men fire a salute by the grave side. I patted her casket and shook his hand, thanking him for his wonderful sermon. His twinkling eyes met mine and he gave me one more smile before he left me alone with my thoughts. It has taken me a couple of months to think it all through, and I keep coming back to that room in the manse, the bust of the Prince of Albania on his book shelf and the history lesson that started the whole thing. The take home message, as my good friend Jess would say, is that God has saved each and every one of us out of spiritual darkness, has put our feet upon a path and prepared good works for us to do, and has placed around us everything we enjoy in life as His good gifts to us, from our Father the King, to we, his Princes. The reason for that priest’s joie de vivre is so obvious. Why can’t we all see it? I have had a life of luxury and ease compared to him: I’ve never been persecuted for my faith, had to escape my home with nothing but my life and the clothes on my back, to find myself free, but in an utterly foreign land, and yet, I can be so grumpy and discontent when I have to wait at a stop light, or when I’m served diet instead of regular soda at the drive up window of our local McDonalds. What is my problem? Paradigm.

Paradigm: the window through which we see the world. Paradigm is a choice. I so often choose the “glass half empty” approach to life: What I don’t have: a finished kitchen, drywall and paint over the insulation hanging out of walls and ceiling around my house, time to travel like I wish I

REFORM IN EDUCATION AND LIVING INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

could, kids who sit still, kids who do math lessons without me reminding them, enough time to do “my” things, a maid, flooring, the list goes on. What the Albanian Prince is teaching me by example and one forty five minute lecture is that I’ve got it all wrong. My home is a palace, prepared for me by the people who lived there before me just so that my family would have a lovely place to live. They even held out on selling their piece of land so that we could enjoy the solitude of our location. The fact that it is not finished is also a gift, it means that I can design in just the way I want it. The McDonalds at exit twenty was built just for me, so that I could get a drink going to and from music on Wednesdays. The fact that the employees sometimes mess up my order is just an opportunity for me to show my benevolence as Princess and extend the grace of my Father the King to them. My children are also kids of the King, part of the royal priesthood, benefactors of the good gifts of their Father but they are also part of His good gift to me. Because He loves me so much He’s arranged for me to always have company, no chance for loneliness with this crew! He’s given me one that cuddles, one that clowns, one adventurer, one who wants to do everything I do, and one with a belly button that is shaped like a cinnamon roll swirl who insists I taste it daily. They were created for His good pleasure, and for mine as well. As I’ve been driving around I’ve found myself thinking, “These roads were made just for me!” Or in the fabric store: “They assembled this huge selection of fabrics for me to choose anything I like, that was so thoughtful. How can I be upset that they only have three yards of this one when I needed six... I’ll choose something else and be glad for the choices available to me.”

Maybe it’s silly. Maybe anyone else who had been in the room would have seen this priest in a different light. Maybe you would not have been as captivated by his life and his lessons as I was; but, I’ve always had a soft spot for foreigners. I thought I was going to the funeral for my Mim, and in some ways I was. However, I suspect that the Weaver of Threads saw me coming and placed in that little Catholic church in Erie, Michigan, an Albanian priest that He’d had up his sleeve for some time, to continue my lessons on contentment and show me joy walked out in the flesh. Just for me, because I’m the princess.

Perspective

by Stephanie Payton

I recently sat across from a friend at dinner, enjoying a night out. Girl talk was being rapidly exchanged as we caught up with each other. As is usual, much of the conversation revolved around our families. We can leave our families at home, but we cannot ever forget them, can we? It is always such a joy to sit and share the ups and downs of parenthood with someone who loves your kids, as well. It was a delight and encouragement to my soul.

At some point, the conversation turned to the topic of affliction—why it happens, and what is our response to it. We agreed that there are many kinds of affliction, some worse than others, but in the end the most important thing was our response.

The world would have us believe we are in bondage, staying home and caring for a husband and kids. Surely we want more from life? And then, if we have chosen to educate them at home, well, we must be certifiably crazy. Nobody can survive spending every day “trapped” within the walls of their home with their kids. After all, kids are fun to be around, but ALL of the time? Most would say, “No, thank you.” Now, truth be told, there ARE days when I feel certifiably crazy. And there are certainly days when I feel “trapped.” The walls close in around me, and I go to my favorite place to cry. But here’s the thing I am learning. Response is every-

thing. And I have a choice.

I have been weeping my way through a book called *Affliction*, by Edith Schaeffer. I bought this book over a year ago, and I am still not finished. With each chapter, I have had to carefully ponder the contents. If you’ve not read any of her books, I would encourage you to do so. She engages the reader so easily, and writes in such a way that mere mortals can understand. And yet her words are so rich.

The biggest thing I’ve gained from her book is a change in perspective. She touches on many different types of affliction—death, abuse, chronic suffering, just to name a few. As one of my pastors is fond of saying, you’ve either already experienced suffering, are experiencing it now, or will experience it in the future. None of us is immune. It is inevitable. It is a reality of a fallen world. And we each have a choice in our response.

Have you ever lamented the fact that “nobody understands?” Whether it’s the way you feel when your kids seem out of control, or the way you feel when balancing the checkbook, or the way you feel when you have to somehow parent, and parent well, with raging pain? Here’s my answer: That’s exactly right, nobody does understand. Exactly. We have the distinct honor of walking a path that

REFORM IN EDUCATION AND LIVING INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

nobody in history has walked before us. Sure, some of our steps might intersect with many others, but somewhere along the way, we take a step right when they took a step left, and voila, a new path is forged. Everyone's path is unique. Nobody else will experience exactly the same situation in exactly the same way as each of us will. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made," a small and unique portion of the fingerprint of God. Only God can understand every little thing about us, and every experience we pass through. Just as only He can fulfill that deepest need in our hearts, only He can offer thorough understanding.

So what part do we play in this experience of affliction? We can choose our perspective. Well, sort of. Put another way, we can choose to remain in our limited, finite perspective, or we can allow God to expand our perspective into one more like His. Let me share a personal example.

I live with chronic pain. There are mornings when I would prefer to stay in bed, rather than get up and have to parent. The sounds of kids playing can just about send me over the edge. Simple questions become annoyances. Anger flares, and before I know it I am consumed by my circumstances. My mantra quickly becomes, "It's not fair," or "If only they would stop. . . ."

This is when choice becomes all-important. The reality is that at that moment,

the circumstances will not change. I can view them as defeat, give up the fight, and allow Satan the victory. Or, I can choose to look at them from God's perspective. He has given me these circumstances, these children, and this LIFE, as my unique path to walk. My choices are making eternal differences. If I choose to not play my part, the song will continue, but will not be as rich as the composer intended.

I must add that I am not capable of making these choices in my own strength. Left up to me, I would make the wrong one every time. But I can choose to allow God to remind me when my perspective becomes skewed, and give me the strength to forge ahead with a heavenly perspective. It is all for His glory, is it not?

How about you? Have you found yourself in circumstances less than what you would prefer? Do you find yourself fighting anger and frustration over and over? Have your kids been driving you crazy, or your husband been less than perfect? Think about this: you have the opportunity to live a life that NOBODY else has or will live. You can spend it in the quagmire of anger, bitterness, and despair, or you can allow God to raise you above your circumstances and soar in triumph. He Who Overcomes is on your side. Look at life from under the protection of His wing. It is a much better perspective.

To Subscribe (or Unsubscribe!) To This Publication:

Send your request via e-mail to: i4reality@i4reality.org to subscribe to the e-mail version (we prefer that you subscribe to this one if you have computer access as it frees up resources to keep the paper version free for those people who do not have computer access! Thank you for your consideration!)

Or: Send your name and land address to: The Institute for R.E.A.L.I.T.Y.
Fern Hill
531 NH, Rt. 3A, Hill, NH 03243



Craft Classes!!

Lois Wood, a.k.a. "Crazy Beadin' Mama" is offering classes in Franklin, NH:

Dec. 9th-Silk Ribbon Embroidery

December 16th-Beaded Bracelet

Recommended ages: 10 and up (younger with help from Mom!)

Cost: \$10 per person, per class

Call Lois to reserve your spot!

603-934-8201

Ring of Truth

Now available in 3 editions:

Anger Edition
Trials Edition
Kids Edition

\$10.00 each or 3 for \$24.00

Ring of Truth

Scripture Memory Rings



- 20 different scripture selections
- Portable (3x4")
- Durable (each page laminated)
- 20 original images (to aid in the memory process)
- Affordable (only \$8 each)

To order contact Nikki Powers: nickel@metrocast.net

The Wilds of Creation

The Walking Stick

by Judy Daley

This fabulous docile bug is completely harmless to humans and also to farmer's crops.

They are large, wingless insects with legs all about the same length. They look exactly like a twig of a tree. The walkingstick is strictly a vegetarian, feeding on a variety of leaves and tender green berry stalks.

Some of the fascinating facts of the walkingstick are:

They can move quite fast if they want to and with much grace. They move around and eat at night. In the day they hang motionless on leaves or among the new twigs of trees and shrubs, blending in so well that they go virtually unseen. Eggs are dropped to the ground to hatch next spring. They molt, or shed their skin, five or six times in order to grow into adulthood. Should a leg become broken off, a new one will regenerate after several molts.

I've only seen them in the fall. They seem to appear from out of nowhere looking like something from outer-space. Their movement is odd and uncalculated, swaying front to back ever so slowly. Their appearance alone is a bit of a fright!

In late fall, one particular walkingstick was vertically situated on the clapboard just above the outdoor faucet. The medium dark-brown

coloration blended perfectly well with the color brown of the siding on my house.

I spotted him when I was reaching for my water bucket which had been left near the outdoor faucet. I never would have seen him had he not moved slightly. He appeared to be warming his body in the strong sunlight of the day.

"Wow," I whispered out loud. I studied him for quite a while. "This is fabulous," I thought to myself, recoiled from my outward whisper. I was certainly, without a doubt, face to face with an adult walkingstick! "How cool is that?" Well, for me it's pretty cool!

This was an adult, full grown at just over six inches long, hardly anything to fear. It fascinated me so much that I wanted to share it with someone else! This is not a creature seen every day though it could be if one took the time to hunt it out among the oak leaves in late fall.

I placed my hand in front of him, gently sliding it under his body. This encouraged the front legs to take hold of my fingers allowing me to pick him up without hurting him. The walkingstick's feet have tiny little hooks which enables it to hold on to the rough bark of trees and also to the smooth surface of

REFORM IN EDUCATION AND LIVING INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

leaves. The hooks feel funny, but do not hurt at all. In fact, all you feel is a slight pressure on your skin. The hooks on the feet can not be seen with the eye unless you have a very strong magnifying glass and patience to hold your bug in place while you get a good look.

Once on my hand my little friend stopped moving and remained very still. Perhaps he was just resting like he was doing on the side of the house. I wasn't quite sure. Since he did not seem to want to move again, I decided to place him on the front of my shirt.

Since I seemed to be the only human being outdoors at that hour of day, I decided to busy myself with some much needed yard work.

After a while the neighbors began to emerge from their houses.

One woman was out walking with her three small children and stopped to say hello. Mom's distorted facial expression quickly reminded me that I had a creepy looking bug on my shirt. The kids stood staring at me as well. "Tell me that isn't real," the mom squeamishly stated. "Oh~ Please let me introduce you. This is a walkingstick bug!" As mom took a step back, I knelt down to the eye level of the three children. "You don't have to be afraid of him, he doesn't bite", I told them gently. They smiled and shook with excitement as I offered each child the chance to hold the rather large odd looking bug.

The kids were thrilled to have touched such a weird looking creature, and soon they were hurrying off to tell everyone what they had just experienced.

I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to help educate the children about one of their very own wild back yard creatures. I can only hope "Mom" gained some measure of appreciation from the experience too.

With excitement we share!

Nature Deprivation in Children?

Something to Consider

I have been exposed to a new thought this month. It presented itself in the form of a book in an out of the way bookstore in Vermont on a bright Sunday afternoon. I disremember the title, but I stood for quite a while reading excerpts and considering the premise: that the average child in today's American society is nature deprived.

I must admit, being raised as I was, that it never occurred to me that some people suffered nature deprivation. If anything, my parents could have been accused of being nature gluttons and of force feeding my brother and I on a steady diet of pine needles and buckets full of garter snakes caught in the gully behind our island home. Of course if I had thought for just a minute I would have seen the plausibility of the thought, of course I knew people who'd lived out their whole lives in cities and couldn't tell a maple tree from an elm, but until last week I hadn't. Nature deprivation as a societal condition never crossed my mind.

The general premise of the book, and other articles I've read since then, is that children today are being raised without nature for a variety of reasons: the prevalence of television and video games, being two, but another significant reason the author cited is fear. He states that parents fear what is outside their front doors, violence, kidnapping, accidents and so they don't allow their children to freely

explore as was common one or two generations ago. Is this fear well founded? According to the author and the studies he cites, no. The fear is propagated mainly by media. One or two tragic stories of a child coming to harm are played and replayed until every parent in the nation is terrified that this could happen in their neighborhood. One ten year old child wanders off from his family's vacation rental in New Hampshire one summer and dies of exposure within two miles of his house and suddenly every parent is terrified that the same fate awaits their child if they are allowed out of sight of the house. I have a whole soap box on America's "culture of fear," but I'll save that for another article. This one is about nature deprivation.

Apparently, a regular exposure to nature has been shown to be calming to children, to diminish the symptoms of ADHD, and reduce stress levels in the subjects studied. To this I add a hearty, "Duh?!" Maybe one of the reasons that ADHD didn't show up in record numbers when we were children, or when our parents were children was that our parents were in the habit of locking us out of the house for several hours a day to "go play," whatever that meant. No kid who has played stick ball in the alley for three hours and been decked into the bricks fifteen times by well meaning friends can possibly have the energy to drive

his Mom nuts when he comes in, and certainly he will sleep well that night.

Is your child nature deprived? Of all of the things my children may well lack, exposure to the natural world is not one of them. This is not due to some great insight on my part or that stellar parenting class we are so grateful to have taken before our daughter was born. No, to me it was just natural to bundle them up and ship them out of doors, for their sanity and mine. It is gratifying to be reinforced in this accidental success of my parenting journey. However, I'm not sure I buy it entirely.

Supposedly nature deprived persons are more stressed, less attentive, and at some sort of emotional and spiritual disadvantage. I am the first to tout the benefits of nature in treating these symptoms within myself, however, does that mean that a person who has been raised, say, in lower Manhattan is a warped soul for not having kept snakes in a pail or fished tadpoles into a quart jar? That is painting a rather broad stroke, I think. I know plenty of folks raised on television and subway stations that seems to be perfectly balanced persons and who are not medicated for stress or attention deficit related conditions. So what's the point?

Evidently this idea of nature deprivation, although new to me, is not new to a whole lot of other people who are far more knowledgeable in this field than I am. The fact, alone, that a book of several hundred pages could be written on this topic and become a reasonably

popular read among parents as diverse as tree huggers in California and the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention (who have endorsed the book) says that there is a need and that the book resonates with a wide variety of people across our culture. You can spend the twenty bucks or so and read the book if you like, or you can put the twenty bucks toward a season pass at your local state park.

One of the things that my parents, unquestionably, did well was to let us get dirty. I remember playing out in a driving rain with rivulets pouring off the ends of my braids, and water filling my boots as we waded in the gully full of rushing water. Taking a page out of my mother's book, I try not to get too bent out of shape when my own children come to the door carrying their boots (which they had to excavate from the mud) with black socks after losing to the sink holes in the "fire swamp" as they call the mucky region of our forest just below the driveway. I repeat the mantra of this season of motherhood with almost religious diligence: Mud is good. Dirt makes them happy. Pine needles pass through the digestive tract. Sure. It would be easier to put tidy children in front of a movie all afternoon four or so days a week. There would be a lot less laundry and I'll bet I could even get away with bathing them only ONCE a day in the summer if I did that. But is there any substitute for a thoroughly filthy girl with bangs stuck straight up with mud instead of hair gel, mud smeared evenly across her cheeks instead of makeup and dress patched with sand stains

REFORM IN EDUCATION AND LIVING INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

pine tar, eyes shining telling the story of the fort she's built under a fallen tree in the hollow. She's even learned to tie together pine branches to make a sort of thatch.

I'm not going to read the book. I already agree with him on all of the practical levels, I could tell that from reading the jacket. However, I'm grateful to the author for causing me

to consider the "why" of what is already second nature. He has caused me to be a little more intentional and cognizant of my reasons for wrapping these kids up and pitching them out the back door for half of every day. Just think, they'll be so well balanced when they grow up!

Pictures from the Medieval Feast



Ian Campbell in the knight costume he made



Gabe & Elisha Miller reading a report on "Pepin the Short"



Matthew Rantala giving his report on castles. He drew the top picture himself!

The Weasel Farm

One of the things that our family loves to do is party. Several times a year we host a big party for home schoolers in our area. They're so popular that we usually have to cut off the guest list at 45 (the maximum we can seat for dinner in our great room). The most recent was last weekend. At the request of 11 year old Faith Mosher we hosted a Medieval Feast to go along with our history studies for the semester. We plan these parties for weeks: food, games, costumes, and projects, every kid brings a project to go with the theme, but by the morning of the party we're usually all ready to go, with happy kids bouncing around in their costumes. It is one of our favorite aspects of the way we school, sharing it with so many other families.

The morning of this party dawned slightly grey, but dry. We heard the usual music practice of the older children, but this time punctuated by a more dissonant sound. Screaming. What? One of OUR children? Screaming? Surely not. If you've met our family it won't take you three guesses... Ezra. He woke up on the wrong side of the bed, then got out of bed without permission, then proceeded to terrorize his brothers in every way he could think of. So, we woke to a divided camp: Two knights and a princess buzzing around preparing for the quest. One knight trying to figure out how to slay the king and take over as head of state. Enter the King. Before I was even down the stairs I heard Ezra and his Daddy having a "Come to Jesus Meeting" over his chosen path for the day. I couldn't hear what Daddy was saying, he was speaking so quietly. Ezra, on the other hand, was coming through loud and clear: "I'm just having a bad day because of these boys!" Daddy said something I couldn't quite hear. Ezra made a frustrated shout and stomped his foot. Daddy responded. This is the point at which I collapsed on the stairs laughing: Ezra shouted, "I'm done! I'm just DONE WITH YOU PEOPLE!!!" The door to the bedroom opened and Daddy came barreling out so the little convict wouldn't see him laugh. We're still laughing. Of course Ezra learned that from me. What is motherhood but one big slice of humble pie after another?



Our Product List is Growing!
Check Out The Cool New Kits To Create With Your Kids!

Time for Twos (begin with 2-3 yr. olds)

Thinking with Threes (begin with 3-4 yr. olds)

Years One, through Seven (consecutively following TW3)

A Kaleidoscope of Days

(a collection of stories based on our family's experiences...fun!)

Growing in Grace

(articles on aspects of parenthood)

Table Talk

(a set of over 100 discussion starter cards)

Newsletter Volumes 1-5

(burned on CD)

Latin Quiz Program on CD (for use with Yr. 2+)

Home Organization System

A binder system & CD ROM to help you get it all in order!

Chore Cards Training System

Meal Rotation Cards and Life Skills Training for Kids

Wooden Bird House Kit

Paint Your Own Snake Kit

I Can Sew: Bonnet Kit

Be Creative: Leather Scraps Grab Bag (a million uses!)

Build Your Own Rubber Band Powered Car Kit

Build Your Own Sailboat Kit

Discover! Excavate A Mayan Temple Kit

Deluxe Wooden Sword & Shield Set... ready to paint or swashbuckle!

Please Contact us for further information or a catalog.

Parenting on Purpose

by Dianne Schenk

Hello everyone! It's been quite awhile since I last wrote anything for REALITY. Just in case you were wondering, our family is doing fine! Bethany is nearly six months old now and is growing steadily. We joke that she is going to fool strangers into believing that she is a miracle child when she begins to walk and talk, because she is so tiny. Well in one sense, she is a miracle child...because aren't they all? Motherhood is a strange thing. It grows on you...but how it grows is largely dependent upon your heart attitude, I've discovered. It can grow like a fungus and become something that drags you down and strangles all the life out of you, or it can grow like lovely roses on a trellis and make the garden of your life immeasurably more enjoyable than it ever was before. Which brings me to a topic that I'd like to begin discussing on a regular basis with all you great parents out there--purposeful parenting. It's something that God has been speaking to my heart about for several months now, and with the encouragement of several friends, I have decided to put this out on the table for all of you, so that you can add your thoughts as well. The phrase "parenting on purpose" came to mind a couple months ago and has stuck in my mind. At first I thought, "Well, that's a nice little catch phrase." However, the more I thought about it, the more I realized that it's a lot more than just a saying--it has become one of my long-term goals as a mother.

When one thinks about parenting, many things may come to mind. What parenting means to you and your family may mean something totally different to the Joneses down the street. Indeed, your idea of parenting may be even farther removed from how you yourself were

raised. On the other hand, you may find that your philosophy is one that you share with many. Still others of you may not be sure of exactly what philosophy you embrace. Are you into attachment parenting, or do you find merit in the cry-it-out method? Are you child-centered or family-centered? Do you give time-outs, or do you spank? Or both? In truth, this article is not about touting one philosophy over another, although my husband and I definitely have our preferences. What philosophy you choose to employ in your family is a choice best made thoughtfully (and prayerfully) between the two of you as parents. I do believe, however, that with whatever methods you embrace, parenting on purpose must be a key focus.

The truth is, no matter what kinds of things you do with your children, or what you say to them or within their hearing, you are training them. You may not know it, but you are. Consider a child who at the age of five has learned to shout curse words at the computer screen because she has observed her father doing the same during a tense moment of frustration! Or think about the eight-year-old boy who cunningly gets his way by playing one parent against the other, because he has learned that one or the other can be manipulated and that Mom and Dad do not present a united front when it comes to raising him. Mom may have said "no candy after supper", but he knows that he can wheedle Dad into letting him have just one piece when Mom's back is turned. And the ironic thing is, most of the time these parents have absolutely no idea why they have to deal with such issues with their children. Why is my daughter saying those kinds of words??

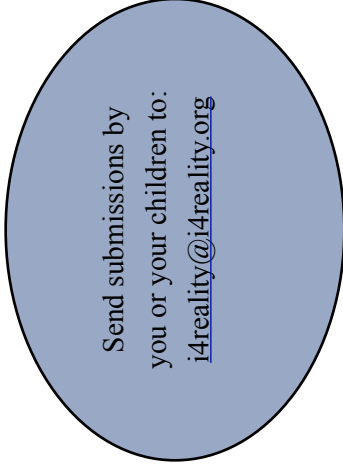
REFORM IN EDUCATION AND LIVING INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

Why does our son fight us on every instruction we give him?? Because you have trained them to do so. Of course, you never meant to. No one intends to foster impropriety or rebellion in their children. But without careful thought, sincere prayer, and a whole lot of hard work, much of our parenting will be "on accident." Being a new mother to a nearly six-month-old baby, I've been working my own way down this path whose brambles of faulty thought patterns and old habits so easily entangle me. It would be so easy to just let parenthood lead me--to echo the chorus of so many other parents who claim that their ideas of parenthood were blown out of the water when their children were born. Indeed, part of that is certainly true; we all have preconceived notions that don't often compare to "real life" once the children come along...but we can either choose to let that carry us the rest of the way, like a river with a swift current, or we can acknowledge the newness of this latest phase of life, but then choose to be purposeful when it comes to how we raise our precious children. We have the power to make choices that to a large degree, will determine what kind of people our children turn out to be. We have the tools to instill either selfishness or contentment, rudeness or kindness, security or insecurity, dependence or independence. And though it may be hard to believe, it's not some unattainable high standard or some big secret that we must divine from deep within the soil of our parenting foundation, that is the key to parenting on purpose. The key to purposeful parenting lies in the foundation itself--in how we build it, and in how we maintain it. It's in the small things, the every-day routines that we practice with our children. It's whether or not you allow your child to guilt you into letting him have "just five more minutes" at the playground or

whether now means now. It's what you allow your child to see and hear on television, or what you say when you think they're not listening. It's whether you let your kids isolate themselves with iPods, Game-boys, and DVDs on long road trips, or insist on family interaction and enjoying the trip together. These seem like such small things, and indeed they are. But just as a beautiful beach is composed of trillions of minute grains of sand, so is our children's upbringing composed of these little, seemingly unimportant moments. When they are all added up, they make our children what they are, in the long run.

This is by far just the tip of the iceberg, and for that reason, this will be an ongoing section of the newsletter. I felt compelled to share what God has been laying on my heart, and I look forward to your thoughts as well. The thing is, we all have ideas of how we'd like our children to be as adults; the good news is that we have more say in that than we think. Insist on what is right. Don't allow your child to be the boss. You have God-given instincts as a parent--follow them. Don't allow popular culture dictate or guilt you into parenting a certain way. Don't let the way your child turns out be "on accident"--parent on purpose!

The Institute for R.E.A.L.I.T.Y.
Fern Hill
531 NH Route 3A
Hill, NH 03243



First Last
Home Street
Home City, Home State Home ZIP

Visit us online at:
www.i4reality.org