



# FAMILY!

## Conference Preview

### How Much Is Too Much? The Price of Pampering Children

by Terry Lowe, B.S.W., R.S.W.

We are a generation of parents who are very conscious about wanting our children to be happy, confident, and competent. We are very much aware of the importance of having our children grow up with healthy self-esteem. Yet, despite our good intentions, we need to ask ourselves if what we are doing is getting the results we are aiming for.

Could it be that in our quest to raise happy, confident children with healthy self-esteem that our "bend over backwards" mentality and actions are actually counter-productive to what we actually

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## Resolve to Change

### Dear Addy...

Guest author is Tina Feigal, M.S. Ed.

Dear Addy,

Every New Year, I try to make resolutions that will really benefit my family. Once again, I've failed to keep up with the promises to myself. Do you have any tips to help me stay on track?

--Wondering

Dear Wondering,

As 2011 arrived, many of us found ourselves asking how we might be different this year.

We all set resolutions, dreamed big, and felt refreshed with the

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## Conference Preview

### Gender: Nature or Nurture?

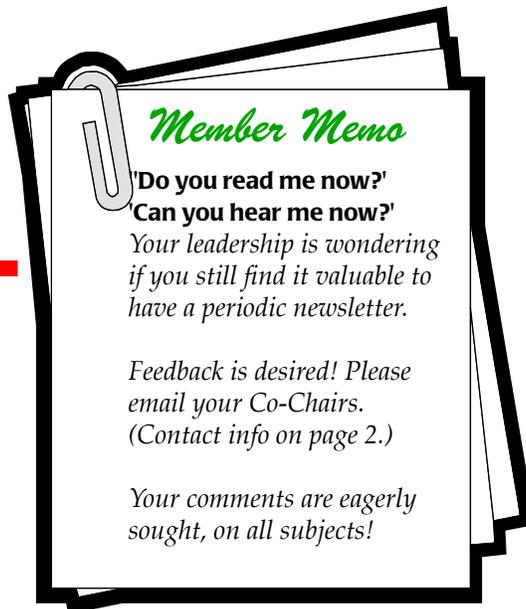
by Penny G. Davis, M.A., Certified Positive Discipline Trainer

There remains lots of controversy and discussion with regard to the nature vs nurture derivations of gender and the differences between genders. Are boys' brains and girls' brains really different before birth, or do the differences emerge as the infant's brain synapses begin to connect and engage with their primary caregivers after birth? What messages are parents and others consciously or subconsciously imparting to their children about gender, and what decisions are children making about who they are, and how they have to 'be' in the world, as a result? How different are boys and girls, men and women, REALLY?

There are physical differences between the genders, obviously, and even between male and female brains, but not as many as most people believe. Often the differences between the brains of people of the same gender, are greater than the differences between the genders.

Parents and educators often state (and truly believe), that they relate 'the same' to both genders, and that they treat boys and girls equally....yet studies have repeatedly shown that this is frequently not the case. There remain many hidden gender 'rules' and sub-conscious assumptions. We all need to examine these – for ourselves, for our children and for the future.

*Penny Davis & Cheryl Erwin will be co-facilitating a workshop on "Understanding Gender: What It Really Means, and What It Doesn't" at NASAP in BC on May 13, 2011.*



## Also in this issue

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*A few articles to whet your appetite for NASAP 2011*

## FE Section Co-Chairs Report...

Dear Family Education Section Members,

Spring is a welcome sight for those of us in the northern part of our continent. With spring comes our favorite event of the year—the NASAP conference. We're delighted to announce that we have 12 Family Education sponsored sessions for you this year.

You will find previews of some of the Family Education sessions in the pages of this newsletter. Nancy Chamberlayne, Penny Davis, Cheryl Erwin, Rob Guttenberg, Michael Popkin and our co-chair Terry Lowe have provided a little taste of what they will be covering in their sessions. We'll have to wait to enjoy Deb Gibson and Linda Kasdorf's sessions on *Children with Challenges: Adlerian Parenting and Neurologically Related Disorders* and *Let's Talk RESPECT: Activity Based Adlerian Learning*, Mary Jamin Maguire and Pearly Jett's *Working with Parents Who Abuse Their Children*, Jane Nelsen's *Experiential Activities to 'Get Into Their World'*, Sonia Nicolucci's *Life as a Mom with 3 Boys!* and Alyson Schafer's *Power Struggles—Who Is In Charge Here Anyway?* It's a rich program with something for everyone.

We look forward to seeing you at our section meeting bright and early on Saturday, May 14. We want to hear what you've been up to over the past few years—how you've weathered decreased enrollments and what innovative ideas you've come up with to attract parents to your programs. I also hope to revisit the idea of a NASAP Adlerian family educator certification program. Be sure to let us know what other topics you would like us to cover.

I don't want to close without mentioning the passing of Carol Mader, a talented and encouraging family educator and therapist who lived in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Terry Lowe and I got to know Carol while serving on the NASAP Council of Representatives with her over the past few years. However, it wasn't until I attended her session at the last NASAP conference on the parenting program she developed at a local prison, that I realized the extent of her skill and her contributions to the community. I'll never forget what it felt like to walk into the room, expecting to sit down and start taking notes on the program. Instead I was handed a blue or brown T-shirt with a number on it and I was relieved of all my belongings, despite my protests. In that moment I got a better sense of prison life than I've ever gotten from books and documentaries. Carol will be greatly missed.

On a happier note, we look forward to seeing you at the conference! ■

Your Co-Chair,  
Patti Cancellier, along with Terry Lowe

## Adlerian Wisdom

### Don't Ask "Why"

*When you confront a child about a misbehavior, don't ask the question 'Why did you do it?' Ask instead 'What are your plans so this doesn't happen again?' When you ask 'why,' you focus on past behavior and will probably get a defensive reply as the child tries to protect him or herself from blame. When you ask 'What are your plans?' you focus on the future behavior, where no blame is involved so no defenses are needed. Focusing on future leads more directly to the same goal as that of the confrontation—an assurance that the behavior will not be repeated.*

-- from **Coping With Kids** (Alcorn House, 1992) by Linda Albert, PhD. Available through Amazon.com

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## How to reach us

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*Dear Addy..continued from page 1*

turn of the calendar page. How about making this year the best ever for your family or classroom by changing your way of being with intense children?

Two things you can do:

**1. Resolve to only give energy to child behavior that you want.**

This is a big adjustment for most people. We were raised to “jump on” negativity, so to consciously decide to stop that, and focus our communication on positivity, is a huge change.

**2. Need your children or students for something significant.** A needed child is a less needy child.

Don't continue to do, do, do for your intense young person. Empower him with usable skills, and provide guidance and heartfelt appreciation for the help he truly can be!

Human nature being what it is, I realize you won't be making this change at all until you see what's in it for you. There has to be a motivation that comes from inside, that fulfills a real need in your life, and that outweighs the desire to continue old habits. Once you start to see the results of heartfelt appreciation for positivity, your motivation to continue will be second nature!

–Addy ■

*Tina Feigal is the author of **The Pocket Coach for Parents** and a parent coach at The Center for the Challenging Child, LLC. As Associate Faculty at Adler Graduate School, Richfield, MN, Tina certifies parent coaches and teaches Developmental Psychology. Email her at <tina@parentingmojo.com> or visit <http://www.parentingmojo.com>.*

## Conference Preview

# Children With Trauma Histories and Stealing

*by Penny G. Davis, M.A., Certified Positive Discipline Trainer*

In my work with caregivers and professionals who care for children with trauma histories, one of the most frequently reported challenging behaviors, is stealing. Often, I hear statements like ...‘He steals things from me that he doesn't even want or need.....yesterday he took my earrings off the table....he doesn't even have pierced ears'.....or ‘She took a pencil off the teacher's desk, when she had 3 other pencils in her desk'.

Stealing is a very different phenomenon for children with trauma histories than for more ‘typical’ children. It is most often a result of stress and dysregulation.

All human infants depend on primary caregivers to ‘regulate’ their systems in the early days, weeks and months of life. Infants have no ability to self-soothe or to bring their system into balance on their own. They cannot change their own diaper, or get their own breakfast, and they also cannot ‘feel better’ if they are scared or lonely. They need primary caregivers to be there for them. Only through repeated experiences of ‘other-regulation’, wherein caregivers hear and respond in a consistent, nurturing way to the needs of the infant, does s/he, over time, begin to trust in caregivers and the environment. Eventually, the child learns how to self-regulate, in times of stress.

Children who have never known this consistent, responsive nurturing in their early lives, are not able to self-regulate when their system becomes stressed. Biologically, the human system seeks to ‘balance’ and when this is impossible to do from within, the human being looks for something outside the system to help. Stealing, for children with trauma histories, can often be this ‘other’ regulation. So, for example, it's almost recess time at school. A child with trauma history might do very well within the confines of the classroom, where things are structured and ordered, and s/he has learned the sequence of events. However, the thought of the unstructured free play time of recess, immediately causes the child's system to dysregulate...the child feels stressed and out of control...biologically the body that cannot regulate itself, seeks something external that will help. The simple act of taking a pencil off the teacher's desk and putting it in a pocket, provides this... in much the same way as alcohol or drugs can for an adult. There is a chemical reaction in the body and the brain that temporarily creates a ‘release’, thus calming the child. Unfortunately, just like alcohol or drugs (or even chocolate for some of us), the ‘rush’ is short-lived, and we need more. The child becomes even more stressed, and steals something else.

In order to reduce this behavior, caregivers need to understand the child's dysregulation and help with the process of ‘other regulation’, in order to teach and support the child in learning to self-regulate. ■

*Penny Davis, M.A., CPDT, will be facilitating a pre-conference workshop at NASAP 2011, on Thursday morning, May 12th, entitled “Chronic Trauma: Attachment, The Brain and Positive Discipline”, in which she will further explore this and other challenging behaviors of children with trauma histories.*

## “ADD Nation”

by Cheryl L. Erwin, M.A., MFT

From time to time, I pick up and re-read a marvelous book titled *Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World through Mindfulness* by Jon Kabat-Zinn. Kabat-Zinn is a pioneer in using mindfulness and meditation to work with stress reduction and trauma, and is widely respected in the therapy and medical fields for his ability to make meditation techniques accessible to business leaders, medical practitioners, and everyday folks alike.

Kabat-Zinn explores one theme that I found especially resonant—probably because it echoes ideas of my own about the invasiveness of modern technology and its damaging effect on family relationships and connection. Kabat-Zinn notes that 30 years ago, no one had ever heard of attention deficit disorder, usually called ADD, but now this diagnosis is widespread and growing among both adults and children. There are obvious links between inability to focus and pay attention and mindfulness practices, but Kabat-Zinn takes the idea even farther. He believes that our entire society suffers from attention deficit disorder, especially ADD with hyperactivity. We can't seem to pay attention to any one thing for more than a few minutes; we're always multi-tasking but not getting any more accomplished.

Thomas Friedman, a writer for the *New York Times*, has quoted Microsoft researcher Linda Stone as describing our present state of mind as one of “continual partial attention.” We are all expected to be available 24/7, either face to face or by way of some electronic gizmo. Being *unavailable* has become *unacceptable*—and unfortunately, this approach to work and to life usually makes us unavailable to our families. We're paying only partial attention to everything and everyone—and I can't help but believe that our health, our children, and our important relationships suffer as a result.

Here's an example, from the Sunday *New York Times*. A former executive for Cisco Systems describes how he now spends *only* 10 hours per day at work and uses technology to remain in touch the rest of the time. He is at home more, but how present is he? Well, he describes having “Lego air fights” with his five-year-old son. Both love the game, and dad can play with one hand while he checks his email or talks on the phone with the other. Occasionally, he deliberately crashes his son's plane; while his boy rebuilds his aircraft, dad can answer email on his BlackBerry.

Whatever happened to playing with both hands and full attention? I can't help wondering what the message to this five-year-old really is. Yes, dad is home—but what is most important to him, his BlackBerry or his little boy? Any child alive can answer that question. Is “continual partial attention” an effective parenting tool?

You may be muttering that this is really nothing new. Generations of fathers came home from the office, hung their ties over a chair, and poured themselves a martini to watch the evening news. They weren't particularly available to their families, either. And I would agree with you. Raising children takes a lot of energy and awareness. You have to pay attention. Sometimes, kids require *all* of your attention, even when you have other things to do.

Kabat-Zinn wonders in his book whether the huge numbers of children being diagnosed with attention deficit disorder may actually have been

trained to be easily distracted by their parents' lifestyle and the widespread use of electronic gadgets. In fact, some new research indicates that early exposure to computers and video games actually may be changing the way children's brains are wired. Could children be learning “continual partial attention” from us?

If this is so, Ritalin, Adderall, and other ADD drugs are unlikely to provide anything more than a band-aid. What children—and indeed all of us—really need is the ability to pay attention, to be mindful, and to practice real awareness. Our lives are passing by and we're never really present for them. Most of us realize that the only moment we truly have is *now*—but how many of us are really paying attention in all the “nows” that make up our lives?

Here's a homework assignment for you. Take five minutes—just five minutes—today, or tonight, and try to be fully present. You might go out and sit in the back yard, close your eyes, and just listen to the noises, big and small, around you. Feel your own breath going in and out. When your mind wanders—and it will—simply pull it back and return to listening and breathing. Then take five minutes and be fully present with your partner or your child. Really look at that person; hear her voice and let the words sink into your mind. If you can, practice some gratitude that you have this moment at all. What do you suppose your life and the lives of those you love might be like if you learned how to pay attention and be present all of the time? ■

*Cheryl Erwin is a marriage and family therapist in private practice in Reno, Nevada. She is the author of several books in the Positive Discipline series, as well as the Everything Parent's Guide to Raising Boys. Cheryl can be reached at (775) 331-6723 or at <[cheryl.erwin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cheryl.erwin@sbcglobal.net)>.*

## Membership Matters

### Co-Chair Election

Terry Lowe has generously agreed to continue in her role as Co-Chair, representing the Canadian membership. No other nominations were received. See page 7 to express your support for Terry by filling out the ballot and mailing it in to be received by May 6. If you will be present in Victoria for the conference, you can vote in person there.

### News from Members

Dina Emser, a *Certified Positive Discipline Lead Trainer*, will be conducting a workshop, *Teaching Parenting the Positive Discipline Way*, while some of us are at the NASAP conference. It is a two-day "train the trainer certification workshop" to be held May 12 & 13 from 9am to 5pm at Heartland Community College, in Normal, Illinois. Dina may be reached at <dina@dinaemser.com>.

### Conference Preview: Using Adlerian Psychology

## A Couple: Loving and Living with MS

by Nancy Chamberlayne, M.Ed.

A chronic disease can cause great stress in a relationship. It was something that neither of us signed up for when multiple sclerosis surfaced two years into our marriage. It was a shock.

Words like handicapped, disabled, caregiver, victim, burden, and wheelchair disturbed us. I struggled with my identity and my husband rebelled against the label caregiver. When my husband first pushed me in a wheelchair he got a headache and I got nauseated. If given the opportunity, we realized, this disease could consume our lives.

Adlerian Psychology provides us with the knowledge and skills to work as team, coping positively with the challenge MS presents in our relationship. The concept of holism teaches us that the MS is just one small part of who we are. It also tells us that the MS is just one small part of our relationship. There is so much more to us. Not only does my husband help me but he is also my best friend and lover.

A subjective or phenomenological approach helped me look at the wheelchair, cane and later a walker in a different light. My husband acknowledged the benefits of mobility aids before I did. He has become very efficient at loading the aids in and out of our vehicle. It is not what happens to my husband and I but how we feel about it and what we do with what we have.

I may have MS but it is not going to stop us from getting out there and having fun. Gone is the nausea. I now value my walker and scooter as tools that enable me to be active and play. ■

*Nancy will be presenting on this topic in BC on May 13 from 4:30pm to 5:30pm. She will explain, demonstrate, and give behavioural examples of how she and her husband use and apply Adlerian principles to living with MS. Email <nchamberlayne@shaw.ca>.*

### Book & Conference Preview

## Chris' Traffic Light

from Rob Guttenberg, M.A., LCPC

*This is an example from the many humorous ones in Rob Guttenberg's newly published compilation, 'Funtastic' Adlerian Techniques for Change.*

**Name of Technique:** Arizona Traffic Light: On Training Social Interest

**Time Needed:** 5-10 minutes

**Source of Technique:** the late Dr. Oscar "Chris" Christensen, Former Professor, Department of Counseling and Guidance, College of Education, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona

**Description:** In Tucson, Arizona Dr. Oscar Christensen administered a questionnaire asking individuals to consider the following:

"It is late at night and you are at a stoplight, and the stoplight seems to be stuck on red for an unusually long period of time. In this case, would you go through the light, even though it continued to stay red?" Some of the people responding to the questionnaire said they would not go through, and others said they would. Of the people who said they would not go through, Dr. Christensen asked a second question: "For those of you who would not go through the red light, please tell me the reason you wouldn't go through."

Their responses broke into three separate groups:

The largest group of respondents said that they wouldn't go through because they might get caught by a police officer observing the scene. Basically, it was 'fear of authority' that motivated this group. The second largest group of respondents said they wouldn't go through because they might get hurt: that

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*Pampering (Conference Preview)...continued from page 1*

want for our children? Is it possible that we are actually pampering our children instead of teaching them the valuable life skills that they need to become capable, productive, self-confident, contributing members of society?

Alfred Adler said, "The misfortune of pampered children lies in their encountering too little resistance on their path, and thus they are not in a position to get to know their faculties and test their strength."

Pampering can come in many forms. Pampering can be overdoing, which happens when we do things for children that they are capable of doing for themselves. For example, dressing a six year old. As parents we need to make sure our child is developmentally capable of a task, take time for training and then get ourselves out of their way.

Over-giving and over-buying are great ways to create children who expect a lot for little or no effort on their part. We live in a land of plenty and with so many options of toys, electronics, and equipment to choose from its hard as parents not to get caught up in wanting our child to have the latest and greatest. However, by having to invest their own money, time, or energy into something children learn the value of what they receive.

Another way children are pampered is when parents over-supervise and over-evaluate. Many of today's parents are heavily involved in their children's lives – to the point of being intrusive. Well – meaning parents who want their children to be successful, start grooming them from the time they are born. As parents we need to learn when we are being supportive and when we are being intrusive. We need to learn the difference between encouraging children to challenge themselves and pressuring children.

Over-protected children are also pampered. While it is important to protect our children, today's children have lost much of the freedom and independence that previous generations of children had. With all the forms of media available to this generation of parents we are constantly bombarded with horror stories of what could happen to our children. In reality, our children are actually much safer than previous generations. We need to give our children tools and skills so that they can survive in our society but we also need to give them room to use the tools and skills they are developing, recognizing that they may make mistakes along the way.

Surprisingly children who are under-supervised are also pampered. This is because while they may learn to fend for themselves, what they are not learning is the cooperation that it takes to live with other people. With our busy lifestyles, it is easy as parents to be present yet absent (preoccupied) all at the same time. Making one small change like eating suppers together as a family on a regular basis can make a huge difference in how well you know your child, who their friends are, where they are going, and what they are up to.

Another form of pampering is giving children privileges without responsibility. Children quickly learn that if they protest long and loud enough busy parents will let them get away without doing any chores or staying on their game machine long after their time is up. As parents we need to be clear with our children that privilege and responsibility go hand in hand. Just as importantly we need to follow through with whatever we have set up if our children choose to misuse their privilege.

In parenting we need to think long range as well as short range. While pampering may seem to work at the moment, in the long run there is a heavy cost to the child, the parent and to society. We need to go back to what we really want for our children and then ask ourselves if what we are doing is getting us where we want to go! ■

*This article by Terry Lowe is excerpted with permission from Catholic Family Services of Saskatoon. Website <http://www.cfssaskatoon.sk.ca>.*

*Terry is the Director of Clinical and Community Programs at Catholic Family Services of Saskatoon. She is the Co-Chair of the Family Education Section of NASAP, and a member of the Certified Canadian Family Educators Recertification Committee. Previously Terry spent many years on the Saskatoon Adlerian Society Board and the Continuing Education Committee.*

*For more information on this topic, join Terry and her FES Co-Chair Patti Cancellier at their NASAP 2011 conference session on Friday morning, May 13, "How Much Is Too Much? The Price of Pampering Children."*

## Conference Preview

## Families in Action: Parent Education with Teens Included

by Michael Popkin, Ph.D.

The success of Adlerian parent education programs is one reason so many of us were attracted to Adlerian Psychology to begin with. Armed with such resources as **Children: the Challenge, STEP, Positive Parenting, and Active Parenting**, family educators have made huge differences in the lives of parents, children, and communities for over fifty years. Funded with a large grant from the government, one Michigan mental health center took parent education a leap forward by working with Active Parenting Publishers to develop a version of our popular *Active Parenting of Teens* curriculum.

The program, called *Active Parenting of Teens: Families in Action*, includes both parents and middle-school students for six video-based, interactive sessions. Parents and teens meet in their own separate groups for part of each session, and then together to practice what they have learned with each other. Not only do the parents and teens enjoy the combined learning process, but the research results from the initial study were strong enough to land the program on SAMHSA's prestigious NREPP website for evidence-based programs. <<http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=168>>

The idea of teaching similar skills to teens and preteens as their parents makes a lot of sense when you consider that both parents and teens share the common goal of preparing teens to succeed in the world in which they will live. We've always taught parents to instill such qualities as courage,

## Convention Victoria! May 12-15, 2011

Our traditional best time is that spent at the annual NASAP convention. We look forward to the next month in gorgeous Victoria, B.C.

One thing we'll be doing is electing a new Co-Chair. Current Co-Chair Terry Lowe has agreed to serve another term. If you cannot attend our annual membership meeting to participate in that, please mail in your vote using the form below.

We will also be approving Minutes of the last meeting from Minneapolis in 2010 and having a Treasurer report from Secretary/Treasurer Kerry Mayorga.

Other Agenda Items: See Co-Chair message ideas and send in your ideas to our Co-Chairs! See page 2 for contact information. ■

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responsibility, cooperation, and respect in their kids. So why not use the same methods with the teens themselves? In fact, the video examples of parent-teen interaction are as stimulating to the teens as they have always been with the parents. And the experiential activities bring an element of fun to the experience.

I'll be demonstrating how this innovative and versatile approach to parenting education and youth development works at this year's NASAP conference in beautiful (and I do mean BEAUTIFUL) Victoria, BC. The "versatile" aspect of the curriculum is in the design which allows leaders to use the same program with parent-only groups and teen-only groups, as well as the combined family approach. And as all three versions teach, it's good to have choices. ■

*Dr. Michael Popkin is the founder, author and publisher of **Active Parenting**, and can be reached from their website at <http://www.activeparenting.com> or by email at <[docpop@activeparenting.com](mailto:docpop@activeparenting.com)>. He will be presenting at NASAP on Friday, May 13.*

## Co-Chair Election Ballot

Please send in your vote to re-elect our Co-Chair for another term.

Terry Lowe

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

print your name here: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to NASAP, 1120 80th Street East, Suite 200, Bloomington, MN 55425

*Guttenberg..continued from page 5*

is, there might be a car coming that they didn't see. The smallest number of respondents was in the third group where the individuals reported that they wouldn't go through the light because they were concerned for the welfare of the other drivers, and they didn't want to put others at risk by entering the intersection on a red light.

#### How to Front Load

Introduce Adler's concept of 'social interest.' Social interest means having 'interest in the interests of others.' It does not simply mean to be interested in others for one's own gain. Adler believed social interest is an innate potential that will not develop on its own, and therefore must be stimulated to reach that potential. The failure to stimulate social interest in the young child can lead to the devel-

opment of a self-centered adolescent or adult whose interests are against the best interests of the community as a whole.

**Concept Illustrated:** Social interest

#### Harvesting Process & Questions

- Would you want to grow up in a community where your neighbors' first concern was whether they get caught doing something wrong, versus being in a community where your neighbors' first concern is whether or not their actions would cause a problem for others?
- What types of parenting practices are more likely to raise a child to grow up believing that the most important thing is to avoid getting caught?

- What types of parenting practices are more likely to raise a child to be cautious rather than fearful of potential dangers in life?

- What types of parenting practices are more likely to raise a child to be interested in the interests of others? ■

*Source: "Every Time I Learn 'Where it's At' Somebody Moves It....," College of Education, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona; Edited by Betty J. Newlon and Kirk Johnson, 1977. Reprinted by permission in 'Funtastic' Adlerian Techniques for Change, a new book compiled & edited by Rob Guttenberg, who will be presenting a pre-conference workshop at NASAP on May 12 as well as a session in the ACT track on persons with disabilities, on May 13.*

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The mission of the North American Society of Adlerian Psychology is to promote growth and understanding of Adlerian (Individual) Psychology, the work of Alfred Adler, and effective approaches to living based on his philosophy. NASAP membership includes educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, parents, business people, community organizations and other interested people. The Family Education Section applies Adlerian principles to the home. Members are professionals and nonprofessionals dedicated to understanding and improving family relationships between children and adults, with couples, and among individuals.

**Don't Forget  
Your Passport...  
to Learning:  
May 12-15  
NASAP 2011  
Victoria, BC  
Canada!**

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