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 counterproductive 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 subconscious 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.

Your Co-Chairs Report............................................................. Page 2
Also, Adlerian Wisdom, how to reach us

Membership Matters............................................................. Page 5
Re-Elect Section Co-Chair

Conference Previews............................................................ Pages 1-8
A few articles to whet your appetite for NASAP 2011
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

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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 defences 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

Contact the author at LindAlbert@aol.com

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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](http://www.parentingmojo.com)._
“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>.
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 <nlchamberlayne@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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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 it’s 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.
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.

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

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>. He will be presenting at NASAP on Friday, May 13.
Don’t Forget Your Passport... to Learning: May 12-15 NASAP 2011 Victoria, BC Canada!

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.