Verbal Son Gets Mom’s Attention

My five-year-old son, Michael, is an intelligent boy and delightful in many ways. He’s quite well mannered around adults and has an advanced vocabulary for a child his age. Adults are charmed by him and his willingness to spend time conversing with them. Unfortunately, he has developed this bad habit that doesn’t make any sense to me in light of his good manners on other occasions. He yells for me whenever he wants my help or just wants to speak to me. If I am in the kitchen, he cries for me if I am in another room.

What a learning experience. I had many misconceptions and pleasant surprises. My journey is my own, but I thought others might benefit if I shared my story.

At the time, I was an MA student at Adler and had been teaching parent education classes for years. I figured that I could create an add-on product of “coaching” to offer my parents as an additional revenue source. After the course terminated, I could convert them to coaching and really help them apply...
Dear Friends,

Adlerian Psychology teaches that we human beings are goal-directed creatures and movement begins, whether we’re aware of it or not, the moment we establish an intent.

Flying back home from Vancouver, exhilarated by a hugely successful, fun and informative NASAP conference, my spirits flew even higher and more freely than the plane! Then, inexplicably, I began remembering all those years I had not been able to attend the annual NASAP conferences. Those were the years when our children were young, my husband traveled frequently and our budget stretched and strained to meet even our routine obligations.

In those days, when the conference catalogue arrived, I would leaf through it wistfully, staring, circling and highlighting sessions I yearned to attend. I imagined the luncheons and the speakers, the dinner cruises and auctions, the new friends I would meet and perhaps – as the years passed – the old friends I would see again. Yet I felt grounded, left out of an exciting adventure. The catalogue seemed like a fantasy trip a mere parent educator like me could never hope to take.

But goals must often be reached one small step at a time. So I led parenting groups, gained experience, founded PEP and participated in and got involved in creating local workshops and conferences. I joined the regional Adlerian Society and eventually PEP became an Affiliate Member. The day I finally became a full-fledged Member of NASAP in my own right was a big step for me, like stepping up to the counter and buying my ticket. In fact each of these activities moved me slowly, but surely, closer to my destination.

For the last seventeen years now, I’ve been increasingly able to attend national and even international conferences. My husband sometimes enjoys going too, and two of our sons have attended ICASSIs. Our calendar and budget now allow for more travel and I consider such activities as important “professional development “opportunities. With Mary Hughes, I serve as a representative to the Family Education Section because both of us now have the time and energy to devote to this organization whose reach and impact far outweigh its size.

Realizing that many parent educators are not yet in a position to climb on board and fly the friendly skies with NASAP, this edition of FAMILY! becomes our letter to keep those of you “back home” informed and connected with this exciting organization. Mary and I urge you to set your goals, support NASAP by becoming a full Member, get involved wherever you are. Take advantage of our Section’s scholarship opportunities. Purchase some of the audiotapes from this year’s conference. Read the Journal of Individual Psychology and the NASAP Newsletter. One of these days we promise – you too will have the chance to make this fantasy trip become part of your reality!

Warm regards, Linda

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**Adlerian Wisdom**

- Have family meetings or class meetings to solve problems with cooperation and mutual respect. This is the key to creating a loving, respectful atmosphere while helping children develop self-discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and problem-solving skills.

- Give children meaningful jobs. In the name of expediency, many parents and teachers do things that children could do for themselves and one another. Children feel belonging when they know they can make a real contribution.

  --from *Positive Discipline*

  by Jane Nelsen

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**How to reach us**

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Scholarships for NASAP FE Members

We’d like to call members’ attention to the fact that our Section provides two $250 scholarships to offset attendance fees at NASAP conventions.

In return for this grant, the persons receiving the scholarship are asked to take a turn hosting the conference book store, and to write up a report for FAMILY! on whatever interests them about the presentations.

Mary Hughes, FE Section Co-chair, says “Start to think now about applying for the scholarship!”

Here 'n' There

Linda Jessup tells us that "PEP held its 3rd annual Self Sufficiency Fair on March 9th. This is a wildly successful event which trains parents and children in a wide variety of life-skills (from dry wall repair to manners to plant and pet care) in a festive, fair-like atmosphere. It’s fun, fosters social interest and is a modest fund-raiser as well."

Henry T. Stein, PhD, <HTStein@att.net> reported that in January, the Alfred Adler Institute of SF & NW Washington passed the 250,000th visit to the Classical Adlerian Psychology web site. "Our mailing list now reaches people from 80 countries: statistically, the United States represents 65% of the list, and foreign countries 35%; the top three states are Illinois, California, and Texas; the top three foreign countries are Canada, England, and Australia." <<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/hstein/>>

Active Parenting: Twenty Years of Helping Families

by Michael Popkin, Ph.D.

Editor’s Note: FAMILY! is running a series of articles highlighting the various Adlerian parenting curricula. This is the fourth in our series.

I was sitting in a session at the NASAP annual convention in 1979 when I had an idea about two recent inventions: Wouldn’t it be great if we could program a desktop computer and a videocassette player to talk to each other in a way that taught Adlerian parent education? Such an interactive program would give parents hands-on practice using parenting skills while learning the material. A year later I resigned my position as head of Child and Family Services for an Atlanta mental health system to devote more time to researching and developing my dream.

During the next three years I learned a lot about dream-making. First, I learned that it doesn’t work to be too far ahead of the times. Although I developed a prototype of an interactive delivery system in 1981, the cost of the hardware alone was $5,000, too much for the schools, churches and others who would benefit. Dropping the computer aspect of the idea would bring the cost down to that of a VCR, but I still needed $250,000 to develop and launch the first program. And as Benjamin Franklin once said, “If you want to know the value of money, try to borrow some.” I even pitched my idea to NASAP for a grant, and was close to a partnership when somebody “hijacked” the designated funds for another project. Fortunately I found some good-hearted investors and after two years of research and writing (which included a week’s work asking 25 very capable parent educators—who worked under Lynn Lott’s supervision at the FEC of Petaluma, CA—“What would you include in your ideal parent education curriculum?”), I was finally able to go into production on what was to become the world’s first video-based parent education program: Active Parenting.

The program was introduced in Atlanta in 1983 at our first leader training workshop. When the 55 educators broke into spontaneous applause at the conclusion of the day, I knew we had a winner. Their subsequent field-test success encouraged us to launch the program nationally in 1984 at the annual American Counselors Association convention, and as people clamored around our booth to see what in the world a TV and VCR were doing at a professional trade show, we found that we had struck a chord.

Dr. Spock’s Eyes Light Up

Most people, the research tells us, are primarily visual learners. By combining brief video vignettes, group discussion under the facilitation of a skilled leader, home reading assignments in an attractive Parent’s Guide, experiential exercises and group feedback about home practice, the video-based delivery system changed the way parent education has been conducted ever since. In fact, at our next trade show, none other than Dr. Benjamin Spock came by our booth. After watching a few of our video vignettes, he turned to his assistant and said, “This is the future.”

continues on page 4
That future not only propelled Active Parenting Publishers into the leadership role in parent education, but also landed us on the 242nd spot on Inc. magazine’s list of fastest-growing companies in the United States.

The Third Generation
We are currently in the third generation of that first groundbreaking program. Active Parenting Now, for parents of children ages 5 to 12, was released in the spring of 2002 and replaces the award-winning Active Parenting Today (which was itself introduced in 1994 on the Oprah Winfrey Show). AP Now contains all new videos. It is still a six-session, Adlerian-based video and discussion program. It includes more research, such as the Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets for Children; new skills, such as the FLAC Method for defusing power struggles and the BANK Method of encouragement; increased information and skills for dealing with drugs, sexuality and violence, including CSAP’s Protective Factors for child use prevention. We still include our own spin on Dreikurs’ famous four goals of misbehavior, our unique “problem-handling model” and “think-feel-do cycle,” as well as such trusted Adlerian concepts as encouragement, mutual respect, natural and logical consequences and the right to talk in a heavy German accent. Oh, and we still include a lot of humor—and a lot of heart—in our video vignettes.

AP Now is also complemented by Active Parenting of Teens and 1,2,3,4 Parents! (for parents of toddlers). We have a character education curriculum called Free the Horses for teaching such Adlerian traits as courage, responsibility and cooperation to children in K-3 and a Families in Action program for parents and/or their teens and preteens. We offer over 60 leader training workshops a year. In fact, we now have a 48-page catalog of programs we have developed and those we distribute that go out to over 500,000 professionals a year. Many of our books and programs are also available in Spanish, Japanese, Korean and even Swedish. We welcome new ideas, authors and products and are always looking for cooperative partnerships.

Into The Future
Our goal is to continue to lead the way in innovative applications of educational technology and to bring Adlerian-based programs to many more millions of children and parents. Our newest delivery system is a true Web-based version of Active Parenting Today. Now parents and leaders across the globe are meeting online to take the same six-session course (complete with group leader, video and peer interaction) that has helped millions of families over the past decade, only they are meeting from the comfort and convenience of their own homes. This cutting edge program really brings us full circle, back to my original vision at that 1979 NASAP convention that computers AND video could interact to teach Adlerian based parent education. And as long as there are Adlerian leaders willing to commit their time to helping families, we will continue to lead the way with innovative programs for you to teach.

To find out more about Active Parenting Online and other Active Parenting materials check us out online at www.activeparenting.com or call 800-825-0060 for a free catalog. Or if you are a really patient person, write us at 810-B Franklin Court, Marietta, GA, 30067 for a free catalog.

Coaching...continued from page 1
what they had learned in class. After all, it is so easy for a consequence to be a punishment, a choice to be blackmail, and encouragement to be praise if you don’t have feedback. In a 1:1 relationship people could really nail it down! I was very excited.

My work on the committee proved to be a real challenge as the coaches and the parent educators both held strong opinions about what “parent coaching” is or should be. Coaches are very non-directive and want to help mine the client for their own answers and resources and they work heavily on identifying values. Parent Educators want to educate! Or at least I sure do, and they work heavily on behaviours and interaction patterns.

I just couldn’t get my head fully around coaching, but I was bent on figuring it out. I read the book Co-Active Coaching, enrolled in the Adler School of Professional Coaching Foundations course and hired a leading North American parent coach who happens to reside in the USA, to be my own parent coach and business mentor.

It was all so different from what I had expected. I can see why so many people don’t understand what coaching is and why the coaching federations are trying to defend it and control it. Coaching is largely misunderstood and belittled.

My coach helped me make big improvements in my family life and we never once talked about misbehaviour or co-operation.

I also don’t think that all coaches would like all that I do in my role as a parent coach as I am very directive when it comes to guiding the child. I am a content expert and people pay me to get to that... continues on page 5
Coaching...continued from page 4
expertise. Coaching that includes content expertise occurs in many of the professional sectors of coaching, but somehow people feel parenting shouldn’t. All I can say in defense is that they don’t know Adler and Dreikurs material I guess. I know I will be met with some disdain by many coaches. I keep a low profile in the coaching community for this reason. Maybe I’ll get braver as I feel more confident in my trade.

What I lost sight of was that fact that discipline and “guiding the child” is only one aspect of this multifaceted thing we do called “parenting”. Every parent has their own idea of what parenting should be for them.

My coach challenged me to keep growing and asking what is next for me on my “growing edge” in my quest for reaching my parenting vision.

And the coaching program evolved too! It has the best of both approaches. A new generation of students coming in with a clear mind will have an easy and exciting time learning about the “hybrid” that was created by Linda, Richard, Jeannie Nishimura and the team.

My concern had been that coaching will support and feed the already growing pool of “anxious do-gooder” parents who are “hyper-parenting” their way into crisis. More pressure on mastery is not a helpful prescription. So far, my fear has been completely unfounded.

And my idea of converting course graduates to coaching – that proved a wrong assumption too!

Watch for Part II
My business findings re: where the clients really come from (not parent education), the media attention, the pricing, the average length of a relationship etc….
Dear Addy...continued from page 1

getting dinner, and he is in the family room playing on the computer, he’ll call “Mommy”. If I don’t go to him, it will get louder. Eventually it becomes a loud, sustained “MOMMMMMEEEEEEE!!!”

I’ve tried explaining to Michael that he should come to me when he needs something. I’ve also explained that it’s rude to yell for people. But he won’t listen. He always says he is going to forget what he wants to tell me. He’s so earnest and sweet when he says this, that I believe him. And it certainly seems to satisfy his needs when I go to him because he stops calling me, for a while anyway.

Communication is very important between a parent and child. I’ve always tried to listen when Michael has something to say. But this particular behavior is becoming quite irritating and it’s also starting to spread into other areas of life. When I had a friend over the other day, he called for me from the other end of the house. I tried ignoring him at first because my friend was talking, but he got louder and louder. I called to him to join us in the living room, but he didn’t. Once again, he persisted until I went to find him. It was very embarrassing. I know my friend thought my child was ill-mannered. Please tell me what to do. I don’t want my adorable little child to turn into an obnoxious pest.

—Desperately Seeking Relief in Washington, D.C.

Dear Desperate,

It seems nonsensical that Michael can be so polite with some adults and so impolite with others, but it actually makes perfect sense when you understand it from Michael’s point of view. Both behaviors serve Michael’s desire to get attention. Every child’s goal is to “belong” in a significant way in his family. Children want to feel valued and important—they want to feel that they really matter in their family. When they can’t figure out how to belong in a positive way, they’ll turn to negative behaviors that give them a temporary sense of belonging. In this case, Michael has gotten the idea that a good way to belong in his family is by demanding constant attention. Whenever your attention is on something else, such as cooking or conversing with a friend, he’ll do something to get your attention back on him. He’s not doing this consciously. Although he gave you a reason for calling to you, he probably doesn’t know why he’s really doing it. At some level his behavior works to give him a sense of connection to you.

Undue attention seeking is a very common misbehavior. Parents find themselves easily trained by their children to give attention when it isn’t appropriate or “due”, simply because they want to be responsive to their children’s needs. It’s helpful to keep in mind that one of our main responsibilities to our children is to train them to be good participants in our society.

I would start by giving Michael plenty of positive attention when it is appropriate. There are several ways to do this:

• Notice him doing the right thing and encourage that behavior by describing it in detail, asking for more information about it, or expressing detailed appreciation for any help he gives. For example, when he is playing quietly alone, notice that positive behavior by saying, “Michael, I notice you’ve been playing with your blocks for 20 minutes. They started off as a pile, but now I see towers, and buildings and walls. Would you tell me more about what you’re building?”

• Give him plenty of opportunities to contribute to the family. Invite him to share in the work you are doing. If you are making dinner, let him tear lettuce leaves for the salad, or grate cheese, or shake the container of salad dressing. With training and supervision he can cut tomatoes or celery or other vegetables. This side-by-side work has a couple of benefits. He’s feeling connected to you because the two of you are working together. He’s getting attention for positive behavior because you will be sure to express detailed appreciation for his work (e.g., “Thank you Michael for helping me make the salad. You ripped lettuce leaves, cut tomatoes and mixed the dressing. Without your help it would have taken me an extra 20 minutes to finish making dinner.”) He’s learning new skills which will help him to feel more capable in life.

• Spend 20 to 30 minutes doing “special time” with Michael each day, or as often as possible. “Special time” is one-on-one time between a parent and child. The child chooses the activity or leads the play within certain limits. Those limits might include that special time happens only at home in the house or yard, or if you do something away from the house, there is a cost limit on any activity. The best kind of special time with young children is imaginative play that is directed by the child. The important thing is that you do not allow interruptions such as the telephone, the television, or friends or siblings to get in the way. As much as possible make special time a part of Michael’s routine.

continues on page 7
Dear Addy...continued from page 6
When he can look forward to time with you, he won’t feel the need to seek your attention when it isn’t appropriate. Research shows that when special time is done on a daily basis, children exhibit less whiny and irritable behavior.

• Train Michael to use an “interruption signal” when he needs you. This signal will be your family’s way to politely interrupt someone who is occupied with someone or something else. One example of an interruption signal is the following: when he needs your attention for something important, he will put his hand on your wrist, softly holding it. You will signal him that you know he’s there waiting, by putting your hand on top of his. Meanwhile you are continuing with what you were doing when he approached you. When you can take a break from it, turn to him to find out what he needs. Michael will learn to use this signal faster if you begin to model it at home. Instead of calling to him when you need him, go to him and use the interruption signal. It’s a much more respectful way to deal with people.

There are also several things you can do on the spot when Michael is trying to get your attention at an inappropriate time. Before you try them, spend a few weeks doing the things outlined above. Michael will feel more encouraged by having the opportunity to participate more fully in the family and may be less likely to seek undue attention as often.

When Michael tries to get your attention at inappropriate times, do something that will enable you to avoid giving attention to him. It is usually very difficult for parents to ignore their children in these situations because children are so

concludes on back page

K.A.S.H. & Carry Attributes...

What better venue than our Family Education Section Meeting at NASAP 2003 for discovering what is needed of parent educators? In response to Joy’s online question, “What knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits are needed of parent educators?” [see K.A.S.H. article by Mary Hughes, beginning on page 1], we invited Section meeting attendees to contribute their input. Below are their collective answers:

WHAT A PARENT EDUCATOR NEEDS - KNOWLEDGE
• self awareness • multi sensory learning • skills for both small and large group work • basic Adlerian conceptualization of family dynamics, etc. • practical application of these ideas • child development and temperament • an effective problem solving mode • positive discipline • Adlerian Theory • difference between logical consequences and punishment • the ability to teach freedom with limits (positive choices) • knowledge of the whole program - knowing that there’s more than one alternative • four goals of misbehavior and the order of discouragement • updated information • knowing when someone is inadvertently hurt

WHAT A PARENT EDUCATOR NEEDS - ATTITUDES
• open mind • encouraging • seeing the positive • having fun • curiosity • optimistic • optimistic about change • ability to smile in adversity • see self as a learner • passion • hopeful • empathetic • positive • acceptance • non-criticizing of any group/person • solution-focused • flexibility • open • confidence in self, parents, children • non-judgmental • letting go of expectations • patience • courage to be imperfect

WHAT A PARENT EDUCATOR NEEDS - SKILLS
• listening (listed 2x) • encouragement • bringing forth • overview/sensing room temperature • group dynamics awareness • ability to stay with/understand the exact, unique situation described by parent • how to draw out the quiet ones and shut down the talkative ones • listening with your heart • communication • ability to stay with understanding the exact situation described by parent • parents who say “yes, but……” • stay on track • working with groups • ability to re-frame • non-punitive tools • address spanking issues • multicultural issues, spanking, authoritarianism • marketing skills • business skills • able to say (or show) the same thing in many different ways • teaching concepts experientially • bringing forth (rather than stuffing into) • draw out the positives in the most challenging situations • to encourage in the face of discouragement (institutional/organizational/parental)

WHAT A PARENT EDUCATOR NEEDS - HABITS
• support • encouragement • have a sense of humor (have a ditty ready!) • seeing the positive/optimism • reliability • ethical • walk the talk • able to be flexible • able to see self as a learner • empathy • “let go” of need to fix other’s problems • proactive vs. reactive • organization vs. going with the flow • multitasking • “have courage to share mistakes” • share anecdotes productively

For fun, look up FAMILY! in its online PDF format, and see some photos taken at this lively Section Meeting in Vancouver. Members who were there got free copies of the ABCs of Guiding the Child. Ya’ll come! -- ed
Dear Addy...continued from page 7
skilled at saying or doing something that appeals to their parents. You may need to act distracted by talking aloud to yourself or launching into a song as you go about your business. Another option is to give him “indirect attention.” Continue with what you are doing without talking to him or making eye contact. Instead, put your arm around him, pull him into your side and start rubbing his arm. Keep this up until he pulls away. Indirect attention provides nourishing physical attention without fueling the habit of undue attention seeking.

Don’t be discouraged if these techniques don’t “work” right away. Remember that Michael has become accustomed to demanding and getting your attention. It may take the consistent use of these skills over time to convince him that he can belong in the family in a more constructive way.

—Addy

Marketing Tips

Have you been making good use of your local newspapers and their need for local interest stories?

Change your mindset from ‘I wonder how to get our group information into the newspaper’ to ‘I have a cute (or compelling) story the local papers could use. I think I’ll do them a favor and share it with them!’ Then, make that phone call to the reporter whose beat covers neighborhood issues, or write up that comment.

Some parent educators write a regular column in their local paper or school newsletter. That activity establishes the writer as an expert, someone familiar and trusted – so when it’s time to offer a class, enrollment is high.

Let’s hear about your experiences with local media, or any other tip!

Write to us!

Bonus for Net Users

FAMILY! is posted as a PDF file on the NASAP website, often with color photos! Click on “current” newsletter under FE Section.

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.

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Photos from Vancouver 2003

Some of Our Gang poses at the FE Section Meeting 5/30/03
left to right
on floor:
Linda Jessup, Bryna Gamson
seated:
Alyson Schafer, Georgine Nash, Elsie McDorman, Jane Nelsen, Edna Nash
standing:
UNK, Helen Iriarte, Joy Murassutti, Michael Popkin, Martin Nash, Ingeborg Heinje, Mary Hughes, Jan Thomas, Jody McVittie, John Mulligan, UNK, UNK (please let us know!)

not pictured: Beverley Cathcart-Ross, Gary Hughes; also present Marilyn Banfield, Shawna Mackereth, Glenda Montgomery

(right) Participant Sharon Cohen poses with presenters Mary and Gary Hughes after "Adlerian Tools for All Seasons" 5/31/03

(above) Jane Nelsen interacts with participants in her session on "No More Logical Consequences -- At Least Hardly Ever" 5/30/03

(bottom right) Linda Jessup and John Mulligan pose after completing session on "PEP's Model for a Thriving Family Education Center" 5/31/03
Martl Monroe presents to packed house on "Hearing and Expressing Anger Compassionately" 5/30/03

(below) Linda Albert poses as "jackal" with Martl Monroe as "giraffe" after presentation on non-violent, compassionate communication of anger 5/30/03

(left/top) Active breakout conversations abounded in Jody McVittie’s session on "Beyond Sibling Conflict" 5/31/03

(left/bottom) Linda Jessup and co-participant pose during McVittie session 5/31/03
Bob McBrien addresses large group at his session on "Laughter: A Bridge Over Troubled Waters" 5/31/03

Terry Lowe pauses at the beginning of her seminar on "Coping with Parental Anger and Frustration" 5/30/03

Buy a book and get a hug from William Glasser, who good-naturedly posed in the conference book store with Bryna Camson.