

The Gifts We Really Want To Give

A few weeks ago, my youngest daughter, Arianna Grace, was rushed to the hospital with an inch-long gash in her brow bone. She and big sister Angelina Mari were playing keep-away from our dog (a 15-pound Cavalier King Charles Spaniel—small and fast). “The event” happened just as I walked into the family room to investigate all the barking and taunting and to tell the kids to settle down. Arianna tripped over the dog and whacked her head on an exposed area of the stone basin around the fireplace.

A few centimeters higher or lower and I’d be looking at MRI’s and CAT scans, right now. She needed five stitches but she is fine and the wound will heal with minimal scarring. Tough kid; not so tough, Mom.

While doctors and nurses tended to my little girl, I lost it. The adrenalin surge gave way to emotional angst. Tears poured from my eyes and worry filled me: Is she really okay? What if the ER doc missed something, like a fragment of stone lodged in the laceration? Why wasn’t the entire fireplace covered?



Arianna is our little ‘ball of fire’ and she’s gotten herself, in just two years of life, into more precarious predicaments than I care to count. I couldn’t help but think this incident was preventable. My evil inner parenting critic had the best of me as I wondered, what am I doing wrong?

Vacillating between berating myself and trying to remind myself that children are resilient and heal quickly, the wise words of Dr. Wayne Dyer, whom I recently interviewed, popped into my brain window. “We want our children to grow into

content, high functioning, no-limit adults who can handle life’s challenges without getting so overwhelmed by outside forces or their own emotions that they feel defeated,” Dyer advised.

Dr. Dyer is highly regarded for his bestselling books and PBS/CT-CPTV programs for adults (*The Power of Intention, Excuses Begone!* and *Change Your Thoughts- Change Your Life*). What you may not know is early in his career Dyer wrote a book called “What do You Really Want for Your Children?” He also is the author of a series of remarkable children’s books, many of which are in our family library.

Back to the story: I’d been feeling defeated all week long. The trip to the hospital was the icing on the cake. The kids were wearing me down. The upcoming holiday obligations were already exhausting me. To have been standing at the sink drying dishes while the kids played in the family room that fateful day was actually a respite. Next thing, I’m on my way to Children’s Hospital.

Is what Dr. Dyer suggests realistic? Well, Karen, the still small voice in my head whispered, that's up to YOU.

If I show defeat in my words and actions my children, (acute observers that they are) will learn to respond in the same way. To answer the question Dr. Dyer poses in the title of his book: that is not what I want for my children!

From his years as motivational speaker and visionary self-help expert along with raising six children, Dyer teaches that in order for our children to grow-up to be heart-centered, resilient, content and high-functioning individuals, we as parents have to make a commitment to the same. If this is what I really want for your children then there's no room for excuses.

What do we really want for our children? It's a great question to ask especially during the holiday season when the focus can easily shift to material possessions in the form of gifts, trend-setting styles and personal appearance.

Prompted by Dr. Dyer's wisdom, I've come to realize that I want to give my children the following "gifts," all of which I can model as a way to help them develop these gifts in themselves:

to have self-respect regardless of the situation;

to be doers not complainers (excuses begone!);

to be motivated by intrinsic qualities more so than external rewards;

to show compassion and concern for others;

to give rather than taking from life; to experience joy and inner peace even when the world seems like a mad, mad place.

Perhaps, what was so intriguing to me about Arianna's experience is the way she responded, naturally. Sure, she cried, but she didn't lose control of her emotions or her physicality. She squirmed a bit under the restraints, but once I started to recite "Where the Wild Things Are" she became focused and calm, asking, "Almost done, Mama?" When she was all bandaged up to go home she said, "I did it! All done, now." She was proud to have survived her ordeal. She then showed concern for her sister, "Why 'Lina crying?" (Angelina was so worried she couldn't contain her own emotions!) Arianna responded by sharing a crayon to color. They hugged. We all hugged. We all found a moment of joy within the chaos.

There is one more bit of wisdom Dr. Dyer gave: "Teach only love. Give only love."

What are the gifts you really want to give this holiday season? Perhaps, as you offer a wrapped present to relatives and friends, you can look for ways to share the real gifts of the season – the kind that keep on giving . . . back to you and out into the world . . . 🌟

Karen M. Rider enjoys life's adventures with her husband and their two spirited daughters. Her articles, interviews and works of fiction appear in regional and national publications. Karen also is an accomplished ghostwriter and copywriter. www.KarenMRider.com Karen blogs about parenting and pursuing her writing dreams at <http://WritingParent.blogspot.com>

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the source of
your smile,
but sometimes
your smile can
be the source
of your joy."**

- Thich Nhat Hanh