

From the Heart. . .

. . . Life Skills for Today

By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



Making the 09.09.09 Connection! All Businesses, Arts, & Railroad Enthusiasts! Part 2

What do a business plan, a concert or painting, and a caboose have in common?
CONNECTION!...

Without people with a passion and purpose connected to your business plan, success rarely happens. Without an audience, the talent and gifts of the performers cannot be shared with the world. Without a caboose coupled with the engine that moves it down the track, the conductor, brakeman, and passenger inside go nowhere.

Why do I give this example? Remember the last article when I mentioned a very special event coming on September 9, 2009? If you didn't get a change, find a copy or go online to read part 1. The recently renamed Hill Country Council for the Arts (HCCArts) is having their kick off Business & the Arts Speaker Series. You won't want to miss this! And here's the other hints promised on what you will hear.

There are many awesome, challenging plans and projects going on throughout our beautiful Texas Hill Country and here in Boerne. Your business, the Arts, and Railroad history and preservation are right in the middle of what's happening right now. So, come to both the Luncheon and Evening programs. At the Luncheon 12-2pm, Bruce

Flohr, former CEO of Railtex, will make the connection between your business and the Arts.

In addition, get a glimpse of how our nation and Texas thrive today because of the Rails that painted the landscape throughout the countryside. And if you are one of those railroad enthusiasts, you can get connected with the newly formed Friends of the Old No. 9 (www.oldnumbenine.org). You too can share in the rails to trails story and help preserve its history. The HCCArts has partnered with FON9 for their speaker series launch.

Then don't forget the evening reception (6-8pm) where you will meet Lynn Barnett, former President of Texans for the Arts, share her story on the revitalization of downtown Abilene and how the Arts were key players.

And if you want to see some great art by our Hill Country artists who love the railroad & the Arts, go by Bear Moon to gaze on the Rails through the eyes and heart of artisans. And if you are a friendly beer drinker, you might drop in at the Dodging Duck for a unique Railroad brew created just for this event and buy a commemorative mug!

Well, that's enough hinting on how our businesses, the arts, and railroad enthusiasts get connected! For more details and to buy your tickets now go to the Hill Country Council for the Arts website, www.HCCArts.org. See you soon. Come find out what they are up to lately in support of the Arts, artists, and your business.

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Your Child & 9-11

For most of us, when we watch our children and grandchildren play in the backyard or at our neighborhood park, smiles of love and joy fill our hearts. Their playful antics on the swing, slide, and sand make each of us feel just a little younger than our years. It seems like all is right with the world at that moment.

Yet, as we have all experienced, not all things are right with the world around us. September 11, 2001 proved that more clearly for this generation than at any other time. Did you lose a loved one in the midst of the 9-11 tragedy? Or someone you knew? Whether your family experienced personal loss or not, one cannot deny, even today, that 9-11 is very personal for us all.

Family members and students representing more than 90 countries lost citizens on Sept. 11, 2001 and gathered last year in Lower Manhattan for the recitation of the names of more than 2,700 people killed in New York. Throughout our nation today, in every rural and metropolitan city, we will remember again not just this tragedy but the limitless courage of those who fought to save lives in the aftermath; and the families who were left behind to care for their children and grandchildren.

Your children and grandchildren will undoubtedly hear about 9-11 at school during this week and may have questions. I encourage you to spend some time with them to be the one who answers their questions. Share how you, your family, your

friends, and our nation have been affected by this tragedy, as well as the courageous people across our nation who continue to inspire us today. Reach out to your neighbors. Volunteer to be available to them in a need, if at all possible. Make your own neighborhood just a little safer one neighbor at a time. When your children play at the neighborhood park, you will rest a little easier about their safety right in your own backyard.

Be sure to attend a 9-11 memorial service in your community today. If your community doesn't have a service, take the day as a family to honor those in memory.

Here are a few services being offered in the San Antonio area today:

- All Saints Anglican Church of San Antonio,
<http://www.allsaintsanglican.net/2009/08/21/911-memorial-service/>
- All American Armed Forces Parade Association—9/11 Remembrance Dinner, Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort & Spa, San Antonio, (210) 647-5689
- Heritage Children's benefit concert by Life in Rescue Christian band, Heritage Children is a non-profit that provides services and mentors to foster children and at-risk youth. Purchase tickets in advance. 210.495.5352, <http://www.heritagechildrentx.org/>

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Letting them grow up—even when they groan!

You get a phone call from your son that he registered late at the university and couldn't get the classes he needed. Johnny also announced that he lost his part-time job. You asked him what happened. His story goes something like this, "I was only late to work a "few" times but my boss just wouldn't understand that I was caught in traffic and had to pick up my friend, Michael." The story continues with a couple more assorted "reasons" why life wasn't going well. Your son then asked if he could again borrow a little more money to get by this month. You wonder how he used the last loan. The story goes on...

Does this sound familiar to you? I hope not. Yet, we parents have all heard something similar either from our own children or someone we know. Where do you draw the line on rescuing one's children? Whether it's a ten year old learning how to manage allowance or a nineteen year old starting the sophomore college year, the line of unhealthy parental enabling is not always clearly seen on the road of life. When does helping out become rescuing—only to have the same behavior return for more rescuing?

We as parents always want the best for our children. Yet, what does that really mean for the children as they grow up and become adults. Have they embraced their own personal dreams and goals? Does their everyday behavior reflect a maturing,

purpose-filled and emerging fulfilled life? Are they really intrinsically happy and secure in who they are and where they are going?

Here are a few questions to ask yourself just related to money (feel free to put in any other topic you believe is relevant to your child's development into adulthood):

1. How often do your children ask for money?
2. What is your usual response to their ask?
3. What is their response and behavioral outcome of your answer "yes"? Your answer "no"?
4. If you believe you have been too permissive (or hard), how would you like to change your own behavior with your children that will help them mature in a healthy, happy, responsible way?
5. Think about one significant incident with your children that had a significantly positive outcome because of the way they responded and the choices they made. Then, share with them your feelings and affirmation about it.

One of the most important things you can now do for your child is to find out what they think also? Recently, a very insightful 90 year old Guy, living right in the Boerne community, wrote an awesome book to help parents connect and communicate with their children. This little book, *Well, what do you think?*, authored by Guy Chipman, doesn't have the usual "do's & don'ts."

Rather, it is specifically designed to get the family talking together with a series of "Life Questions" parents are to ask their kids, teenagers, and young adults. So often, as parents we have great expectations for our children as Brent Evans so astutely describes in Guy's little book—"What most of us parents want is to raise an angel who acts like Superman." Isn't it time to get to know your children, not as angels nor as a

Superman, but as very unique, delightful human beings with dreams, goals, and very much independent thoughts and feelings? Wouldn't you like to experience your own unique relationship with them that only happens between parent and child, no matter how old you both are today?

The wisdom you will gain from this little book of inquiry and discovery into the heart and soul of your child will go a long way to forever impacting your whole family's relationship. Get this book! Pass it along. You will never regret it. I leave you with a quoted section from Guy Chipman that starts this powerful little book.

"My Dad had a gift, he taught me life lessons and helped me understand how the world really worked by bringing up interesting and thought provoking questions. He was careful not to appear judgmental or critical of my points of view. He did not want me to feel 'put down' or otherwise I might not be honest and forthcoming in the future. In some cases he would tell me what the smartest and most successful people thought on a subject. In many of the statements or questions herein there are no 'one answer.' He did it without preaching, primarily by open discussion (some of it took years to sink in)."

So, let this sink in to your own heart and behavior with your children. Life is always an adventure and will be extra exciting when you incorporate this gem into your family's lives. You can purchase copies of *Well, what do you think?* at the Cibolo Nature Center (www.cibolo.org, 830-249-4616). All profits go to the center's ongoing programs and projects on behalf of our community.

Start today asking open, nonjudgmental questions and discover the heart and soul of your own very special children.

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Being “Nana” is Awesome!

Well, I almost didn't get this article done on time. My reason? I'm in California having a blast with my grandson, “Jazz” (short for Jasper Grey Benedict). If you are not a grandparent yourself, you may ask, “What does it feel like to be a ‘Nana’?”

That's what Jazz calls me at 4 ½ years old. Where do I begin?! First, of course, he is THE cutest, most adorable child in the world. Jazz has the biggest, sweetest smile, loves to run, jump, dance, watch Thomas Train movies; and his best friend's name is Hunter. He goes to the Montessori School just down the street from home.

He already knows his numbers, alphabet, and the regions of Australia. And believe it or not, most of the time, he loves to share his toys, snacks, actually takes turns on the slide with Hunter. One of the most delightful moments is in the morning when he comes jumping in my bed to cuddle, play hide and seek, and tell me about what he wants to do today. I am also amazed at the variety of foods he is willing to eat...broccoli, salad greens, carrots, all kinds of fruit. Jazz does love ice cream too. Who doesn't?

Another very special thing about my precious grandson is...he is a hugger. Out of the blue he just comes running up and gives me a big hug and says, “I love you Nana.” And then runs off to play some more. But before you think I've gone off the deep

end with my starry eyed description, Jazz has a little rascal side to him as well. I wouldn't want it to be any other way.

For those of you who are grandparents, does this example sound familiar? It's dinnertime, and you call him to come to the table. He says, "No, I'm not hungry." Yet, you can hear his stomach growling from the kitchen. What he is really saying is he is in the middle of playing with his train set and doesn't want to stop. You first say, "Please come now. The food is getting cold." He ignores you. I don't know your tactic. But with Jazz, I try to negotiate a deal with him first. That usually works. When it doesn't, I watch his mother so deftly maneuver Jazz's mindset that he wants to come to the table. It usually means, "If you come now, we will then go for a walk to the park (or something else enticing for an active four year old)." When that doesn't work on some occasions, his Mom always has a special look and tone that signals to him he better move or the alternatives won't be much fun.

At that point, Jazz does the cutest thing. He simply shrugs his shoulders, puts down his toys, sends out a loud resigned sigh, and says, "O..K..." Then he sounders up to the dinner table. You want to just go over to him and give him a big kiss. He is just too cute! Yet, Nana holds back the urge, particularly with those moments where he's being more stubborn than usual with both Nana and Mom. One thing I am learning as "Nana" is to stay "Nana" and not try to be his parent. My daughter as a single parent does a great job being "Mom." And it's a lot more fun being "Nana" anyway! At the end of the day, I can retire gracefully after being worn out by fast moving Jazz.

I hope in the years ahead, you too get to experience being a "Nana" or "Papa." The gift of grandchildren cannot be measured. And for those who are already grandparents, take lots of time to be in their lives as much as possible. The rewards of

the heart are limitless for you, your own children, and grandchildren. Well, time to go pick up Jazz from school and off to his first soccer game.

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