



Accepting Your Child for Who They Are by Kathy Slattengren

When you were expecting your first child, do you remember what hopes and dreams you had for your child? Did you wonder what type of blessings this child would bring to your family and the world?

Perhaps you thought about how this child might follow in your footsteps and go even further than you did in football, baseball, soccer or gymnastics. Perhaps you dreamt about how this child might just be the one who would find the cure for cancer or become a powerful political leader.

What you probably didn't imagine is that this child would struggle to learn, not enjoy the activities you really like or reject beliefs you hold dear. You certainly didn't imagine your unborn child having difficulties making friends or succeeding in school.

Discovering Your Child's Gifts and Challenges

Once your child was born, you started learning more about him or her. This child was no longer a thing of your dreams but right here crying in your arms!

When did you first discover that your child might not fit all your expectations? That this child has a mind of his or her own which does not necessarily agree with yours?

This realization came to Gillian Lynne's parents when they learned she was struggling in school. Her teachers

suggested that they take her to see a specialist to get evaluated for a learning disorder.

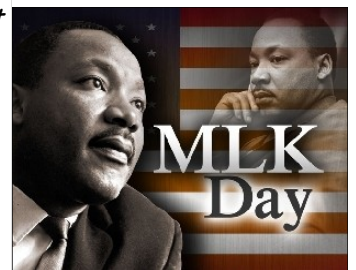
Sir Ken Robinson describes talking to Gillian Lynne, now an adult, about this experience in his TED Talk "How Schools Kill Creativity". Robinson recalled "*She went to see this specialist ... She sat on her hands for twenty minutes while this man talked to her mother about all the problems Gillian was having at school. ... In the end, the doctor went and sat next to Gillian and said, 'Gillian, I've listened to all these things that your mother's told me. I need now to speak to her privately. Wait here; we'll be back. We won't be very long.' And they went and left her.*

As they went out of the room, he turned on the radio sitting on his desk. When they got out of the room, he said to her mother, 'Just stand and watch her.' The minute they left the room, she said she was on her feet, moving to the music. They watched for a few minutes, and he turned to her mother and said, 'You know, Mrs. Lynne, Gillian isn't sick. She's a dancer. Take her to a dance school.'

I said 'What happened?' and she said, 'She did. I can't tell you how wonderful it was. We walked into this room, and it was full of people like me: people who couldn't sit still, people who had to move to think.' ... (Continued Page 2)



Happy Winter !!



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She was eventually auditioned for the Royal Ballet School; she became a soloist; she had a wonderful career at the Royal Ballet. She eventually graduated from the Royal Ballet School and found her own company, the Gillian Lynne Dance Company and met Andrew Lloyd Webber. She's been responsible for some of the most successful musical theater productions in history; she's given pleasure to millions, and she's a multi-millionaire. Somebody else might have put her on medication and told her to calm down."

Like so many, it was Gillian's differences that ultimately led to her success.

Accepting Your Child's Differences

Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer is a classic children's story of parents who struggle to accept their child. Rudolph was born with a red, blinking nose instead of the normal black nose. His parents were embarrassed by his nose and decided to try to hide it with a black dirt nose.

When Rudolph complained about wearing the uncomfortable fake nose, his dad reassured him that he'd get used to it adding "You'll like it and wear it." The fake nose worked for a while but unfortunately it fell off right during the reindeer games and his friends were shocked to see his red nose.

Feeling rejected by his friends and family, Rudolph decided to run away from home which created even more problems. In the end, his nose is seen as a wonderful gift because it was the only thing that allowed Santa to drive his sleigh full of toys through the thick fog on Christmas Eve.

While your children were certainly not born with a blinking red nose, they may have been born with other differences which you find hard to accept.

What happens when your children can't change to fit your expectations? There can be tragic results if children believe they absolutely must fit certain expectations.

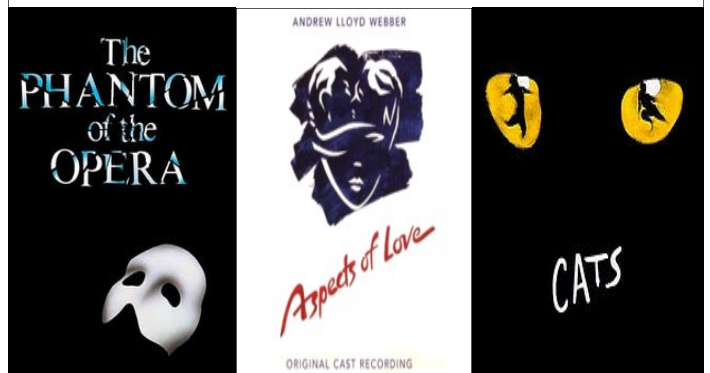
Jack grew up in a family that had high expectations for him. His parents and grandparents were all college educated and really expected Jack, as the oldest son, to earn a PhD. Ideally, his father wanted him to succeed in politics - perhaps a state senator or even better, the President of the United States!

It wasn't that his parents ever told him directly that he must achieve these goals but it was the underlying theme since he was a preschooler. When years later Jack struggled in graduate school, Jack decided he was better off dead than failing to complete his degree. Fortunately Jack did not succeed in killing himself and instead began the long path of embracing his own talents and dreams instead of the ones his parents had for him.

There may be many ways your children don't fit your original expectations of who they would be. While adjusting your expectations can be a long and difficult process, the best gift you can give your kids is to accept them for who they are.



Gillian Lynne & Andrew Lloyd Weber Productions she choreographed. Learn more on Wikipedia.



The Fitness Resolution

"The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake," declared First Lady Michelle Obama at the Let's Move! launch on February 9, 2010. The Let's Move website (<http://www.letsmove.gov/health-problems-and-childhood-obesity>) states quite starkly why childhood obesity is such a serious problem:

"Obese children may experience immediate health consequences, which can lead to weight-related health problems in adulthood. Obese children and teens have been found to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD), including high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, and abnormal glucose tolerance. In a sample of 5- to 17-year-olds, almost 60% of overweight children had at least one CVD risk factor and 25% of overweight children had two or more CVD risk factors. In addition, studies have shown that obese children and teens are more likely to become obese as adults."

So as we move into a new year, how about making a resolution to help the children in your care make fitness a part of their everyday routines for life?



Rewards of Curiosity

"Truly happy people seem to have an intuitive grasp of the fact that sustained happiness is not just about doing things that you like. It also requires growth and adventuring beyond the boundaries of your comfort zone. Happy people are, simply put, curious."

This observation was made by Todd Kashdan and Robert Biswas-Diener in their **Psychology Today** (August 2013) article, "What Happy People Do Differently." They explain...

"Curiosity, it seems, is largely about exploration — often at the price of momentary happiness. Curious people generally accept the notion that while being uncomfortable and vulnerable is not an easy path, it is the most direct route to becoming stronger and wiser. In fact... curious people invest in activities that cause them discomfort as a springboard to higher psychological peaks."

500 STATE LEGISLATORS SUPPORT GREATER INVESTMENTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

THE RESULT



CHILDREN WHO GROW UP BETTER PREPARED
for school, career and life



SUPPORT INVESTMENTS IN EARLY LEARNING

GROW AMERICA STRONGER with **QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

In what might be regarded as a timely gift to children, over 500 state legislators from 50 states sent an appeal to the Congressional Budget Committee to invest in early learning. In its introduction, the appeal states:

"As Democratic and Republican state legislators from across the country, we understand the challenges of balancing budgets while making critical investments that drive economic success for our constituents and states. We believe that maintaining and expanding high-quality early childhood education is an effective and efficient expenditure even when budgets are tight. We urge you to make these investments in young children a priority in your deliberations."

Baby it's cold outside...



Let's go play!

Spend a fun-filled day playing across five football fields of frosty joy. Zoom down the 400-foot hill all together in our family-sized tubes, or go it alone as a single rider. From snowman building to snowball shooting, tubing to togetherness, enjoy all the moments that will make for the perfect snow day.

NEW for 2013-14, Avalanche Alley is adding an extra lane for you to get in more family tubing time! And take a spin in the snow on the new Snow-Go-Round, a tubing carousel adventure designed for Little Angels!

Pinnacle



January: "Winter Wonders"

Topics Include...

**Snow, Snowflakes and Ice
Winter Outerwear
Arctic & Antarctic Animals
Eskimos and Where They Live**

Character Education Topic:
PATIENCE

What's Happening...



**Henry County Schools & Georgia Pre-K
Closed thru January 6th**

Barrington Closed: January 1st

Donuts With Dad: January 16th

**Henry County Schools & Georgia Pre-K
Closed January 20th for MLK Holiday**

Science Fair: January 31st

**STAN THE LOVESICK
SNOWMAN**



Jan 2 - Feb 2, 2014

Downstairs Theater
Recommended for ages 4+

Showtimes

- Tues-Fri: 10am & 11:30am
- Sat: 11am, 1pm & 3pm
- Sun: 1pm & 3pm

CENTER FOR
PUPPETRY
Arts