

He repeatedly told his parents . . . "It wasn't your fault."

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When it's time, momma birds push fledglings from the nest. Parents nurture and teach their young until it is time to fly solo but unlike animals, human parents don't ever stop being parents. This story, true or not, makes a poignant point.

"Thousands of years ago in central Japan a culture took their elders into the jungle when they reached a certain age and left them there for the Gods. As the story went, a man carried his wisp of mother into the jungle. As he pushed through the underbrush, his feeble mother kept breaking off branches. The son asked, "What are you doing mother?" She, with tears running down her wrinkled cheeks said, "Son, I'm breaking branches and dropping them so you will be able to find your way home once you leave me."

Flying solo doesn't stop parents from caring, worrying, being proud, being concerned or from "breaking branches." But regardless of the love given, lessons taught or the values instilled in them, children flying solo make choices. Some are good; some may be bad. But all too often, if the child messes up slightly or horribly, a parent may question, "What did I do wrong?"



THE FOLLOWING IS A TRUE STORY

I first met "Jack" (fictitious name) when he was nine. He had a winning smile, delightful personality, and was so kind. Back then, if told he'd end up in prison when he grew up, I'd have strongly said, "Not a chance!" Jack had two siblings but his extended family was huge. His family played together, camped together, prayed together and his parents never missed the kid's school activities or sports. I used to think, that is the type of family a child needs in order to grow up successful. But even with stable, loving home-lives, children may

make choices that leave people wondering how could that have happened.

In contrast, I know a woman whose past was full of abuse, neglect, alcoholic adults, pain and suffering. But she rose above it, made wise moral choices and had a successful life.

I've learned that no matter how much guidance, love and nurturing children get or don't get, once flying solo they make choices.

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Tips to Deal with Difficult People

Many labels are used to describe "Difficult People" such as bulldozers, snipers, know-it-alls, negativists, brown-nosers, complainers, motor mouths, door mats etc. In reality, these words are subjective labels attached to those who rub us the wrong way or to those we just don't like. We judge others from our own frame of reference. All too often, we find people difficult just because they are different from us.

Labels aren't given arbitrarily. We choose labels because of the way a person behaves; i.e. what they say or do. So basically people aren't difficult; it's their behavior that is. Behavior can be dealt with. Consider these tips to deal with difficult behavior.

1. Accept differences and remember there is more than one way to do things.

2. Identify the specific behavior that bugs you and exercise your options.

You can:

- Leave.
- Ignore or overlook the behavior.
- Assertively ask for a change in behavior using I messages. "I'm not comfortable talking behind someone's back."
- State your feelings with I messages. "I get upset when you interrupt me." "I don't like negative talk."
- Tell the person to stop. "I need you to stop yelling."
- Call attention to the behavior if appropriate. The person may not realize strongly they are coming across or what they are doing. "I don't appreciate those remarks." "Being silent isn't going to solve this issue."

"I don't like being called names."

Get expert advice by calling EAP or check out these references found on amazon.com. Arapakis, Maria. *How to Speak up, Set Limits and Say No*. Bramson, Robert M. *Coping With Difficult People*. Bernstein, Albert. *Dinosaur Brains - Dealing With All Those Difficult People at Work*. Felder, Leonard. *Does Someone at Work Treat You Badly?*



Interview with "Jack" (continued from front)

In high school, "Jack" experimented with prescription drugs. Soon addicted, and funds exhausted, he resorted to robbery and was caught. "Jack" was tried as an adult and sentenced to prison. "Jack" and his mother agreed to this story and interview in hopes of helping other parents.

"Jack, I was shocked when your mom told me you were in jail and why. I just couldn't see you doing something like that. Your mom told me first she was angry and wondered how you could be so stupid. Then she said she was sad, sick, scared, devastated, depressed, and worried. She said, 'You name it I felt it.'"

"It was awful. I hurt a lot of people and that year was the first time since I was born, that I wasn't with family on Christmas."

"Your mom took it hard but clearly never stopped loving you or being there for you. Dr Phil once said a parent can love a child but hate what he or she does."

"True, but the worst thing was mom asking me over and over 'What did I do wrong?' I tried to convince her it wasn't her fault but I don't think she believed that for a long time."

"You must have known that doing drugs wasn't wise."

"Yea, but first time users rarely think about addiction and life-altering, destructive behavior. At first it was fun and felt great. That was before the cravings began. Before long, the drugs controlled me and came first over right or wrong. Plain and simple, addiction is a downhill spiral."

What would you tell any kid who'd listen?"

Don't do drugs. Seriously, don't start. You never have to crave or quit what you don't try be it cigarettes, alcohol, drugs or any addictive activity.

"What would you tell parents of kids who get in serious trouble like you did?"

"Parents really need to know that it isn't their fault when their kids go wrong. My parents are the best. And like I told them, I made all the bad choices myself. None of it was their fault. Every choice I make for the rest of my life won't be their fault either."



Healthy Recipe ~ www.foodfit.com Roast Chicken with Citrus & Thyme

Ingredients:

1 whole chicken about 5 lbs
1 lemon and one orange both halved
½ onion
½ cup roughly chopped celery
4 sprigs fresh thyme
1 tablespoon olive oil
Freshly ground pepper; salt to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. Rinse chicken inside and out. Pat dry with paper towels. Season cavity of chicken with salt and pepper.
3. Squeeze juice from lemon and orange halves all over chicken. Stuff halves into cavity, along with onion, celery and thyme.
4. Place chicken on rack in a roasting pan. Drizzle oil over skins and season with salt and pepper.
5. Roast chicken in oven for 90 minutes or until a thermometer inserted into thickest part of thigh registers 160 degrees.

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Work Life Services

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