

EMPOWERFUL! PARENTS. & Families

By Mark Fourniér

Article #1

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Empowerful! Parents & Families

www.CenterForEmpowerment.com

How exciting to be involved in the inaugural release of the Spirit Wings website and news letter!!! And how honored I am for the opportunity to make this small contribution to someone who has made such a difference in *my* life; (thank *you* Donna Johnson!!!).

In a moment you will experience the *first* in a running series of articles that will help you become a more empowering, effective and enlightened parent, and regardless of your children's age or challenges you *can* find answers... either through the Spirit Wings website, this series or our Center for Empowerment website (link above).

As I repeat from time to time, raising 'empowerful children' is a process... a journey. The solutions won't all come at once but if you remain committed, they *will* come.

**Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children;
now I have six children, and no theories.**

~John Wilmot

Have you ever worked on a jigsaw puzzle... sifting and searching for that one missing part? You try *this* piece and *that* shape, twisting and turning, as if grasping for the lost combination to a safe... and then... suddenly, almost out of nowhere, snap... a 'perfect fit'.

THAT is what I'm hoping will happen for *you* through Donnas' thoughtful website; it is also how it felt to *me* when Donna first described what her plans were for the Spirit Wings Charity... a 'perfect fit' for exactly what I too have passionately worked on for many years; the only measurable difference was that 'Spirit Wings' has a mission of 'empowering children, teens & families in need' by helping them *find* tools and support systems. And 'The Fournier Center for Empowerment' has a mission of 'empowering children, teens & families' by *providing* tools and support systems. It doesn't get much more perfect than that!

The fact that Donna and her own family had experienced our programs and worked with us through serious crises meant that she *already* knew what was possible... which made it that much easier for us to team up.

So here I am... ready to serve You, Donna, Spirit Wings and of course, **your children...** at www.CenterForEmpowerment.com and through this series of articles on Empowerful Parenting.

Being a 'parent' is the easiest thing in the world... all you need to do is 'get pregnant'. Being a GREAT parent however, is the most challenging thing on earth... challenging, but well *worth* it (as any GREAT parent can tell you).

“I never said it would be *easy*... I only said it would be *worth* it.”

There is no higher calling than being a parent... nothing more noble or rewarding and certainly nothing with greater potential for making a difference in the world.

So what kind of parent do YOU want to be?
What kind of *children* do you want to raise?
What is it that you really *want* for your children?

Are you looking for a way to keep them safe and secure, help them through a serious illness or difficult period in their life, set them on the 'right track', help them 'find their way' or possibly improve upon your own relationship with them?

As you ponder your answers, ask yourself if you seem to be more focused on helping them *survive* or on helping them THRIVE.

What might their lives look like if they not only overcame their *challenges* but went far beyond to find true peace, joy, passion and purpose in their lives?

I ask this question because Donna and I both share the goal of **'raising the bar on raising all children'**. We are passionately committed to providing parents and teachers with the tools and insights they need to fully develop their children's **Character, Self Awareness and Consciousness**. This means doing more than just teaching our kids to *behave*, it means teaching them to *be enlightened*... by helping them gain *mastery* over their habits, perceptions, behavior, feelings, relationships and character.

“If we spent a tenth as much time teaching our children *character* as we do teaching them to 'be quiet' mankind would evolve a thousand years almost overnight... (and kids would *still* be noisy).”

~Mark Fournier

Naturally if your child is in serious 'crisis mode' you need to address that *first*. Some illnesses can be life-threatening if left untreated and you must be certain that you are seeking medical assistance where warranted.

I *would* like to point out however, that although it would be natural to assume your children's more serious issues might be solved through financial support, this is *often* not the case; although there are many competent therapist and effective treatments, I have found that very few solutions can entirely replace the love and support of an empowered parent.

MANY of the challenges and disorders involving our children must be addressed through a shift in the child's Consciousness, Self-image and Character... and these are things that few in the medical field address; they still work on the ancient paradigm of 'behavior modification'... when in reality, it is almost impossible to permanently alter someone's behavior without *first* altering the underlying 'perceptions and programs' that *drive* that behavior... and *most* of these perceptions and programs were created by one or both of their *parents*... which is in part why it is so much more effective to have their *parents* play an integral part of the *solution* as well; especially if they don't want to *perpetuate* the problem.

It may be difficult to hear this especially if you tend to focus on finding *fault* over finding *solutions*... besides, it can seem so much easier (and safer) to rely upon the efforts of a qualified expert to solve our children's issues... but even when you find that person, you may quickly discover (As Donna Johnson did) that YOUR work has only just begun:

Most of you are unaware of the life-threatening challenges that were faced by one of Donnas' close family members for many years.

During this time Donna watched on feeling helpless as this family member underwent treatment after treatment. Although Donna had the financial resources to *fund* the staggering expenses, she didn't feel there was anything she *personally* could do to help, and worse yet, she wasn't seeing results either.

After four years of intensive therapy, the decision was finally made to bring this family member to Donnas' home. That's where I came in. And as much as I might enjoy taking the credit for the remarkable recovery that quickly ensued, I simply cannot. When I first started working with this family member I explained to Donna that I needed a 'parental figure' to play full-out in supporting the process of turning her life around.

But after the first couple of months it became apparent that she wasn't getting the 'parental' support she needed and even Donna will readily admit that she wasn't enforcing the boundaries I had set. Once everyone could see that the family member wasn't going to improve this way, Donna made a **SERIOUS** commitment to do whatever was needed (which included upholding every boundary I set and following a rigorous protocol to the letter).

It wasn't easy for *either* of them, but Donna kept her commitment to being an 'empowered parent' which helped to lead this adored family member out of the dark with unconditional love and firm but unwavering support. Within weeks, she had begun taking responsibility for her own life and in only a month she had gotten her first job, was going

to AA twice per day, was volunteering at a shelter, her weight had stabilized and she was out of her depression. Within *six* months, she was living on her own, supporting herself, managing her store and involved in a loving relationship that thrives to this day.

No *single* person can take the credit for her recovery; there were others helping her as well and she herself did the hardest work of all... and we are all so proud of her, for the miracles she has achieved and for all the lives she has yet to touch and influence.

Our '**Empowerful! Parenting & Families**' approach may have provided the *roadmap* to her recovery, but it wasn't until *Donna* stepped up to the plate and started 'being' an 'empowerful parent' that things really turned around.

I am pointing this out because the cost associated with her *ultimate* recovery dropped to less than 1/100th of what *Donna* *had* been spending from the moment she 'took responsibility' and become an empowerful parent. The solution as it turned out had very little to do with *money* and a LOT to do with empowerful *parenting*.

THIS is how *Donna* can be of the **greatest** help to you and your family... by assisting every family who requests financial support by *first* sponsoring them through an '**Empowerful! Parenting & Families**' program. And if the need *still* exists for financial support, that aid will be infinitely more effective than it might otherwise have been.

Let's start your path to creating an empowerful family NOW with a little quiz... I call it the Empowerful! Parenting Quiz and it will help you learn more about yourself as a parent and more about the areas where you might want to focus your attention.

The Empowerful! Parenting Quiz

**“Although children aren't always great at listening to their parents...
they are brilliant at *imitating* them.”**

~Mark Fournier

Answer True (T) or False (F) to each of the following Questions. Naturally you will want to consider which of these behaviors you exhibit in the presence of your children to determine what kind of *example* you are being. (Be as honest as you can with yourself in order to gain maximum insight from this experience):

1. I continually *see* the *best* in my children because I continually *look* for it; my children like themselves best when they're with me because they love to see themselves through *my* eyes. T/F
2. I take responsibility for my actions, easily admitting when I'm wrong, *especially to my children*. T/F
3. I *consistently* eat healthy food, take excellent care of my body and enthusiastically encourage my children to do so as well. T/F
4. My children know *exactly* what my boundaries are and *exactly* what the consequences will be if they violate them. T/F
5. I always follow through on the 'consequences' when a boundary has been violated. T/F

6. I consistently convey *unconditional* love for my children *before, during* or *after* each consequence for misbehavior or strong disagreement with them. T/F
7. I *unconditionally* treat others with kindness and respect; especially those in disadvantaged circumstances or those who *serve* us such as waitresses and attendants. T/F
8. I am *unconditionally* patient, respectful, kind and loving toward my *spouse* and *children*, *consistently* treating them better than *anyone* I know (including my *customers*), even when I'm in a hurry or irritated. T/F
9. I speak kindly to my children and rarely, if ever, yell at them or treat them in a way that I would not want them to treat me. T/F
10. I am consistently honest and truthful (unless it is *cruel* to be so), even about the 'little things'. T/F
11. I avoid using physical force or threats with my children, opting for *love* and *understanding*. T/F
12. I consistently listen to my children and avoid assuming I *know* what they are thinking or what their motives are. I 'seek *first* to understand, *then* to be understood'. T/F
13. I eagerly take 'calculated risks' allowing my children to observe me 'being vulnerable' *and* to see how I respond to unfavorable consequences by looking for what is GREAT about *any* outcome. T/F
14. When things don't turn out as we had *planned*, I *always* encourage my children to *help* figure out what is GREAT about the way it *has* turned out. T/F
15. Rather than looking for 'fault' when things go wrong, I look for 'solutions' and then, *calmly* discuss the 'cause' of the problem *later*. T/F
16. My children know what I am passionate about in life and what my priorities are and I know the same about them. T/F
17. I am highly accountable and keep my word! My children know they can count on me once I commit to them. T/F
18. I am fully present when I am with my children; I avoid drifting off or multi-tasking. T/F
19. I passionately encourage my children to solve their own (safe) challenges regardless of the outcome; although I provide *encouragement* and *support*, I consistently avoid solving their problems. T/F
20. I eagerly, generously and frequently contribute to others *and* involve my children in doing so. T/F
21. I don't compare my children to other children or even to each other; realizing that with all our unique strengths *and* challenges it would be impossible to make a fair comparison. T/F
22. I avoid saying negative things about others and never stereotype regardless of differences. T/F
23. I consistently do my personal BEST in life while encouraging my children to do the same. T/F
24. I have earned my children's trust and respect by living with integrity *and* respecting *them*. T/F
25. I continually strive to learn and grow ... expanding my skills and areas of knowledge, and I consistently inspire my children to do so as well.
26. My children see the best in *themselves* (and in *others*) because I continually *help* them do so. T/F
27. I view 'empowered parenting' as an opportunity to empower *myself* as much as being a way to raise more empowered children. T/F

If you couldn't answer 'TRUE' to every single question, don't sweat it... who can? But since children learn MOSTLY by our EXAMPLE this *is* a wonderful opportunity for you to take another look at the choices you make as a parent. And if you REALLY want growth... you might also have your *kids* answer this quiz FOR you and see yourself through *their* eyes, or... go through the questions again and see how often you could answer 'True' even if you didn't *have* children, since *everyone* plays a 'leadership' role in *someone's* life; besides a TRULY Empowerful Parent isn't just putting on a show...

their basic behavior remains the same *regardless* of *children*... because in actuality, an ‘Empowerful Parent’ is little more than an Empowerful *Human*... (**with sleep deprivation**).

“If we are to teach *real* peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a *real* war against war, we shall have to begin with the children.”

~ Gandhi

And remember, creating an ‘empowerful family’ is a *journey*... and *sometimes* a perilous one, down steep, icy mountain passes, on rainy nights, without windshield wipers... or breaks... or a seatbelt... or a map... or low-deductable insurance. But just stay committed to the process, and you WILL see results! And if you need *additional* support please visit our web site: www.CenterForEmpowerment.com

**The hardest part of raising a child is teaching them to ride bicycles;
A ‘shaky child on a bicycle for the first time’ needs both support and freedom.
The realization that this is what the child will *always* need can hit hard.**

~Sloan Wilson

A Thank YOU from Spirit Wings!

We at Spirit Wings would also like to thank our generous contributors at this time, many of whom are dedicated Arbonne distributors and thoughtful, loving parents themselves. And we would like to remind those of you who are unaware, that Spirit Wings is thanking every single person who contributes \$100 or more to Spirit Wings with the beautiful and heartwarming book ‘**The Giving Game**’ by inspirational author Mark Fournier. Each book is personally autographed by both Mark Fournier, and our very own Donna Johnson; making it a rare and wonderful treasure in deed.

About Mark Fournier: Three time EMMY-Award winning TV producer, transformational speaker, author, columnist and Master Life-Guide, Mark Fournier is the founder of The Center for Empowerment (a public charity) and creator of its powerful ‘Course of Action’; the ‘Empowerful!’ series; the ‘PermaLearn Mastery System’ and other life-altering programs.

About The Fournier Center for Empowerment: A 501(c)(3) Public Charity, the Center focuses on *permanently* elevating the character and consciousness of children, teens and families.

Related Seminars, Workshops & Programs:

- The Course of Action:** Empowerment for LIFE!
- Empowerful Parents & Families:** Raising the Bar on Raising our Children

Related Seminars, Workshops & Programs *soon to be released:*

- Empowerful Teaching:** Raising the Bar on Raising our Children (teachers version)
- Empowerful Kids:** The FUN Factory (for kids)
- Empowerful Teens:** Getting what you REALLY Want (for teens)

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by Mark Fournier

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