

KinCare Newsletter

May 2014



On May 1st, we were honored to have our guest speaker, Elaine K. Williams, talk to us about what enabling is, and how it affects our lives, and the lives of those we love.

In case you missed it, here is Helping or Enabling? - Part I & II, excerpted from her blog. I would encourage all of you to find a copy of her book, "The Sacred Work of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren".



THE SACRED WORK OF
Grandparents
RAISING **Grandchildren**

ELAINE K. WILLIAMS

HELPING OR ENABLING? PART I

A parenting grandparent support group in Idaho recently emailed me and asked me to distinguish between helping and enabling behaviors. They had quite a rich discussion at their meeting about whether some grandparents were helping or enabling their adult children, but did not come to a conclusion.

This is a great question and one that every grown adult, parent, parenting grandparent, foster parent, adoptive parent needs to consider as they raise their children and grandchildren. This article will specifically address parenting grandparents, but the information applies to all families.

Part I ... *The Difference Between Helping and Enabling*

When we are helping, we foster our adult children's or our grandchildren's growth. We create an environment that is positive and holds them accountable. *Helping* lifts you up but it does not hold you up! Instead, it allows the adult child or grandchild to hold themselves up as best they can. Helping at its best is supportive, not controlling; strengthening, not debilitating, mobilizing, not paralyzing, growth-producing not dependency-creating. When helping hurts the giver or the receiver, it is no longer helping ... it is *enabling*.

Enabling is often disguised as helping, but it's quite the opposite. Enabling creates a sense of powerlessness for the person who needs the help. Even though the child, teen or adult child may want or demand help, they often feel discouraged after receiving it, because they had to depend on someone else to resolve their immediate

problem. In this way, enabling is a de-motivator, while helping supports growth and therefore is a motivator.

If you are wondering if you are a helper or enabler for your adult children or grandchildren, ask yourself these questions about how you attempt to help them.

- 1) Are my actions helping this person to feel more self-empowered?
- 2) Are the circumstances staying the same, worsening, or improving?
- 3) Is your adult child or grandchild doing his or her best to help themselves?
- 4) Are my actions motivated by fear? Pity? Guilt?
- 5) Am I helping my adult child or grandchild to take advantage of his or her full potential?
- 6) What good has come from my help?
- 7) What harm has come from my help?

When helping ceases to motivate or empower your adult child or grandchild; it becomes enabling. How you answer these questions will help you know if you have crossed the fine line between helping and enabling.

One other measure that might help you discern the difference between *helping* and *enabling* is this: the help offered should assist the receiver achieve some kind of sustainable self-reliance without the giver (parent or parenting grandparent) paying a high or impossible price which threatens their own well-being.

HELPING OR ENABLING? PART II

We all want to be supportive of our children and family, especially when there is a crisis of some sort. Usually, it is sufficient to provide non-judgmental listening and perhaps some practical assistance to help someone through a difficult time. And many people are open to seeking professional help if they are experiencing serious emotional/psychological symptoms, or simply feel that they cannot cope.

However, some people have underlying issues that will continue to make them miserable until properly addressed – and might be in denial about their need for help. In these cases, the individual might develop a pattern of “crisis-oriented” behavior, in which he/she is continually creating chaos or responding to various life stressors in very maladaptive ways (e.g., compulsive behavior, addictions, running away or withdrawing, confusing/unpredictable behaviors, lying and stealing, taking things out on others).

Many of the parenting grandparents I have met and talked to describe their adult child, parent of the grandchild(ren) as having many of these dysfunctional behaviors. For some, that is the sole reason they are raising their grandchildren. For some the relationship between the grandparent and their adult child has completely fractured. For others, the relationship is characterized by unpredictable, confusing, demanding, and often hostile dependency.

Many of the adult children have mental and emotional health issues and are in desperate need of treatment and appropriate medications. No amount of giving to them will help them unless they get the professional help they require. However, many refuse help and continue in their dysfunctional behaviors and demanding patterns, which creates angst for everyone in the immediate family.

When someone repeatedly expresses an urgent need for help but then does nothing to avert future crises, this can become quite a drain on people close to them. However, loved ones often continue taking too much responsibility for fixing the negative outcomes of someone's untreated mental health or substance abuse problem(s). In addition to creating stress and frustration for the helper, this type of "caretaking" does the troubled person a disservice by *enabling* him or her to avoid consequences and delay getting professional help.

Some signs the line for *helping* has been crossed and *enabling* is occurring:

- You keep suggesting solutions but your adult child does nothing different
- He or she keeps turning up distressed -- or behaving in the same maladaptive ways, no matter how much supportive listening or practical (or financial) help you provide
- Your adult child denies that he/she has a problem and consistently blames others when things go wrong
- He/she resists getting professional help even after serious consequences result from his/her problems (e.g., a suicide attempt, an episode of violent behavior)
- Your adult child starts making unreasonable demands on your time, energy or other resources
- He/she seems consumed with self-pity, or just a little too gratified by the attention of others who are trying to help
- You find yourself feeling burdened, preoccupied or overwhelmed by your adult son or daughter's problems – which could provoke your own symptoms of anxiety or depression
- You recognize that the relationship with your adult child has become entirely focused on his/her needs with little or no reciprocity
- It starts to seem like your adult child is a "bottomless pit" – no matter how much help and support you provide, he or she still demands
- more



Register your child for a FREE Summer Fun Bowling Pass! 2 FREE games of bowling a day ALL SUMMER!

Sign up now...IT'S FREE! Go to www.kidsbowlfree.com and click on a bowling center near you!

It's easy...

- Go to the website www.kidsbowlfree.com to register each child.
- Receive the FREE BOWLING PASSES every week by email.
- Come and enjoy bowling ALL SUMMER!

FREE Take Me Fishing! Trailers

Stocked with equipment and information, Idaho Fish and Game's "Take Me Fishing" trailers travel to local ponds across the state.

Wrapped with vibrant fish illustrations, they're hard to miss. Getting kids excited about fishing will build a new generation of anglers.

The only thing kids and their parents have to do is show up!

2014 Clearwater Region Fishing Trailer Schedule

Date	Location
May 3	Hordemann Pond - Moscow - Kids Fishing Day Event
May 10	Kiwanis Park - Lewiston
May 17	Spring Valley Reservoir - Troy
May 24	Mann Lake - Lewiston
May 31	Deyo Reservoir - Weippe
June 7	Moose Creek Reservoir - Bovill
June 21	Elk Creek Reservoir - Elk River
June 28	Winchester State Park - Winchester

- ✓ The fishing equipment can be checked out for free during the scheduled times listed for your area.
- ✓ Reservations are not needed and equipment is checked out on a first-come, first-served basis.
- ✓ Participants will be granted a permit to fish without a license.
- ✓ If kids get "hooked on fishing" after the event, parents will have to purchase a license.



CAMPING 101 PROGRAM

Hells Gate State Park • Lewiston, Idaho

Bringing families and the great outdoors together! Our Camping 101 Program is a fun filled, overnight camping experience for families new to camping.

Are you interested in camping? No prior outdoor knowledge is needed! Come join Hells Gate State Park for a weekend focused on the basics of camping and recreational skills to help your family enjoy the outdoors. Knowledgeable and friendly staff will show you the ropes. **Don't have all the essential gear? No problem! We have loaner equipment for you to use.**

Camping 101 Program is the perfect opportunity to reconnect with your family and with nature. This is a safe, comfortable, and relaxed setting for beginners to experience hands-on lessons for rewarding outdoor experiences in the future. Create new memories with your State Park Family.

For more information about Idaho State Parks and Recreation, visit our website at www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov

Activities May Include:

- Fundamentals of camping
- Staff-led nature hike and plant identification
- Wildlife interpretive programs
- Fishing, disk golf, canoeing
- Outdoor cooking instruction
- S'mores cookout
- Tips on sustainability and fire safety

Want more info?

Call or email Park Manager Charlie Chase at (208) 799-5015 or charlie.chase@idpr.idaho.gov

Idaho KinCare Project 2014

My Family. My Story.

Expressions of children raised by relatives or other significant adults.

Contest

This art contest celebrates the relatives and significant adults who open their hearts and homes to children in Idaho. Over 29,264 Idaho children live in households headed by a grandparent or other relatives.

The Instructions

Compose a poem, write a short essay, or draw a picture that describes how living with someone other than your parents (such as a grandparent, aunt, or uncle) has made a positive difference in your life. Entries will be judged in three age categories: **Up to 9 years old, 10-14 years old, and 15-18 years old.**

The Rules

- All participating children must live in Idaho and be no older than 18 years of age. Children must live or have lived in a KinCare family in the past.
- Poems should be 20 lines or less.
- Essays should 200 words or less.
- Entries may be submitted on the entry form or on a separate white paper (8.5x11 inches). Make sure you include name, age, address, phone number and email (if available).
- Colored pencils, markers, pencil, or crayons may be used on any drawing. Make your artwork as big and bold as possible and add a statement that explains your drawing.
- Entries must be original, in English or Spanish, and unpublished
- Winners will be notified in early July and all decisions of the judges are final.
- We reserve the right of first publication and use of writings and drawings.
- All entries will be published in a 2014 book called My Family. My Story. that will be distributed to all participants.

The Prizes

- The top two (2) Entries in each division will receive \$100. All entries will receive a special gift from 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please call the Idaho CareLine at 2-1-1 or (800)926-2588 or email Norma Barrientos at barrienn@dhw.idaho.g

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Print your full name: _____ **Age:** _____

Your mailing address: _____

Email: _____ **Phone Number:** _____

Mail your entry form to: My Family, My Story **or Email your entry to:** barrienn@dhw.idaho.gov

C/O 211 Careline

P.O. Box 83720

Boise, ID 83720

Return or Postmark entries by May 31

Privacy Note: The information above is for awards committee members to contact you and will not be shared with third parties. Winning entries will be published with the child's first name only, age, and city. No other personal information will be given out.





Idaho KinCare Project

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