**When and how to draw the line with kids**

Adapted from *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee* by Wendy Mogel, Ph.D.

Here’s a simple formula for parenting: one-third love, one-third law and one-third sitting on your hands. The love part we intuitively understand. The sitting on your hands part just means turning a blind eye to minor transgressions, picking your targets and being judicious with discipline. The law part requires being tough and unyielding a third of the time, perhaps tougher than feels comfortable to you.

**The one-third law**

What could make you tough and unyielding? Behaviors such as setting a fire or torturing an animal clearly fall into the category of unacceptable. But other behaviors are in a gray area for which different parents have their own threshold of anger, concern or alarm. For example, when a five year old says “I didn’t break it, it broke itself,” some parents might see this as the age-appropriate fib of a child trying to wriggle out of a tight spot—while others might view it as a lie and a serious ethical breach.

From family to family, the same behavior is defined as feisty or rude, sensitive or cowardly, endearing or irresponsible, but in all families some behaviors cross the line of acceptability. To channel those behaviors in a constructive way requires not only enforcing a set of rules but also accepting kids’ temperament, respecting their limitations and shoring up their strengths. To figure out how to do this, we first need to answer two questions: Is my child’s behavior normal? And what part, if any, is a reaction to my own attitudes and expectations?

Learning about child development will let you know what to expect at each stage. For example, it will help you understand and deal with a suddenly crabby six year old or a morose, withdrawn seven year old.

**Check out your own behaviors**

Parents may not be directly responsible for a child’s inborn traits or for those that grow out of the influence of school, peers, the media and cultural values, but research confirms that we do have a significant impact on our kids’ character. So, it’s a good idea to see how your own “crazies” may be affecting your child’s behavior. Do you inflate small problems, avoid large ones, run into the same wall again and again, stubbornly sticking to ineffective strategies?

Talk to the experts. Check in with your friends, with other parents and with your child’s teacher. Before clamping down on your child, find out if changing your own behavior might help the situation.

**Another way to view kids**

If you can start to see kids’ worst behaviors as potential strengths, you’ll own the seeds of their greatness. For example, think of your stubborn or whining child as persistent, your shy child as cautious and modest, your...
Draw the line...

Continued from page 1...

bossy child as commanding and authoritative. Now ask yourself if you are giving your child opportunities to express those tendencies constructively.

For example, try giving Lucy, a bossy eight year old (excuse me, future CEO), chores like straightening magazines in the family room, sweeping the front porch and setting the table. She could be asked to remind you of upcoming events and teach her younger sister a new game every week. This way, even though Lucy may still need some help managing her interactions with friends, she will have outlets for her urge to lead and organize.

Reduce opportunities to misbehave

If you run into trouble with your child at certain times—getting ready for school, mealtimes, homework, bedtime—look for a pattern in the behavior and think about restructing the situation.

Watch out also for “meltdown” situations such as shopping for groceries with a hungry, tired child on the way home from day care or after a rambunctious birthday party.

Rethink your approach

Avoid using the words always and never. Don’t have impossible expectations like “always tell the truth” or “always sit still.” Read up on child development to learn how much you can realistically expect from kids at different ages.

Change your perspective. Instead of saying, “If only she would try harder, she would do better,” say “if only she did better, she would try harder.”

Let your child taste success. Be a talent scout. Find islands of competence. Catch kids being good and mention it. For example, say things like: “Your room looks great,” “I could not have pulled off the party without your help,” “Big thank you, Celia, for washing that smelly dog and to you, Michael, for helping Ilana with her homework.”

Don’t talk too much. Use words in moderation. Instead of trying to provide an instant solution to a child’s problem, be quiet and just listen. If you find yourself arguing with a child older than three, you are wasting your time. Their skills are better than yours. Be a role model, not a lecturer.

When it’s time for discipline

Removing stumbling blocks, recognizing children’s strengths and trotting out all the positive spin in the world is not always effective, however. Our kids will still do things we don’t want them to, and we will need to correct their behavior. As with many aspects of childrearing, some forethought and strategy can make this easier.

Be calm and collected. The trick is to discipline without shamming or labelling your child. If you are too upset to speak calmly, leave the room to collect yourself. Then say briefly how you felt about what your child did. Offer a face-saving comment: “I’m sure you didn’t think this through” or “Chloe, this isn’t like you. You are usually very kind to your sister.”

Focus on the present. Don’t drag in other problems, behaviors or attitudes or predict that this behavior will lead to something dire in the future: “I’m starting to wonder if it’s safe to leave you alone with your brother.” And don’t label kids, “You’re mean” or “you’re thoughtless.”

Tell kids the consequences of their behavior: “From now on, until I say it’s okay again, you are not allowed to go into my bathroom without asking.”

If punishment is required

Punishment may be necessary if a child’s unacceptable behavior was intentional or it was a crime of rebellion or a test of parental authority.

Punishment should happen as soon as possible after a misdeed, but that’s not always practical, for example, in a public setting. And wherever you are, don’t announce a punishment and then put it off. If you do not keep your word, your child will be less likely to take you seriously the next time.

When parents tell me that their children don’t care if they’re sent to their rooms or if their privileges are taken away, I always answer: “Oh, yes, they do.” The secret lies in our definition of “privilege.”

If we redefine most of what our kids consider to be “entitlements” as privileges to be earned, we will have a dazzlingly array of effective punishments available.

Think of it this way. Every child is entitled to certain basics, and everything else is a privilege to be earned. “Everything” includes software, fashionable clothing, sweet treats, television, mobile phones, bicycles—even those sandwiches prepared on the spot by mom.

To ease into that approach, try to avoid saying, “If you don’t do X (clean up your room), then you won’t be able to do Y (watch TV tonight). Change the “if” to “when” as in “When you finish cleaning your room, then you can watch some television.”

It’s good to make amends

The purpose of discipline is to teach both new attitudes and new behaviors. Making amends is a good way to convey precisely what a child did wrong—because now he or she is required to actively undo or repair the behavior.

Give children the opportunity to make a correction. For example, if a child loses yet another jacket, she could contribute from her allowance to make up for the purchase of a new one. Ask children for their ideas about what they might do to make up for their behavior. Talk briefly until you reach agreement about an appropriate restorative action.

Ask children how they would handle the situation differently the next time. If you agree that their response is probably true, you might say, “Okay, I’m sure it won’t happen again.” Hug your child to let him or her know that you are not harboring resentment. Then move on with your day.

—Adapted from the author’s book “The Blessing of a Skinned Knee” (see We Recommend on page 8).
Teen drinking linked to media habits

Q I have a 16-year-old and it just bugs me that kids her age are posting pictures of themselves on social networking sites drinking alcohol. Don’t parents see teenage drinking as a problem? Do they think it’s funny?

—M.B., Charlotte, NC

A Teen drinking is nothing to laugh at, especially in light of findings by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (see 2011 Survey of American Attitudes at www.casacolumbia.edu).

For the first time, the annual survey asked 12- to 17-year olds if they spend time daily on Facebook or other social networking sites: 70 percent said they do, 30 percent said they do not.

Of all the teens surveyed, 40 percent said they have seen images on social networking sites of kids getting drunk, passed out or using drugs. Compared to teens who had not seen such pictures, those who had were three times likelier to use alcohol themselves and more than twice as likely to say they were able to get alcohol in a day or less.

The survey also explored teen TV-viewing habits in relation to substance abuse. A third of teens surveyed said they watch programs such as Jersey Shore, Teen Mom, or 16 and Pregnant or dramas such as Skins or Gossip Girl in a typical week. Compared to teens who do not watch these suggestive shows, those who do are twice as likely to use alcohol.

The survey also found adult perceptions to be highly unrealistic: a large majority of parents said they think spending time on social networking sites or watching suggestive television programming does not make it more likely their child will drink alcohol.

The survey concluded that the “anything goes, free-for-all world of Internet expression and suggestive TV programming that teens are exposed to puts them at increased risk of substance abuse.”

Why it’s hard to remember a good joke

H ow come a really funny joke goes in one ear and out the other? Why can I still rattle off my decades-old ID number from college but can’t recall the name of an actor I see on a TV show that I watch every week?

Welcome to the human brain. It’s a “three-pound throne of wisdom with the whoopee cushion on the seat,” says science writer Natalie Angier.

Researchers are learning more about these all too common human tics and lapses. Columbia University neurologist Scott A. Small uses the analogy of computer memory. He says we have our version of a “buffer,” a short-term working memory with a limited scope. Our frontal lobes perform the “find” function, and we have a “save” button. It’s the hippocampus, an area deep in the brain that translates short-term memories into more permanent form.

Scientists used to think that short- and long-term memories were stored in different parts of the brain, but new findings suggest greater complexity. The difference between a fleeting and lasting memory has to do with how strongly it was engraved in the brain. The deeper the memory, the more robustly the brain neurons will fire.

Take music, for example

Michael Thaut, a professor of music and neuroscience at Colorado State University, explains that music is “a language the brain invented and loves to hear.” He offers the example of young kids who could not memorize a sequence of 26 separate letters to hear.” He offers the example of young kids who could not memorize a sequence of 26 separate letters given to them as a string of information. But if you set it to the tune of the ABC song with four melodic phrases, they can learn it very quickly.

A really funny joke, on the other hand, is akin to a mental “banana peel” that we’re more likely to slip on. Robert Provine, professor of psychology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, explains: “Jokes deal with the unexpected, starting in one direction and veering off into another. What makes a joke successful are the same properties that make it difficult to remember.”

Harvard psychologist Daniel L. Schacter agrees. “We humans are pretty good at gist recall but have difficulty with being exact,” he says. “Although anecdotes can be told in broad outline, jokes live or die by nuance, precision and timing.”

—Adapted from The New York Times

Time spent in the great outdoors benefits women

H ere’s another surprise from Mother Nature. She may indeed favor the fairer sex. The journal “Ecopsychology” reported a study of women who spend time gardening, camping or simply enjoying nature. Researchers found that the longer women spend outdoors—regardless of the activity—the better they feel about their body image.

Colorado State University researcher Gretchen Nurse reported similar findings from her survey of men and women on their environmental attitudes, time spent outdoors, and general interest in nature. She found that women especially seek out nature’s sensory offerings, and they are more likely to believe that nature has inherent value beyond its usefulness as a resource.

Women’s instinct to care for things probably extends to the environment, she says. But her findings also suggest that “women are wired to look at nature in a particular way—and that leads to a different sense of environmental concern.”

—Adapted from “Ecopsychology”

—Adapted from “Psychology Today”

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This is your column. We invite you to send questions about work and family life or tell us how you solved a problem that you think a lot of people face. Write: Dr. Susan Ginsberg, Work & Family Life, 305 Madison Avenue, Suite 1143, New York, NY 10165. E-mail: workfam@aol.com.
Look for the warning signs of elder abuse

Elder abuse is not as widely recognized as child abuse or domestic violence, but it’s a serious problem that will only get worse as our population grows older—if we don’t stop it.

Why isn’t it talked about more? For one reason, the great majority of elder abuse is unreported, often because victims protect the person who is abusing them. An elderly person may feel powerless to change a situation or afraid to say anything if the abuser is nearby—and some people would rather be abused at home than be sent to a nursing home.

Mistreatment can also be hard to detect. Because older people bruise and fracture more easily than young people, we don’t ask questions we otherwise might ask.

Abuse comes in many forms

Elder abuse can be physical, emotional, financial or sexual. It happens at home, in communities and in nursing homes. It occurs equally among men and women. The abuser is often the older person’s caregiver, an adult child, a spouse or another relative, or it could be a boarder in the home, an aide or an employee of a nursing home or other facility.

Abuse rarely happens because caregivers feel stressed out or resentful of how much care an older person needs, says Sharon Ostwald, Ph.D., of the McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics at the University of Texas Health Center. It’s more likely connected to a caregiver’s emotional and financial dependence on the older person or to alcoholism or legal problems.

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Here are some things to look for—and ask about—if you suspect that your older relative is being mistreated. Just be aware that some signs may suggest abuse, but look carefully; rarely does one sign by itself constitute proof of it.

Signs of physical abuse

- An untreated injury or an injury that seems inconsistent with the explanation of its cause.
- Frequent visits to the hospital.
- Doctor shopping.

Try to determine whether the older person feels that he or she is being treated like a child, humiliated or threatened with punishment. Find out what usually happens when the person and her or his caregiver have a disagreement.

Signs of financial abuse

- Personal belongings and/or credit cards missing.

Putting the emphasis on abuse prevention

If we accept as our responsibility the safety and well-being of our older relatives, we need to put our emphasis on prevention. Here are some suggestions from Trish Dayan, a social worker specializing in geriatrics.

Carefully check the references of in-home caregivers.
Do not allow anyone with a history of criminal behavior or alcohol/drug abuse to be a caregiver. If, for some very good reason, this is impossible, provide close supervision.
If you feel suspicious, drop in unexpectedly and consider installing a video camera.
Check state recommendations for elder facilities.
Talk with other families. Compare notes on choosing a facility or handling a difficult situation that may involve abuse.
Talk directly to the older person if you have a feeling something is wrong.

Signs of neglect

- Frequent trips to the hospital.
- Doctor shopping.
- Unusual bank activity.
- Checks made out to cash.
- The appearance of a new will at a time when an older person seems unable to write one.

It’s not easy to differentiate between financial abuse and an older person’s sincere desire to give money or possessions to a caregiver or family member. Try to determine if your relative was forced to sign a power of attorney or other legal document and generally how aware the person is of her or his current financial status.

An unavoidable issue

The problems of aging are impossible to avoid, says Marie-Therese Connolly, a lawyer and recipient of a 2011 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship for her work to focus national attention on elder abuse.

“Yet culture is not enthusiastic about embracing these issues.” she says. “We need to focus not just on the clubs and cruises aspects of aging, but also the frailty and incapacity pieces of aging—and have those conversations to prepare ourselves, both in our personal lives and as a nation.”

Connolly, director of the non-profit organization Life Long Justice, helped draft the Elder Justice Act that was signed into law in 2010 as part of the Affordable Care Act and awaits funding.
Dads don’t mother, they father…and that’s good

By Kyle D. Pruett, M.D.

M ost married couples these days fully expect to share the daily physical and emotional care of their children and the responsibilities of childrearing. Men as well as women are nurturing, and they want to feel emotionally connected to their children throughout life.

Some men speak with conviction about wanting to father their kids more actively than they themselves were fathered. At the same time, having happy memories of an involved, nurturing dad encourage sons to behave in the same way with their own children.

What dads do differently

Studies have also found that the things dads do differently seem to have a positive impact on children. For example:

▶ Moth ers tend to pick up th eir infants (usually to care for them) in the same way over and over. Fathers, on the other hand, pick up children to do something with them and pick them up differently each time.

▶ Dads use humor more. They tend to make everyday activities like bathing and dressing more physical and more playful than some mothers would like, and kids love this kind of interaction.

▶ Fathers support novelty-seek ing behavior by encouraging their kids to explore the world around them a bit more vigorously than mothers do. Men are also more likely to let kids master tasks on their own before they offer help.

▶ Moms tend to emphasize the relationship and social costs of misbehaving while dads discipline more with what they see as real-life consequences. Thus, a dad might say, “Don’t expect to have any friends if you’re going to be selfish with your toys.”

▶ Fathers adjust their speech patterns for infants but with older children tend to use bigger words and longer sentences than moms do.

Dads’ play tends to be more rough and tumble—and kids love it.

▶ Infants who have enjoyed positive interactions with their fathers have been found to be more likely to explore the world around them with vigor and interest. They tend to be more curious and less fearful. The combination of a father’s more active play initiation and his somewhat less immediate support in the face of frustration seems to promote a child’s adaptive and problem-solving skills.

By the time they start school, kids with hands-on dads are better able to wait their turn for a teacher’s attention. Young children whose fathers were involved with them in a positive way also displayed more self-control in unfamiliar social situations.

▶ The whole family benefits from a dad’s involvement. When a mother feels supported by the father, she is more patient, flexible, emotionally responsive and available to their children. Studies have also shown that when fathers are more affectionate and helpful to moms, siblings get along better with each other.

▶ Moms’ support of dads is just as important. Research has shown that when couples scored high on relationship traits like willingness to compromise, expressing affection or love for their partner, encouraging or helping a partner to do things that are important to them, and having an absence of insults and criticism, the father was significantly more likely to be engaged with his children.

When there’s no dad around

Of course, not all kids have a dad in their life on a regular basis. In this situation, how does a mother address her child’s fatherneed? It’s practically impossible to do it all by herself, just as it is for a father to completely fill the motherneed in the motherless child.

With the support of the caring, competent man in her life and in her community, however, a mother can provide her child with opportunities for ongoing and predictable physical, intellectual, spiritual and emotional interaction with men, experiences from which her child will benefit immeasurably.

What does ‘involved’ fathering look like?

Every dad can’t do it all, but here are some of the things he can do, says Dr. Pruett.

He can participate in infant care by changing diapers, bathing and feeding. He can help with homework and discipline. He can bandage cuts, drive kids to and from after-school and weekend activities, make trips to the pediatrician, and know his child’s friends, passions, fears and loves.

—Dr. Pruett is a professor of psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center and Medical School and the author of “Fatherneed” (Broadway Books), from which this article was adapted.
Staying close when you travel for work

By Doug and Polly White

For the first eight years of our marriage, Doug’s work required that he be away from home several nights a week, while Polly’s kept her mostly in Richmond. Absence may indeed make the heart grow fonder, as the saying goes, but it can also put a lot of strain on a relationship.

With increasing reliance on virtual technologies, employees are on the road much less these days. But in our global economy, some travel will always be necessary. Moms as well as dads will have to be away from home—often in different time zones and occasionally on another continent. Here are a few tips that helped us keep the home fires burning during this travel phase of our marriage.

Remember, business travel is not a vacation. It’s easy for the person at home to believe that living in a hotel, eating out, and having maid service equals a vacation. But anyone who travels a lot knows that it is much more enjoyable when traveling with kids. And while maid service is always a plus, a home that smells of mom’s cooking is much more comforting.

Find ways to do simple, everyday things together. When Doug was traveling, we used to watch TV together—thanks to cell phone plans with unlimited minutes to specific numbers. Before and during the show, we would talk to each other, make comments about the program, or simply sit quietly and watch until a commercial break. Doing the same activity made it seem like we were sitting together on the couch rather than hundreds of miles from each other.

We found other ways to spend time together too. Doug would call our home number each morning to wake Polly. She called him “my personal alarm clock.” We always talked the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night regardless of how busy our schedules were.

Find ways to share special occasions. With the advent of Skype, travelers should never have to miss happy birthday and sharing in family celebrations. One Halloween, when Polly was traveling (a rare occasion on a holiday that she always enjoyed), Doug stayed in touch by cell phone. As the doorbell rang, he greeted the kids and kept a running commentary going with each goblin, witch and princess, allowing Polly to feel like she was part of the action.

Actively work on your relationship. As much as you like to be together, people can get used to living apart. To keep the spark alive, make your relationship a priority. Talk to each other. Discuss your plans, goals, dreams, needs and wants. Reminisce about happy times. Tell each other about important and unimportant matters.

We used to “do calendars” once a week. This just meant reviewing our schedules together. We would also talk about what we were doing at work and at home, and what we wanted to do when we saw each other again. When you’re traveling for work, the point is to share more, not less. Fully involve the other person in your life so it will be as if they never left, when they return.

Make your reunion a joy. It’s easy for the person at home to save up chores and frustrations for the traveler. Your advice: don’t do it! Treat your time together as precious. Yes, there will always be chores to do and problems to solve, but don’t let them suck up all of your face time. Likewise, if you’ve been away all week, don’t spend your hours at home on activities that take you away from your family. Find a balance between must-do activities and time together.

We had a special “date night” every weekend—and truth be told, we had almost as much fun talking about and planning our dates as we did going out on them. The bottom line is, in whatever ways work for your family, make your time together so special that you can’t wait to see each other again.

The authors are management consultants and coauthors of “Let Go to GROW: Why some businesses thrive and others fail to reach their potential” (Palari Publishing).

Talking to kids about your travel plans

Age makes a big difference in how children respond to parents’ travelling. Here are some tips to make it easier—before you leave, while you’re away and when you come home.

With toddlers Say you’re leaving the night before with a minimum of fuss. For example: “When I’m away, we’ll talk every day, just before your bath.” But when you call, don’t be surprised if your child doesn’t want to talk to you. Let him or her hear your voice and keep up your goodbye rituals. “Good night, sleep tight, I love you.” When you return, don’t be upset if your toddler won’t talk to you at first. Try to help kids put their feelings into words.

With preschoolers Tell them about a trip a week or so before you go. Talk in terms of their schedule: “While Daddy is giving you breakfast, I’ll be taking the train to Washington.” And when you call home, check in with an adult first. This will help you ask your child more specific questions. When you get home, your child may be clingy or start testing your limits. To encourage caring behavior, help a child make a picture or welcome home sign.

With school-age kids Say where you’re going and how long you’ll be away when you know your plans. Share details about the trip, and be aware that children worry about your safety when you’re away. Kids this age are easier to reach by texting or email. They’re also more likely to accept your outings and going with very little fuss.

For kids at all ages Move slowly (and uncritically) back into the home situation, and reconnect with each child separately.
Healthy eating tips when you dine out

It’s easy to fall off the healthy-eating wagon when we dine out. Portion sizes are usually too big and restaurants use a lot more fat than most of us do when we cook at home. Here are five tips from diettian Lynn Goldstein of the Weill Cornell Medical College:

1. **Don’t be afraid to make healthy requests.** Ask for dressing or sauces on the side. Say “no butter” or “easy on the salt.” If portions are large, try splitting a dish with someone else or take the other half home.

2. **Avoid the bread basket.** It often leads to mindless eating. Limit yourself to one piece of bread while you wait for your dinner to arrive, or ask your server to hold the bread.

3. **Just because it sounds healthy doesn’t mean it is.** A lot of people think that if you’re eating salad, you’re eating healthy, but that’s not always the case. Salads often contain cheese, bacon, high-calorie dressing and other fattening ingredients.

4. **Skip the soda.** It’s easy to take in a lot of excess calories by drinking soda, wine and other high-calorie drinks. Water is always your best beverage choice.

5. **Don’t pig out.** Just because it’s on your plate doesn’t mean you have to finish it. On the other hand, skipping meals slows your metabolism, so you burn fewer calories—and if you skip lunch before you eat out for dinner, there’s a good chance you’ll overeat at night.

Goldstein suggests some more things you can do:

**Bring your lunch to work.** Planning ahead can help you avoid a trip to a restaurant during the day.

**Don’t eat mindlessly.** Sit down and enjoy each of your meals and an afternoon snack. In between that, drink water or tea. Avoid snacking on cookies and candies.

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Using the Internet wisely for health information

The Internet’s greatest strength is also its greatest flaw. Anyone can post just about anything on the Web, says Andrew Schorr, author of “The Web-Savvy Patient.” In our search for reliable health information online, Schorr suggests:

**Think like a consumer, not a patient.** Screen out “I did this, so you should too” kinds of advice. Be immediately wary of claims that someone has lifesaving information that the medical establishment doesn’t want you to know about.

A good place to start is with patient advocacy groups affiliated with national health associations, like the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society or the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

**Online patient communities** exist for most illnesses, and you don’t need to use your real name if you don’t want to. These communities can be especially helpful with problems related to a particular health condition. Join or start a listserv devoted to your particular illness or health situation. At the very least, other patients can also help you frame issues that you want to talk to your doctor about.

**Establish an electronic personal health record.** Include, for example: lab test results, diagnostic images, a list of emergency contacts, health insurance information, a medication log of drug names, dosages, pharmacies, immunization records, and links to useful Web sites.

Check out [www.patientpower.info](http://www.patientpower.info) for more information.
WE RECOMMEND

Raising kids to be good people, not just to feel good

We can all agree that we want our kids to become self-reliant, ethical, compassionate adults. But are we doing what it will take to accomplish this? The current trend is to shield children from emotional or physical discomfort.

“We tend to overprotect kids but at the same time expect a high level of skills and achievement,” says clinical psychologist and parent educator Wendy Mogel, Ph.D. in her wonderful book, The Blessing of a Skinned Knee.

“We cater to children’s whims yet pressure them to achieve at all costs—academically, socially, athletically...because we want them to succeed in a ‘new world,’” she says. But who knows exactly what skills a child will need 20 years from now? All we really know for sure is that the character traits of honesty, tenacity, flexibility, compassion and optimism will continue to be valuable.

With warmth and humor, Dr. Mogel provides advice on key issues: (1) teaching respect for adults, (2) doing chores, (3) keeping your expectations in line with your child’s temperament, (4) mealtime battles, (5) coping with frustration, (6) avoiding overscheduling, overindulgence and overprotection and (7) helping your child develop independence and self-control (see front page article)

She provides insights into the differences between how we treat boys and girls, noting that while we’ve come a long way in terms of gender equality, we’re still ignoring what she calls the “other protection” that boys and girls need: the protection of young boys’ natural rough and readiness and protection of girls from feeling that they must excel in everything all the time. If we want to give children what they truly need to thrive, she says, “we must honor their basic nature—boyish or girlish, introverted or extroverted, wild or mellow.”

While blending psychological insights with traditional Jewish wisdom, everything Dr. Mogel writes is appropriate and important for parents of all faiths and with children of every age. The Blessings of a Skinned Knee (Scribner, softcover) is available online and in bookstores.