

Promoting Responsible Fatherhood

Excerpt from Chptr 4(A) PAS PKG

The Case of the Fallen Father1):

Judy and Arthur M. had adhered to a strict custody agreement since their divorce, which they followed to the minute to reduce conflict. They afforded each other no leniency in meeting prescribed limits on time spent with their son, Jason, who was eight years old. Jason was well aware of the restrictive scheduling and parental conflicts. Therefore, when he and his father spotted each other at a mall while he was in the company of Judy and the stepfather, Jason was afraid to make a move toward Arthur. It was not his father's time.

Arthur decided to approach Jason, despite the custody agreement. He brushed by his former spouse and her husband, kneeling down to give his anxious son a hug. When the father stood up, he took a step backward, tripped over the stepfather's extended foot, and found himself sprawled on the floor. The stepfather, who was a large, ominous-looking man, remarked, "I guess you tripped. You should be more careful where you walk." Arthur was not really injured and decided to forget the incident to protect Jason from a potential conflict. He chose not to talk about having been deliberately tripped.

Later, thinking that he had observed something suspicious, Jason confronted his mother and asked whether the stepfather had indeed tripped his father, because his foot had been "in a funny position." Judy discounted his observation by telling Jason that his father had always been clumsy and that he should have been looking where he was walking. Further, he would never have fallen if he had not come over in the first place. Jason had been anxious about the serendipitous meeting and further upset when his father tripped. Jason went to his father and questioned him about how he had fallen. Sill protective, Arthur kept to his story of accidentally tripping. Unbeknown to him, he reinforced the mother's rewriting of history.

Parents are often reluctant to tell their children the truth, even when it could prevent damage. Many parents believe that it is more detrimental "to do the same thing" (talk to the child about the other parent) as a programming parent does. Such target parents must come to understand that protecting one's image and self-respect is just that - protection; and it is important for a child to have the truth in order to overcome the programming or brainwashing. Believing that a child will eventually come to an independent conclusion about what really happened is analogous to believing that the Tooth Fairy leaves money under a pillow. It simply doesn't work that way. Just like the tooth that disappears, so may the parent-child relationship.

Parents who try zealously to protect their children from gaining any knowledge of litigation over custody, nonsupport, and other issues often discover that their self-control has backfired.

The programmer/brainwasher enjoys free reign in promulgating propaganda as long as the

target parent is either unaware or chooses to remain quiet. Ultimately, it is far better for children to understand different perspectives than to believe a self-serving image put forth by a programmer against a target parent. Such target parents should be encouraged to protect their relationship with the child rather than to adhere to the belief that the truth will triumph because children eventually see the truth. Frequently, the relationship under fire never equilibrates due to irreparable damage and deep-seated, distorted beliefs. Target parents should not remain silent but must look at the results of nonintervention, thus dispelling the myths about the harmful effects of false protectiveness.

1) Stanley S. Clawar, Ph.D., C.C.S. and Brynne V. Rivlin, M.S.S., Children Held Hostage: Dealing with Programmed and Brainwashed Children, (American Bar Association) pp. 34-35.

-Anna Rivera
www.MediateNotLitigate.net
anna@MediateNotLitigate.net