

The Online Parenting Newsletter vol.6 no.9 Sep, 2005:

ADJECTIVES

All parents have fantasies about how their children will turn out. We see little Katie grown up in a power suit conducting a brilliant legal defense in a courtroom.

There's Mike, the astronaut, in our daydream. We bring ourselves down to earth by remembering all we really want is that they stay safe, do good at school, and grow up healthy.

But we do worry. Are we good parents? Are we spending enough time with the kids? Are we teaching them values? Will Katie's stubbornness or Mike's daring get them into trouble?

We signed on to this 24-7, 365 days-a-year, no paid vacation job known as parenting but we didn't realize we don't get a performance evaluation until the kids are grown.

A wise grandmother I met recently told me how she felt as a young mother. "I knew I had no control over what career path my children would take. So I started thinking of good adjectives people might describe my children with." She decided there were two adjectives she wanted people to use to describe her children as they were growing up and when they were adults: CONSIDERATE and CURIIOUS.

She encouraged her children to be both considerate and curious, she modeled ways to be both considerate and curious by acting in those ways herself, and she praised them for behaving in considerate ways and expressing curiosity.

It worked!

"Parents can pick any 'good' adjectives they want," she told me with a smile, "it's their decision." Sure it is, parents, feel free to pick your own. But as far as I'm concerned there's nothing wrong with CONSIDERATE and CURIIOUS.