

Unbox Your Child

Apr 26, 2015



"She giggled like a child." - a daughter says as her 90+ year old mother reacts to going into a Jacuzzi.

These words "**..like a child..**" having more meaning than those hearing or speaking realize. Remember when you first entered school and one of the first things they taught you was to FALL IN LINE? You reacted to the new rules with confusion, a moment of looking around at others, then finally shuffling your feet to follow the crowd?

The next day when the teacher said "Now fall in line.", everyone immediately started their shuffling to get in place.



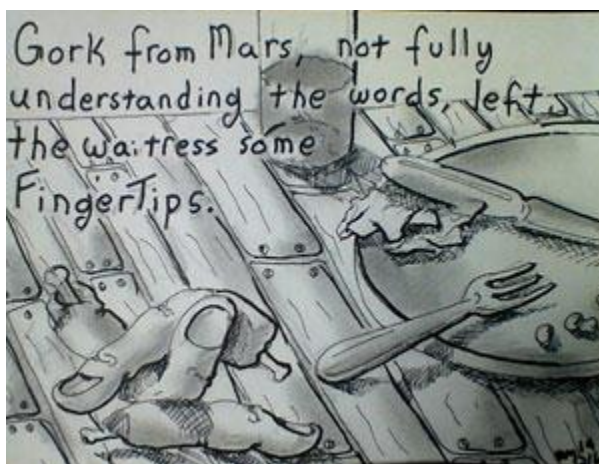
Then, as time passes, a child or two begins to resist the control. Maybe it is Johnny, or little Suzy, but, sure enough at least one of them will start to question why they are 'following' what doesn't feel natural.

They will pretend they do not hear the orders and look down at the little bugs on the path instead. Their eyes seeing how the bug has wings, six legs, and walks in such a weird way. Soon another type of bug is noticed and now both are watched. This is amazing!

"Wow, look at that bug raising those legs to...", Johnny is telling himself.

"JOHNNY, YOU GET BACK IN LINE!" - the order comes from the schools' staff.

And so, Johnny is pulled away from exploring nature and how it works. Later, he receives a one on one lecture from the teacher on how she does not appreciate him not listening and how he will receive a punishment if he does it again (maybe no gold star on his name, or after school detention?)



At a dinner table, do you recall 'playing' with your food, the fork, even the sugar packets? Building imaginary fortresses of food? If you turn your

fork sideways, place a small piece of food on the end, then slap down your hand on the other side, it will send the piece of food flying through the air, landing directly on the head of an adult at another table. You quickly turn your head in the other direction ("Food flying? Fork used? What? I don't know what you are talking about!")

But, you will probably be caught by an adult at the table, scolded for doing such a bad thing, and told...

"That is not the proper way to act at the table. Sit up straight! Stop playing with your food!"

As children, we are born with a large thirst for exploring, experimenting, looking at the moments in the world as chances to see/feel what is around us. When we are in the grass, we lay down and roll. Near some trees? Well now, they ARE 'meant' for climbing! See a puddle close by a friend? Stomp our foot down on the water and send the muddy liquid onto our friend's clothes ("YES!")



Watch a family walking down the street. The adults having 'adult' conversations, following the sidewalk, and not really seeing the things around them as they walk by. Meanwhile, the kids will be jumping off the sidewalk, walking on the rocks, grabbing a leaf and feeling it between their fingers.

This child approach to life and our surroundings is always within us. It is the boxing of those desires that causes our freedom to be caged, filtered and removed from sight.

Just as when you went to school, the workplace teaches us to conform to rules that push us into the same lines. You must dress a certain way that may include a tie, company shirt, dress shoes, or hard hat. Your words and actions are monitored for 'correctness'. At a meeting, notice how everyone keeps eyeing each other for the proper way to act at the table? Are you 'important' enough to speak up during the meeting? Did you sit next to the 'right' person? Is each sound and gesture you make judged by the others?

It is during the school, then the working years that our ability and wanting to explore the world, be silly, and experiment with things becomes boxed in by the rules and judgements of others. Each place placing another box around your previous box. Soon, your moments of pure 'joy', where playing just for the sake of having fun, being yourself, are contained within boxes within boxes.



However, even during these 'adult' years, you can see people trying to free their inner child. Notice that some 'doodle' on their paper while others talk? See most business men pull off their ties at the end of the day with a strong "ahhhh, glad to get that off." Observe some ladies yank the tight fitting high heels from their sore feet and replace them with flip-flops, sneakers, or even bare-feet with an obvious look of (freedom) on their faces as their toes wiggle in the breeze.

I am often asked, "How do you come up with those images, ideas?"

Even I don't know where/how my imagination creates things. But, I make a strong effort to not control my access to the things around me. Even yesterday, while waiting with a group of 'adults'

for a table at an (up-scale) restaurant, I found myself drawn to the bark pieces covering the garden area. I sat down on a brick wall near the pieces, picked one up, examined it, then pulled out my key-knife (about 1 inch long) and started whittling it into something. The others, however, were standing in a group, looking at their phones/watches, other things they have seen hundreds of times a day.

When our table was ready, I brought my new creation and placed it on the table. Everyone looked at it and smiled. Some of them picked it up, felt it, examine what 'it' was.

"There's Dave, being a child again." - one of them told the group.

(I didn't tell anyone, but, when I first sat down, I was wondering if my fork could launch something two tables away.)

Back in 2006, a newspaper reporter was interviewing me for my first children's book.

link to the article: <http://timeforyourmind.com/NewsArticle-20061114.htm>

During the interview, she recorded me saying "There is no box". Which was my way to telling her (and her readers) that I do my best to recognize that boxes are being put on me daily and it is my job to find times to open them up. I know I have to be 'professional' and do 'adult' things. I create Project Plans, design/implement networks/servers, write code and attend meetings/conferences. But, when it is lunch time, or a break, or other moments where I can get out of line, I look for chances to explore.

When you can, look at your own boxes, find moments during each day and **let your child out.**