

Child Guide

The magazine for families in the quad-state area!

www.childguidemagazine.com

November/December 2018



Frederick & Washington
counties, MD
Eastern Panhandle, WV
Frederick & Clarke
counties, VA
Franklin County, PA

Happy Holidays!

Conscious Parenting

Help Kids Give with Joy

NAPPA Awards: Best for the Holidays

**Calendar of Holiday Events and other
Family-friendly Things to Do**



Conscious Parenting:

An Open Dialogue to Raise Aware Children

BY JEANNE-MARIE WILLIAMS

I recently had the opportunity to interview Katarina Wallentin, author of *Clara and the Climate Changer*, a book Gabriel and I enjoyed, in which spirited 9-year-old Clara takes charge and with a never-give-up attitude obtains the attention of world leaders and navigates a solution for climate change. Ms. Wallentin was gracious to answer my questions about conscious parenting and having open discussions with our children about any topic.

So what is conscious parenting? I had heard the term before, and Ms. Wallentin explained, "Conscious parenting is about constantly questioning, including everything

and judging nothing...I am choosing to be an explorative parent. A parent who has chosen not to buy any of the available how-to-parent-perfectly packages and instead is willing to get it completely wrong at times... What if that is actually one of the greatest gifts you could give your child – showing them that it is ok not to be perfect? It's ok to make mistakes and get things wrong, because it's always possible to choose again."

Understanding that, why is it so critical to be a conscious parent at this time? "We're living in a reality that changes faster than ever. To be able to navigate it, we require a way of functioning that can keep up –

and consciousness is the fastest course-corrector I know... Consciousness allows you to choose, and then choose again in the next ten seconds. It doesn't require you to stick with, or defend, the direction you've originally taken. It has no point of view of your new choice, or judgement of your previous choice – as long as the choices are based on the awareness and information you have available at the time... The way I see it, we can't change the world if we hold onto what once was or keep judging things as right or wrong. The world is much bigger, much more complex and much more wondrous than that."



Snips & Snails Photography

SNIPS AND SNAILS PHOTOGRAPHY
** Now offering in-hospital (fresh 48) newborn sessions **

Organic Newborn Portraits Art since 2005 | www.SnipsAndSnailsPhotography.com | 717.597.0952

I knew implementing conscious parenting would be a lifelong process, but I was not sure where a parent would begin. "There is no right way of being a conscious parent... I would suggest starting with letting go of everything you've bought as right and wrong about parenting, from relatives, friends, books, magazines and TV... For me, this is when my parenting auto-pilot finally shut off; when I stopped taking on everyone else's point of view and started to ask questions to find out what actually worked for me and my daughter... You have to be willing to be wrong. As parents, we really want to do everything right. We want to be good parents. In fact, many of us want to be 'perfect' parents. The only way to truly implement conscious parenting is to stop judging yourself for not getting everything right. If you have to judge everything you say, do or choose when it comes to your children and family, you cannot be in the question. You're too busy making sure that you don't make the wrong choice!"

Conscious parenting and engaging children in open discussions leads to children who are aware. In *Clara and the Climate Changer*, we see Clara as a youngster with a heightened level of consciousness and awareness. During her journey, when she begins her mission to change the world,

"...she picks up the package with the climate-changer from the ground, [and] at that moment, when she realizes that she is the one that has to do this, that no one else will, she becomes totally present, and her awareness peaks. She now knows exactly what she needs to say and do to be the catalyst of change required for any person, or in any moment..." Using her awareness, Clara goes on to enable everyone she meets to become a change agent. That is not to say that Clara does not meet with opposition in the book. Clara encounters an antagonist who is referred to as the "grumpy lady." I asked Ms. Wallentin about how we can use Clara's interactions with this character as an example to teach our own children about managing negativity. Ms. Wallentin explained, "Well, what Clara does in the book can work really well to navigate any grumpy and negative person. Clara basically notices that the lady is grumpy. However, she doesn't do anything with it, resist or react, align, or agree. Even more importantly, she doesn't try to change the grumpy lady, or make her happy. That is not her job... Her job is to keep moving, inspire the world and get the climate-changer to the highest point in the city. Her engagement is more powerful than the grumpiness, and from my experience, that is true in real life as well..." This really resonated with


me. For my own part, I have spent way too much time trying to placate others or smooth over tense situations. I love the reminder that it is not my problem to solve. In the case of Clara, at the end of the story, even the "grumpy lady" reaches back into her memory and explores new possibilities. But even if she had not, it was not Clara's responsibility to lead her to that point.

So many parents I know struggle with feeling a need to compete, compare, or measure up against other parents; this wears on them and leads to self-doubt and negativity. Perhaps if we spent more time being conscious and less time judging, including ourselves, parenting would feel a bit easier. "It is a bit strange, and to live a fully conscious life, one of key steps, in my point of view, is the willingness to receive everything, and judge nothing... It is also important to know from the start; you will never 'get there.' Parenting is a life-long journey – and an exciting and rewarding one at that!"

Jeanne-Marie Williams is an analyst and a single mom who delights in homeschooling her son and taking him on adventures. She has too many hobbies and too little free time. She particularly enjoys finding humor in every day life and serving as her family's historian.

**Enter
Child Guide's
2019 Cover Kids
Contest**

See info on page 3
for how to enter.
Include 2 photos, as well as
contact information and
permission to publish.



**Consider becoming
a part of our ELC
community; "We
don't only enroll the
child, we enroll the
entire family."**

Educare Learning Center
2538 Jefferson Pike • Jefferson, MD • 21755
Located on 22 Wooded Acres Directly off Rt. 340/MD 180
301-834-9007 educatewithcare.com
Pre-school & Child Care Programs Serving Children 8
Weeks to School-Age 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. (License #05870)

MSDE Accredited • MSDE Approved Curriculum •
MSDE Approved Education Program • EXCELS Level 3



**The Light
of the
Child**
Montessori School

We've Moved!
You can find us at St. Peter's
Lutheran Church, Shepherdstown

Accepting applications for
2, 3, 4 to 5 year olds

thelightofthechild-montessorischool.com
(304) 268-7075
Serving Jefferson County for over 10 years!