



Better Moms Make A Better World

To Encourage Your Heart

The Cost of Character

My two sons and I screeched to a halt and investigated the treasures at Target. At this particular aisle we found an oasis of clearance candles. I'm a candle lover with keen olfactory senses, so inexpensive, delicious smelling candles are a cheap thrill! I lifted the sensibly priced luminary hopefuls to my nose. <Sniff> *Hummm...smells nice, but not a keeper.* Or so I thought.

Approximately 2.032 seconds after I returned the votive candle pack, I heard glass crash. *What was that?* A quick analysis revealed that in one sweeping turn, my big-honkin'-momma-purse knocked them off the shelf and into numerous shards below.

I shooed my boys away from the jagged circle of destruction and rationalized...*Well, they're on clearance, Target won't miss em'...this is just an accident, surely they won't make me pay for them...who puts glass candles on corner aisle shelves...did anyone see this?*

My boys stood statue still; their eyes the size of pizza pies. As I knelt down to pick up the sharp pieces I felt more than just the power of their eyes upon me. This was not the moment to just get through. This was the moment to make it count. One of those don't-want-it-to-be-but-it-is-what-it-is learning moments.

How completely inconvenient.

I picked up the remains of my pride and candles and placed them gingerly into my red plastic picnic basket.

Instantaneously, my six year old questioned, "Why are you putting them in your basket Mommy? They're broken."

"I know, honey, but it was just an accident. And accidents happen all the time." *Isn't that what I tell them when the inevitable milk spill occurs at every meal?*

As we trudged toward the checkout lane, I was irritated at having to spend money on something I knew I'd just be throwing out. I hoped the cashier would somehow get me off the hook with some version of, "Oh don't worry about this honey, you don't have to pay for these."

But that's not what happened.

No, my middle aged cashier gave me something much more valuable than cheap words for cheap candles, "Wow, boys, you have a very honest Mommy." As the red scanner glowed to register my new candles, my heart illuminated too. I could have cried right there.

I want to raise little boys that will grow to be men of character. When their life appears to be cracked and in pieces, I want them to do the next right thing; to build a life of good choices brick, by brick. I realized then, that the "character bricks" are cemented when they observe good (or bad) examples.

Former Oklahoma US representative J.C. Watts said it best, "Character is doing the right thing when nobody's looking. There are too many people who think that the only thing that's right is to get by, and the only thing that's wrong is to get caught."

I'm grateful now that I made that moment "count". There have been far too many that I fast-forwarded through because I'd rather compete in another round of spazz-nastics than the character balance beam. Character always costs something. Sometimes it costs energy, time and even money. But that day, true to Target's motto, I "expected more and paid less." Our character lesson was just a tad over \$3.

Later that year, our then first grade son was peer-voted the first "Star Student" of his class. The criteria was based on character, character that I believe was strengthened by glass shards that once surrounded average smelling candles.

For more about Steph, please visit her web site at: www.encouragedinheart.org

"A smart wife sees through her husband. A good wife see him through"

-Charles L. Allen



"The problem with cleaning the house is it gets dirty the next day anyway, so skip a week if you have to. The children are the most important thing."

-Barbara Bush

101 Ways to Praise A Child

Wow ♥ Way To Go ♥ Super ♥ You're Special ♥ Outstanding ♥ Excellent ♥ Great ♥ Good ♥ Neat ♥ Well Done ♥ Remarkable ♥ I Knew You Could Do It ♥ I'm Proud Of You ♥ Fantastic ♥ Super Star ♥ Nice Work ♥ Looking Good ♥ You're On Top Of It ♥ Beautiful ♥ Now You're Flying ♥ You're Catching On ♥ Now You've Got It ♥ You're Incredible ♥ Bravo ♥ You Care ♥ You're A Good Friend ♥ You Make Me Happy ♥ You Make Me Laugh ♥ You Mean The World To Me ♥ You're A Joy ♥ You're Perfect ♥ You're A-OK ♥ That's the Best ♥ Say, I Love You ♥ You're Fantastic ♥ Hurrah For You ♥ You're On Target ♥ You're On Your Way ♥ How Nice ♥ How Smart ♥ Good Job ♥ That's Incredible ♥ Hot Dog ♥ Dynamite ♥ You're Beautiful ♥ You're Unique ♥ Nothing Can Stop You Now ♥ Good For You ♥ I Like You ♥ You're A Winner ♥ Remarkable Job ♥ Beautiful Work ♥ Spectacular ♥ You're Darling ♥ You're Precious ♥ Great Discovery ♥ You've Discovered the Secret ♥ You Figured It Out ♥ Beautiful Sharing ♥ You're Important ♥ You Belong ♥ You Brighten My Day ♥ You're A Treasure ♥ Awesome ♥ My Buddy ♥ A Big Hug ♥ Fantastic Job ♥ Hip, Hip Hooray ♥ Bingo ♥ Magnificent ♥ Marvelous ♥ Terrific ♥ You're Important ♥ Phenomenal ♥ You're Sensational ♥ Super Work ♥ Creative Job ♥ Super Job ♥ Fantastic Job ♥ Exceptional Performance ♥ You're A Real Trooper ♥ You Are Responsible ♥ You Are Exciting ♥ You Learned It Right ♥ What An Imagination ♥ What A Good Listener ♥ You Are Fun ♥ You're Growing Up ♥ You Tried Hard ♥ I Trust You ♥ Outstanding Performance ♥ You Mean A Lot To Me ♥ You've Got A Friend ♥ I Respect You ♥ That's Correct ♥ You're Wonderful ♥ A+ Job ♥ You Made My Day ♥ A Big Kiss

P.S. Remember, a smile is worth 1,000 words!

Register Today!**Ellie Lofaro****"Motherhood Smotherhood"**

Our April MOMSnex meeting will feature Ellie Lofaro, well-known speaker, author, and teacher. Her message is a wonderful blend of plainspoken truth, common sense practicality, and disarming humor. Please register in advance by going to:

<http://momsnexaprilerevent.eventbrite.com/>

Doors will open at 6:30pm. Dessert will be served. Bring a friend! Registration deadline is April 7. There are a limited number of seats available.

Run 4 Kids

COME JOIN US!!! Melodie Mandanis and Beth Thomas (members of MOMSnex) are organizing a 5K in our local community to benefit and make a difference for the Adama Orphanage in Ethiopia, Africa.

Where: Prison Fellowship Ministries - 44180 Riverside Pkwy #100, Lansdowne, VA

When: Saturday, 3/26/2011

Time: 8:30 AM

How to Register: <http://www.active.com/running/leesburg-va/run4kids-5k-2011> or paper registration forms will be available at the next meeting.

After Melodie took a missions trip to Ethiopia and adopted her son, Tam, she vowed to never forget the desperate conditions she saw the children of Ethiopia living in. She has partnered with an orphanage to help make a difference for the children in Adama, Ethiopia. This race will be raising money for uniforms, school supplies and funding for a 2nd location so they can help more children.

Door Prizes...

Our yummy door prize was provided this evening by Mary Anne Klank. Mary Anne has started a wonderful business here in Loudoun County "Providing Hand-Crafted, European style chocolates without the fear of cross contamination from nuts and peanuts." To contact her and order for Easter call: 703-855-6479, or see her web site at: www.simplynutfreechocolates.com

It's A Win Win

Support MOMSnex (we win) by donating items for the annual Christian Fellowship Church MOPS Consignment Sale. Stacy Sircar is collecting gently used items in Ashburn and Kristen Mason is collecting in Sterling. For more information, contact Stacy at slsircar@verizon.net or Kristen at masonkt@msn.com.

Then shop 'till you drop (you win) at the sale on March 26th at Ashburn Elementary School. For more information, see the MOPS web site at:

http://www.cfellowshipc.com/pages/page.asp?page_id=10076

Tagging parties

Join us at Stacy's house for a little fun and fellowship while we tag all of the donations for the MOPS consignment sale. We will be getting together the weeks of March 14th and 21st. Contact Stacy for more information at 703.724.1620 or slsircar@verizon.net.

Thank you to our sponsors!

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