

Inquiring Minds: *Protecting Children and our Inner Child*

#45 Sept- Oct, 2017 "The most sophisticated people I know—inside they are all children." Jim Henson

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LET CHILDREN ENJOY THEIR INNOCENCE

On the tenth anniversary of 9/11 our grand daughter's second grade substitute teacher decided to mention that blight on human history to her class. What she was told we do not really know, except that little Lois, sharp and inquisitive, later that evening asked her mother, our daughter, what 9/11 was all about. Even the most gentle telling of the tragedy "really upset" her. When I heard this I was concerned that a seven-year-old was exposed to an awful happening, far removed from her tender years. As it is, their little world is full of challenges and fears of their own. Why add more!

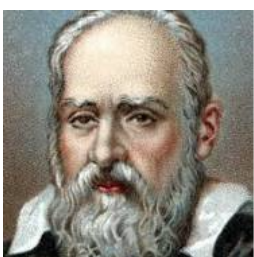


Lois in the North Beach Library *

More generally, how and when does one proceed when teaching the tragedies of human history (WWII, the holocaust, hurricanes, and human suffering and tragedy) without disillusioning and/or depressing our youth? These are important questions to consider. (*The above picture inspired [this](#) little poem written a year before.)

COMING OF AGE IN EDEN: A PERPLEXING DEMAND FROM AN DICTATORIAL DEITY

Why would the mythical God in Genesis forbid the mythical Adam and Eve to eat fruit (later supposed an apple) from "the tree of knowledge of good and evil"?



Galileo Galilei

Was this god trying to protect Adam and Eve from losing their innocence? Was it just a test of their loyalty? Was it a story to illustrate the power of myth over that of knowledge or science (from the Latin scientia)? Was it used to silence people like [Galileo](#) whose discoveries put the literal interpretation of the Bible in jeopardy? Was it to impart wisdom: be careful what you expose yourself to, for you can be damaged by the exposure? See [wiki](#)

for other sources and interpretations of this creation story.

PROTECTING OUR OWN INNER CHILD

Each of us harbor a child within, the fountain of joy, humor, love, innocence, trust, etc., the first fruits of our parents' love and training. Some adults house wounded children, but all of us have an inner child we must protect from what we feed ourselves, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

In this age of instant and oh so transparent communication, care must be given to what we send on and what we take in. Patricia and I screen movies, TV news and shows, and books very carefully before we invest our time and general mental health in what we watch or read. Our time and well-being are most valuable.

Some of the harshest words in the New Testament from Jesus were reserved for those who scandalize (or abuse) children: "If anyone causes one of these little ones to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea." (Mark 9:42) Then again there are the Eight Beatitudes which extol the pure of heart, the peacemakers, the meek, the merciful, and the pure child within.

ABOVE PROBLEM UPDATE: RESOLVED

Soon after this writing and seeking permission to share this first story, our daughter told us she contacted the principal, who spoke to the substitute. The latter expressed extreme remorse in an admitted error of judgement, and the principal sent Lois a beautiful personalized [presentation/letter](#) reassuring her that she would always be loved and protected from the upsetting news around her. It was a teachable moment for all.



Saluting and honoring the children in our lives, in the world, and in us all. Best to us all. -Joe