

Visit With The Utays

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School Psychology and Education Specialists

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Dr. Joe Utay, graduate of University of Pittsburgh, is a school psychologist, marriage and family therapist, author, national speaker, teacher, clinic director, and father. He earned tenure as a professor training counselors and school psychologists and is now Director of Counseling and Evaluation Services for TLC and part-time professor for Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Carol Utay, graduate of University of Pittsburgh, is an expert in curriculum, learning, special education, and technology. She has experience as a principal, teacher, consultant, national speaker, professor, author, and mother. "Dr. Carol" is Executive Director of Total Learning Centers. The Drs. Utay live and work in Wexford with their daughter Andrea.

Do Something Difficult this Summer

Invite your children to visit you in Possibility Land.

"My kids always take the easy way out. Whether chores, homework, or learning a sport or musical instrument, they are quick to find the laziest way to do what they have to do. Even if they are really into the activity, discovering a shortcut is as thrilling as unearthing buried treasure. How do I get them to see the value in old fashioned hard work?"

Don't confuse "discovering a shortcut" with "taking the easy way out." Shortcuts along the path to completing a task make sense if they save quantities of time, money, stress, etc. without sacrificing the qualities of either the process or end product. There are legitimate ways to be more efficient. The danger is in crossing the line from shortcut to short change.

(Prepare to sigh, roll your eyes, and shake your head from side to side.) The best way to help others, such as your children, learn this valuable life lesson is to model it yourself. Yes, we know- easier said than done. Even more important though than modeling a specific behavior is modeling the life-enhancing attitude that energizes it. More specifically, **it is an appreciation of possibilities that can result from difficulty that is valuable.** As an English proverb puts it, "A smooth sea never made a skilled mariner."

We have been greatly influenced by the counselor-writer Bill O'Hanlon who co-wrote, "A Guide to

Possibility Land." In it he suggests counselors focus more on what is possible than what has gone wrong or is too little, too much, or too absent: "... and I have become passionate about spreading the word that there is a route from misery to happiness, from frustration to success. I call that route Possibility Therapy."

What we are suggesting therefore is a route you could call Possibility Parenting. Do something this summer that is clearly more challenging than you would normally take on. Do it anyway. Do it out where everyone can see and hear what you are doing and most importantly where they can learn from your appreciation of possibilities. Make your attitude as clear as Emily Dickenson's: "I dwell in possibilities" as one more way to help your children prepare today for success tomorrow.

Please ask! For more information and great websites to help with education challenges, visit the Total Learning Center website: www.TotalLearningCenter.com or call (724) 940-1090 for a free copy of a TLC CD full of useful information for parents.

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