

Hyun Jin Moon's Family Peace Association: Learning through the Eyes of a Child

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Recently, I was reminded as a father just how much our children help us grow.

Our two-year-old has recently been more adventurous: climbing on the dining table, toppling and standing on our full laundry basket to play with the light switches, and accessing the kitchenware including our assortment of spices to make his own medley displayed on the table and floor. It was a pleasant surprise because observing him, he seemed to be the most cautious one among our children. Yet with every month that he is getting older, he seems to be showing his true character more and more.

Our family went to a neighborhood park over the weekend. It was a nice park with many walking trails, fields and courts for sports teams to play in, and playgrounds for various ages. When we got to the playground area, our son immediately found his target challenge - the arched ladder. I have never seen him climb this type of ladder before. Naturally, when he reached where the ladder curved, the most dangerous part, I began to spot him in case he missed his step or lost his balance. I was worried that he might fall in-between the rungs or hit his head on the metal. He was having trouble on the last two rungs where he couldn't quite figure out where to place his hands and feet. In the end, I helped guide him to take his last steps to the platform. The smile of victory on his face when he secured his footing at the top was unforgettable. I was proud of him because he kept going until the end, even though it was with his dad's help.

But what surprised me was that he went back to the starting point and tried again. He did it again, and again, and again. And each time, I worried as his "spotter" and had to continue to assist him in the same rung where he would get stuck. I reflected on this and admired his innocence and purity. Undaunted by feelings of fear, doubt or failure, he diligently kept at it and tried again.

In the words of Jesus Christ, unless you "become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." I find tremendous wisdom in those words. I have forgotten the spirit of youth. Our ability to dream and imagine possibilities is limitless. Yet, as we age, what we believe to be possible tends to diminish. Our outlook on life is framed over time by what we deem as "life experience", but is often simply fear of failure.

It was a profound moment watching my son continue to play. I reflected on where my own zeal and tenacity to pursue what's worthwhile may have gone. I was reminded that I should not be encumbered by my own limitations. There is still much for me to learn and more growing for me to do. As a parent to my children and as their primary educator, the example I set and the path I walk is that much more important. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "I will not follow where the path may lead, but I will go where there is no path, and I will leave a trail." How I view my life and pursue that life becomes what is possible not only for me but for my children as well.