

PARENTING PROFESSIONALS ENDORSE *THE PARENT'S TOOLSHOP*

This book is dynamite! It is packed with tons of practical ideas. I keep it by my bedside and recommend it to the parents with whom I work. – Dr. Dennis O'Grady, founder of New Insights Consulting Services and author of *Taking the Fear out of Changing*

A wonderful contribution. In the fourteen years I have worked with children with emotional and behavioral issues, your presentation is unique in addressing some obvious problems and problem-solving skills parents can use. – Linda Nicely, LSW, Supervisor, Youth Services Network of Southwest Ohio, Inc.

The philosophy and overall presentation is the most comprehensive, consistent, and impressive I've seen. It is well organized, well-received by those who use it, and conveys a sense of joy and commitment from the author. – Pam Bonsper, M.A., Carmel, CA

This comprehensive book and its advice are built on a solid foundation of research and real-life application. I highly recommend it to any parent who wants to dramatically improve their relationship with their child. – Deborah Critzer, Positive Parenting

An excellent resource for helping parents raise secure and responsible children. It provides an easy-to-follow guide for parenting children of all ages. I highly recommend this for all families. – Sylvia Rodberg, Elementary School Guidance Counselor, Springboro Community Schools

It is so nice to finally find a resource that has screened and chosen ideas from other resources for me, because there are some things in other books I disagree with. I can completely trust that it is comprehensive *and* accurate. – Marla Hurst, Adult Education teacher

An outstanding resource for practical, effective, and easily adoptable parenting methods. Anyone who is a parent, contemplating parenthood, or interested in understanding effective parenting will be richly rewarded by reading this remarkable book. – Robert L. Seufert, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Marriage and Family Dept., Miami University

A model, a map, a guide, an organizer, a conceptual framework—by whatever name one might want to call it, this book helps parents access the wide, wide world of parenting ideas. – Sandra Taylor, MSW, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, University of Dayton.

A valuable resource, not only for parents, but for grandparents, relatives, babysitters, teachers, care providers—anyone who influences a child's world. – Wendy W. Gordon, Child Safety Advocate and Author of the *I'm Safe!* Series, published by BackYard Books

I chose this book over others, because of the clarity and consistency with which it addresses an amazing range of parenting issues. In fact, by using the universal blueprint, it addresses every possible parenting dilemma. – Holly Anderson, M.Ed., RN, NCC, therapist

A complete and well-organized toolbox — very helpful, well organized and easy to use. I'm impressed with not only the content of the book, but also with the heartfelt writing style. – Charlene Costanzo, author of *The 12 Gifts of Birth*

PARENTS APPROVE OF *THE PARENT'S TOOLSHOP*

The Parent's Toolshop is great! I've looked up specific questions and found easy workable solutions. It was truly beneficial to me in dealing with my children, adult relationships and learning more about myself. – – Jacki George, mother of two children

This book is incredible. Every chapter is so comprehensive; I learn so much. When I finish a chapter I think the next one can't possibly be as good—but it always is! I've read many books by the likes of Scott Peck, Stephen Covey and Melody Beattie. *The Parent's Toolshop* pulls it all together and shows you how to *live* these revelations. This book is *not* just about parenting. – – Jeff Smith, father of two teenage daughters

I have read numerous magazine articles and books on parenting, attended lectures, and met with counselors. Yet, I have never found a resource as thorough, well-organized and interesting as *The Parent's Toolshop*. The most rewarding aspect was seeing positive results at home with my son, who is diagnosed with A.D.D. These techniques really work!! – – Rebecca Streeter, mother of one child

No matter how skilled you think you are, this book can give you very effective ways to parent that you never thought of before. – – Rudy Thoms, father of two children

This is the most complete practical guide to human interaction I've ever read!
– – Wendy Adams, mother of two children

My wife and I have agreed more about our parenting in the past three weeks than we have in the past three years! – – Joe Hood, father of two children

I like how the book puts everything into an order that is easy to follow and speaks in a language I can understand. Plus, there are examples so we can relate to our everyday lives.
– – Karen Brooks, mother of two children

The greatest benefit of reading *The Parent's Toolshop* was self-awareness—recognizing my own feelings, speech, and actions. I now feel like I have the knowledge and hope to be able to work on our challenges. – – Elizabeth Valencia, mother of three children

Parenting is never easy, but this book makes it easy to understand.
– – Mike Lowery, father of eight teenage children

This book has absolutely changed my life. Not only have I learned more effective parenting skills, but my entire style of parenting has changed! I am so much more calm, confident, and consistent. – – Amy Reed, mother of two children

The Parent's Toolshop is my parenting Bible! I keep it close at hand and refer to it daily.
– – Cynthia White, mother of three children and home day care provider

"This 'system' is amazing! I thought it might prove overwhelming, but it leads you along effortlessly as you collect and put to use all that you find. The dialogues alone make the book priceless. Thanks for a tremendous resource." – – Susan Kendrick, mother of two children



*The Universal
Blueprint for
Building a
Healthy Family*

by Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW
Cartoons by Mick Wells



The Parent's Toolshop: The Universal Blueprint for Building a Healthy Family

Published by Ambris Publishing

P.O. Box 343

Springboro, OH, 45066

(513) 748-4541 ♦ (888) 415-1212 ♦ fax (513) 748-4620 ♦ www.parentstoolshop.com

If unavailable in local bookstores, additional copies of this and other publications by Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, may be purchased by contacting the publisher listed above.

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Cover design by Eric Norton of The Jenkins Group, Inc.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 99-65065

Library of Congress Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Pawel, Jody Johnston.

The parent's toolshop : the universal blueprint for building a healthy family / Jody Johnston Pawel ; cartoons by Mick Wells.

– 2nd ed. – Springboro, OH : Ambris Publishing, c2000.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN: 1-929643-34-9

1. Parenting. 2. Child rearing 3. Interpersonal communication. I. Title.

HQ769 .P39 2000
649/ .1 – dc21

99-65065
CIP

THE PARENT'S TOOLSHOP:

The Universal Blueprint for Building a Healthy Family

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Dedication

To Chris and Amber —

my inspiration in the past,

my fountain of joy and love in the present,

and my symbol of hope for future generations.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Ah, political correctness. To avoid offending anyone and help everyone feel included, writers must be very careful. Readers can easily misunderstand a writer's intent. For example, one editor said the use of an exclamation point (!) implied yelling—but I use it to express excitement, surprise, or to send a smile or laugh to my readers! The most difficult situation, however, is when a writer is talking about one person. Using “he” is sexist and using “he or she” is awkward and distracting. To avoid sexism and confusion, I will use plurals like “children” and “they” whenever possible. Don't be offended if you have an only child, just substitute the word “he” or “she,” depending on your child's gender. Try not to get hung up on whether I use “he,” “she,” or “they”—the *point* is what's really important.

Similarly, the word “children” refers to all humans under the age of 18. Teens usually don't like people referring to them as “children,” so I try to avoid this. The term “children” does refer to teens, however, unless the statement specifically mentions a particular age group. I know some people dislike the word “kids,” since children are not baby goats. Now and then I use the term, when I want to be less formal or word something the way a parent might actually say it. I also use “people” to refer to both adults and children when the skills are useful in any human relationship. I always try (in everyday life) to be sensitive to others and not offend anyone, but I avoid using “politically correct” statements that sound ridiculous. If I accidentally exclude someone, I apologize. I trust you to be understanding and to interpret what you read in a way that applies to whatever gender or age you choose.

Every story in this book is true, including my family's personal experiences. I want others to benefit from the lessons these experiences teach, but I also want to protect the privacy of the people involved. As a result, the names have been changed.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

This book is designed to provide information about parenting and other relationships. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher and author are not engaged in rendering therapeutic, counseling, legal, or other professional services. If you require counseling, private consultation, or other expert assistance, you should seek the services of a competent licensed professional. While this book is the basis for Parent's ToolshopSM parenting classes, it is not an equivalent replacement for direct, professional instruction by a certified Parent's ToolshopSM Tour Guide.

Every effort has been made to make this manual as complete and accurate as possible. However, there may be mistakes both typographical and in content. It is not the purpose of this manual to summarize *all* the information that is available to the author, but to complement, amplify and supplement other texts. Furthermore, this book only contains parenting information that was available as of the printing date. You are urged to read all available materials, learn as much as possible about parenting and healthy relationships, and to tailor the information to your individual needs. For more information about other resources, see the references in the endnotes.

For many people, the skills in this book have improved their family relationships, prevented problems from developing or worsening, and resolved long-standing conflicts. There is no guarantee, however, that these same results will occur for each reader. No one book can account for all the individual circumstances or needs of its reader so use your better judgement when applying the book's advice.

If you are attending a Parent's ToolshopSM class, be sure the instructor is a certified Parent's Toolshop Tour Guide by checking to see if the instructor has a current identification badge. While Tour Guides must complete a thorough certification process, they cannot be held liable for their advice. Handle your concerns directly with them before filing an official complaint with Parent's Toolshop Consulting, Ltd. *The author, publisher, or their representatives shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity for any behavior or problems alleged to be caused, directly or indirectly, by the information contained in this book or a Parent's ToolshopSM class. If you do not wish to be bound by the above, you may return this book in resalable condition to the publisher within 30 days for a full refund.*

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I want to thank God—for giving me the honor and privilege of being raised by my parents. Without them, I would not be who I am. Thank you, also, for choosing me as Chris and Amber’s mother. They have filled my life with more joy and lessons than I ever thought possible. Thank you for the endless energy and patience you have given me to complete this project. Whenever I felt discouraged, you sent me some sign that you were by my side, which spurred me to continue. I hope I can be a worthy messenger of the lessons I’ve learned and help even more families with this book.

To Mom and Dad — thanks for your endless unconditional love and your faith in my abilities. I trust your advice and appreciate your encouragement and support. Thanks for being such positive role models: as parents, social service professionals, amicably divorced ex-spouses, happily remarried spouses, and as loving, helpful, honest, humble people. Thanks, Connie and Jim, for being supportive, encouraging stepparents and wonderful grandparents. You *all* are terrific parenting “partners.”

To Chris and Amber—thanks for being such wonderful children. Each moment with you is a precious gift. You unconditionally love and forgive me, in spite of all my imperfections. Thanks for showing me the value of these skills through your behavior and examples. I appreciate your permission to share our personal stories with others. I especially appreciate your understanding of the importance of my work and my need to be gone so much, teaching parents. Thanks for giving me the extra time and space I needed to finish this book. I hope I’ve been there for you when you needed me most and also when nothing special is going on and we just hang out together and talk. Thanks, Chris, for the late night shoulder rubs and Amber, for bedtime hugs and angel stories.

To my husband, Steve—thanks for being my best friend and partner in this lifetime journey of self-improvement. You’re always there to give me support when I’m ready to give up and to remind me of the value of this book. I appreciate your sound business advice and your sense of what’s *really* important in life. Thanks for understanding my driven nature and for *making* me take breaks, to smell the flowers, see the birds, and watch the garden grow.

To the thousands of parents I’ve met through my parenting programs—thanks for your excitement and encouragement. Through you, I realized the possibilities of the Universal Blueprint’s application in all areas of life. Thanks for asking tough questions that cause me to stretch my knowledge and skills to the limit. Thank you, also, for your evaluations and suggestions, which helped me develop a program that is practical, user-friendly, and highly successful. Thank you for allowing me to share a part of your lives and to be a positive source of change. And thanks to all of you who have shared your stories—which make me think, laugh, and cry—and for allowing me to share them with others.

To the thousands of professionals who have participated in Parent’s Toolshop continuing education training programs—thanks for your commitment to giving accurate advice to the parents with whom you work. Thanks for sharing *The Parent’s Toolshop* with parents and enthusiastically encouraging me to produce other products to help professionals and meet the needs of the parents you serve.

To Elaine Jelly, Ron Eckerle, and Carrie Morris of Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley—thanks for your enthusiasm and support of the Families Count Project. The United Way outcome evaluation mandates helped prove what parents kept telling us—the skills work and improve families’ lives. Thank you for family-friendly work policies that help me balance work and parenthood. A special thanks to the late Denny Breidenbach, my mentor, for suggesting I venture on my own as an author and speaker and for his support and faith in my potential.

To the other Parent’s ToolshopSM Tour Guides—thank you for your belief in *The Parent’s Toolshop* and for teaching the parents I can’t reach. I highly value *all* your suggestions for program and leadership development. Thank you for showing me the many ways to adapt the program for diverse populations, while remaining true to its universal principles. I appreciate your sense of commitment to the preservation of the integrity and quality of the program. Thank you, also, for expressing

your unique teaching styles; you've shown me the potential I have for self-improvement as a leader.

To Nancy Shockey, my content editor—thanks for helping me tame this monstrous manuscript. You have just the knack I needed: getting to the point, cutting length, but keeping the heart and soul intact. Thanks for all the extra read-throughs you've done, to help this book be as comprehensive, user-friendly, and as short as possible. Your suggestions have taught me to be a better writer. I especially appreciate your occasional notes and funny comments. They were a refreshing break as I waded through pages of edits.

To Cindy Lanning, my editor, proofreader, and formatter—thanks for your dedication to this project, despite computer problems, summer break distractions, and personal obstacles. Thank you for enlisting help from DPS Associates to help meet our deadlines. A special thanks to Crystal Chapin for coordinating your troop of editorial and layout experts—you all are true miracle workers.

To Mick Wells, my cartoonist—thanks for taking my ideas and turning them into cartoons. I especially appreciate your patience with this project. I had no idea just how long the process would take.

To Tom Helmers at EPIC Printing—thanks for helping me keep up with the local demand for the book. I appreciate your expertise in pulling all the parts together and keeping a stock of books flowing. We would have never kept up the pace without your hard work.

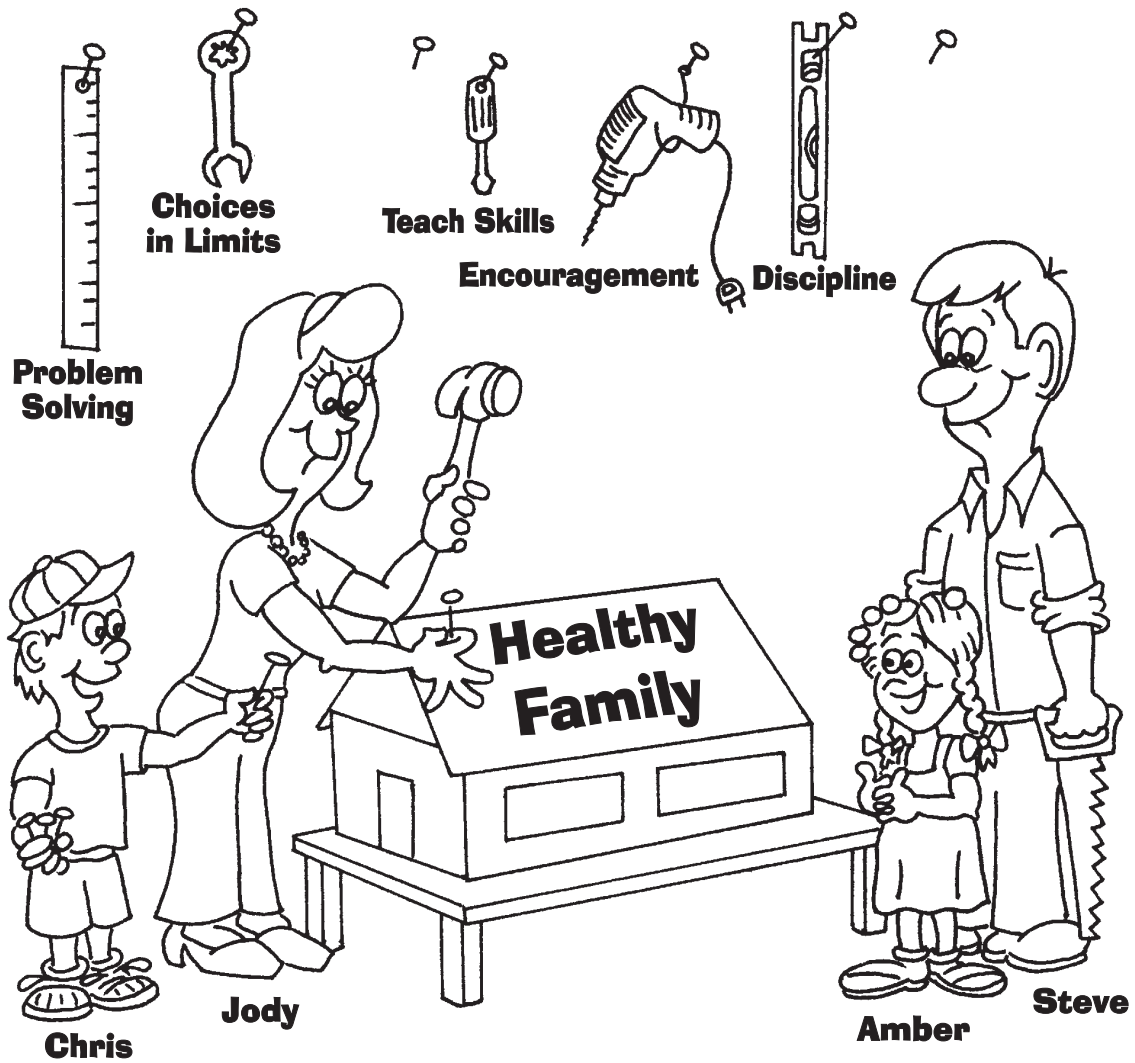
To The Jenkins Group, Inc., especially Susan Howard, Nikki Stahl, and Barb Hodge—thanks for your sound publishing advice and for coordinating this production project. I appreciated your patience throughout the many decisions I had to make and your expert advice, which helped create a professional high-quality book.

To MarketAbility, especially Tami DePalma, Bradley James, and Kim Dushinski—thanks for reading *The Parent's Toolshop*, in full, so you could put the right *twist* on its promotion. Thanks for your patience as I pulled together the production and distribution details. Most of all, thanks for arranging magazine, TV, and radio interviews before the book was even in print.

And thanks to everyone who has enthusiastically spread the word about *The Parent's Toolshop*. Whatever success comes from this book, I owe it all to you.

— Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW

INTRODUCING YOUR TOOLSHOP TOUR GUIDE



INTRODUCING YOUR TOOLSHOP TOUR GUIDE

Welcome to *The Parent's Toolshop*. I'm Jody, your Parent's Toolshop "Tour Guide." This book is part of who I am and it reflects my personal and professional life. I want to share a bit about myself so you understand my perspective and why I believe so passionately in what I teach.

My Childhood Experiences with Parent Education

I've been *involved* in parent education since I was eight, when my parents took a parenting class. I was old enough to remember what my parents were like before the class and to recognize the positive effect their new skills had on me. Both of my parents taught parenting classes for ten years and my mother continued teaching parenting in Christian* settings for over 30 years. I helped my parents make audiotapes for their classes. I'd play the role of a snotty-nosed, bratty kid and they'd use a communication or discipline skill to respond. This was my first realization that some parenting techniques are more effective than others and parenting classes can be a fun place to learn these skills.

My parents, like parents today, took a parenting class because they wanted to do the best job they could. They wanted to bring up their children differently than their parents raised them. They wanted their children to have a strong sense of self-worth and values and be responsible and self-disciplined. They wanted to have open, trusting communication with their children and resolve problems in healthy ways. My parents succeeded in all these areas. As a child and teen, I listened to friends' stories about their parents. I realized my parents were not typical and counted my blessings. Even as a teen, I could talk to my parents about almost anything. I trusted them and they trusted me. They weren't perfect parents, but I always had tremendous admiration and respect for them. Although I was not a perfect child, they always showed me unconditional love. When they needed to correct me, I was often both surprised and impressed by their positive, helpful responses. My parents taught me life skills such as decision making, problem solving, effective communication, budgeting, and time management. Through their words and examples, they taught me values such as honesty, self-discipline, accountability, compassion, and faith in God. I will share some of my experiences as a child raised with the skills this book teaches.

Because of my upbringing, people think that I am an exception—that parenting skills come naturally to me, that I had perfect parents, and we had a perfect family. None of this is true. Each member of my family is imperfect, and we have learned important lessons and skills through very trying experiences.

My Personal Family History

Effective parenting skills help many families avoid and solve problems—but children also interact with people outside the family. These people can traumatize children from even the best of families, which is what happened to my family. I want you to know what happened to my family so you know that I *can* understand the frustration *every* family member experiences in a troubled family. I can attest from *personal* experience, that the skills I teach *can* improve situations that seem hopeless.

*While this book teaches ideas that are *consistent* with Christian beliefs and values, it is written for the general public, which represents many religions and nonbelievers. Many people use this book to provide parenting programs in a variety of religious and non-religious settings. There are a few references to God, but these could apply to almost any religion, not just Christianity. If Biblical references are important to you, feel free to do your own research or call Ambris Publishing's toll-free number to request our free handout "Guidelines for Christian Parents," which has scriptural references correlated with *The Parent's Toolshop* toolsets.

Each member of a family can have a different family experience. It's all a matter of perspective. Many things influence this opinion: one's personality, experiences, and interpretations of events. My parents viewed our family from an adult perspective. From my perspective, my relationship with my parents and childhood was ideal (with a few exceptions). My brother, who is five years older than I, experienced a totally different childhood.

When my brother was nine, he was playing with a friend deep in the woods behind our house, when a teenage boy grabbed and molested him. In the early 1960s, children didn't learn about good and bad touches or telling grownups about inappropriate advances. The shame and trauma my brother felt caused him to keep this event a secret. He could not, however, forget what happened. He had difficulty concentrating in school, his grades went down, and his teacher held him back in the fourth grade. My parents were concerned about his school problems, but didn't realize a deeper problem might be the cause. (Parents were not informed then about warning signs or symptoms of child sexual abuse.) They followed the teacher's advice, but over the next several years his problems only worsened.

My parents took their first parenting class in the late 1960s, when my brother was about 13. Drugs, sex, rock 'n roll, long hair, and permissiveness were everywhere. The society in which they were raising children was drastically different from anything they expected. In his teen years, my brother became involved in a rock group that exposed him to drugs as a popular lifestyle. Since my brother denied his drug use, my parents and the professionals they consulted were unable to accurately diagnose this problem. Drug addiction was a new phenomenon; professionals knew little about specific drugs, the symptoms of addiction, and treatment methods. When my parents consulted psychologists, they received unhelpful or inadequate advice. My parents' new parenting skills worked well with me, because I was a younger child who had never been traumatized. With my brother, however, the skills brought limited improvement. Although my brother and parents received counseling, we never received family counseling, which was a relatively new treatment back then. I realized then, that siblings are often the forgotten "patients" in family problems.

My brother's problems started when I was four, so we had only a brief positive relationship. Seeing his behavior and my parents' concern, I subconsciously decided that my role in the family was to be the good child. (My parents didn't compare us this way. I put myself in this role.) I tried to do everything I could to be the perfect child. I did my best to put on a perky, chipper front and not burden others (including my parents) with my problems. I thought we had to appear to be a perfect family, and often I felt like I was leading a double life, public and private.

At home, my brother teased me, belittled me, and played cruel jokes on me. If I told my parents, he'd treat me even worse when they were gone. I found I could get revenge on him by rubbing in my successes. We were in a vicious cycle and either ignored each other or argued when we were together. Most of our arguments occurred at breakfast and dinner, when we ate as a family. I tried to hold in my emotions, but they'd spill out unexpectedly. If I watched *Lassie* on television, I'd cry for hours. When I was 13, I had stomachaches that were so painful I was hospitalized for a week. Holding in my feelings had literally made me sick—even I didn't realize how deeply things were bothering me.

By the time I was a teenager, my brother's behavior and emotional problems had worsened to the point that there was obviously something serious going on. Since his sexual abuse and drug addiction were still secrets, efforts to help him had only a limited effect. When he tried to detoxify himself, he experienced severe withdrawal symptoms and became violent. Not knowing he was addicted, doctors diagnosed these symptoms as a mental illness, but medication that should have helped only made him more withdrawn and depressed. The doctors and therapists told my parents to give up any hope of him being well again. They said he'd never hold gainful employment and suggested he claim a disability and live off government support. Now he was not only dealing with the pain of childhood sexual abuse, drug addiction, and being the "problem child," but he also had to overcome the stigma of being labeled

mentally ill. While my parents had no choice but to believe the diagnosis, neither they nor my brother were willing to accept the hopeless prognosis. Fortunately, they believed he could be healed and whole again and continued seeking new treatments. Remarkably, the first breakthrough came when my mother's college professor offered two suggestions: "get him out more and involve him in meaningful activity" and "see that he gets good nutrition." Massive doses of vitamins balanced and restored his depleted body chemistry, which improved his depression and recovery from drugs. His involvement in Bible studies and a Gospel music group brought joy into his life again.

At the age of 23, my brother finally told his therapist, and then my parents, about his molestation and drug addictions. With this new information, it was clear what the *real* problems were and why previous efforts had not been successful. By combining spiritual, psychological, nutritional, and behavioral treatments, my brother started rebuilding his life. Only then did the parenting skills seem to have a greater positive affect. His progress was steady, with occasional setbacks. The real turning point in his life and the key to his total healing was his spiritual conversion.

My brother's adult life has focused on becoming totally healed and whole again. Today, he has a master's degree in pastoral counseling and counsels other victims of sexual abuse or drug addiction. Faith, hope, love, courage, and my brother's hard work and determination helped make possible what others said was impossible. Whatever guidance my parents and God provided, my brother deserves the credit for turning his life around.

My Professional Training

During our family's healing years, we all learned a lot about psychology, healthy families, and good mental health. Our efforts to heal our family resulted in each of us changing (or starting) careers as helping professionals. (My mother is a therapist and the Founder/Executive Director of a Christian counseling center. My father is the retired Executive Director of a juvenile diversion program and an accomplished artist.) When I was 17, I attended my mother's parenting class—the only teen in a class for parents of teens. This experience gave me an early insight to a parent's point of view and helped the parents see a teen's perspective. I was impressed with my mother's teaching style and the way the skills helped me in *all* my relationships. It was then I decided to become a family social worker.

I have a special sensitivity to sibling, teen, and parenting issues, because of my life experiences and training. In college, I researched sibling violence and learned how to prevent, identify, and treat all forms of abuse and unhealthy family relationships. I worked my way through college at a teenage runaway shelter and campus counseling center. On summer breaks, I worked with inner city teens. After graduation, I received my social work license and worked with abusive and neglectful families in a unit that specialized in sexual abuse. It was the early 1980s and there were few parenting classes available. Because of my background and experience, several employers asked me to teach parenting classes, although I wasn't a parent yet. (You can guess how much credibility I had with parents!)

The Birth of *The Parent's Toolshop*

I married in 1983 and our first child, Chris, was born in 1984. When my maternity leave ended, I couldn't bring myself to leave my son, so my husband and I made a difficult financial decision—I would become a mom-at-home and pursue my career from home-based businesses. The next year, a local newscaster asked me to be the co-producer and on-air child care expert for a weekly television series featuring safety tips for parents. It only required me to be away from home several hours a week. When the series ended, my son was still young and I was starved for adult companionship. I started a mom-at-home discussion group called The Family Network, which is still going strong more than ten years later.

I wrote *Shared Blessings: Creating and Facilitating Stay-at-Home Parent Discussion Groups* to help other parents start similar groups around the country.

To help myself be a better parent and to share my knowledge with other parents, I taught parenting classes for the next eight years, in my home and other parents' homes, using several popular parenting curriculum kits. While I agreed with everything these curricula taught, I continually experienced two problems. First, parents had difficulty learning certain skills, because they hadn't learned foundational skills that the curricula said to teach later in the class. For example, parents had a difficult time disciplining effectively if they hadn't dealt with their own power and control issues. I was constantly jumping around the chapters so parents could better learn and understand the skills. Second, I kept finding other resources that had valuable suggestions, so I kept adding extra reading assignments to help parents get the most comprehensive parent education possible. I was constantly searching for—and frustrated at never finding—one resource that had *all* the skills parents needed to learn that was presented in a logical order that made their learning easier and more effective.

My daughter, Amber, was born in 1989. When she entered preschool in 1992, I began a job at Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley, in Dayton, Ohio, teaching parenting classes to inner city families. I needed one comprehensive resource but still hadn't found one on the market. Plus, the program had no funds for books but was told I could make copies of any notes I wrote on my own time. That's when I began writing *The Parent's Toolshop*, although I didn't know it would turn into a book at that point. At night, after the kids were in bed, I'd write down the practical tools I had found over the years and organize them in a logical, useful order. For each, I'd add suggestions to help parents use the tools to their greatest potential and avoid common mistakes. Over the next four years, the parents in my parenting classes (through CSSMV and my private classes) field tested the program and its tools, offering suggestions for improvement and testimonials of its effectiveness.

I learned through trial and error that the tools were especially effective if parents learn and used them in a particular order. I designed the Universal Blueprint flow chart in 1990 and the house diagram in 1992 to provide easy *visual* ways for parents to remember these steps. During the four year field-testing stage, I taught the Universal Blueprint to over two thousand parents and professionals in a variety of settings. After several weeks of using the skills, many parents were bursting with excitement because of their success. Many said, "These skills have helped my marriage" or "I even use the tools at work!" I realized that this Universal Blueprint was a useful guide for *any* relationship. When I needed to develop a new presentation, for teachers, businesses, or group leaders, I simply referred to the Universal Blueprint and developed new programs faster than ever before.

Requests for my programs were so great I couldn't meet the demand, so I trained more leaders before the first edition of this book was complete. Within six months, there were over a dozen certified Parent's ToolshopSM Tour Guides throughout the state of Ohio and people were calling from around the country, because they'd heard about the success of Parent's Toolshop programs. All this happened strictly by word-of-mouth, with no publicity, *before* I had finished the final revisions to the first edition of this book. By 1999, when the second edition was complete and ready for national distribution, there were over two dozen Tour Guides throughout the United States.

I know that there will always be parents and professionals who want to learn about *The Parent's Toolshop*, but can't take a class. I wrote this book especially for these people. I have included everything I say in class and tried to answer all the questions parents frequently ask. Yet, my goal is not to give parents all the answers, although I do give hundreds of ideas to try. My goal is to empower parents with the knowledge and skills they need to think for themselves.

In Summary

I have spent most of my professional life researching and writing this book. I have devoted more years to its development than I have been a parent. The process has felt like a *very* long pregnancy: I've been pregnant for over ten years (researching and developing the program), in labor for three years (writing at all hours of the day and night), and pushing for two years (making final revisions and changes). After putting so much of myself into this creation, I feel just as protective and rewarded as a mother feels when she holds her newborn in her arms for the first time.

I know how hard it is to be a parent. I want to offer ideas and support from an educated, experienced, and practical perspective. While my personal experiences have affected my opinions, I don't select tools that simply fit *my* beliefs. I include those tools that are accurate, healthy, and proven effective over time for the families who use them consistently and appropriately.

I am *not* a perfect parent. I have old habits and personality traits that are a challenge to my effectiveness as a mother, wife, and person. I still struggle to master some of the skill I teach and keep trying to improve myself. (I will share some of my parenting mistakes and successes and what I learned from them.) Although sitters and strangers often comment on my children's good behavior, they are still learning and growing, which provides me with my fair share of challenges.

While many of the tools are now second-nature to me, it is because I was raised with them and get constant practice from teaching parenting classes almost every day. Any parent who works with these tools and practices them daily can feel they are second-nature, too. Whether you are looking for a miracle or a boost of confidence, these tools will be an important part of your efforts to be a positive, effective parent.

Parental love might come naturally, but effective parenting skills are *learned*. It takes constant practice to develop and maintain them.