

EMPOWERING CAREGIVERS, STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

LEGACY OF LOVE

A Resource Parent's Story

As a resource parent partner, I am involved in trauma-informed care training. One of the first things we do in the class is to ask people to think about what they would like their legacy to be. What is it that they would like those who they interact with to receive from them?

The very first time I was asked this question, I knew that the legacy I wanted to leave was love. Love is a word that isn't used very much in the area of social services. So, first I want to clarify what I mean by "love." Most people would define love as "unconditional regard for another" or "an intense feeling of affection for another." For me, love is oneness; it's a feeling that you "see" the other person and identify with him or her, and he or she feels that way, too—even if just for a few minutes or seconds. By this definition, I can leave a legacy of love with the clerk at the grocery store, the person I smile at as I pass by on a busy street, as well as with all of the people in my life. You don't have to know someone or be in a relationship with someone to leave a legacy of love. When I open my heart and give my attention to another, I am communicating oneness. I identify with the other person as a fellow human, regardless of our apparent differences.

I have opened my heart and let the energy of love shine for every foster child who has lived in my home. Not every placement has ended well or happily. But time and time again, when I see one of the kids who left us under difficult circumstances, they greet me with a huge smile and they ask me how I'm doing. After we catch up for a few moments, more times than not, they say, "I'm sorry for all that I put you through," "I can't believe how wild I was when I lived with you," or "I'll never forget how good it was in your home." I know that the energy of love shared in my home created a bit of healing for each and every wounded soul who spent time within it, regardless of duration or the immediate outcome.

It seems like every morning when we wake up we are met with another story of death, violence, or human beings hurting and hating one another. These stories can make the most positive person really wonder what is happening. We all get to choose how we respond or react to these realities. Do we react from a place of fear, picking a side and demonizing the other guy? Or do we respond from a place of love and open our hearts up to send the energy of love to all people? I believe it is human nature to feel oneness with one another. We see it all the time when great tragedies occur: strangers helping strangers, people lining up to donate blood, rescuing someone from a flood or fire. When the situation demands goodness, human beings respond with courage and love. This human tendency is what sustains me; it is what moves me to open my heart to every child who comes through my door, regardless of his or her circumstances.

Love is what is needed now. I will continue my commitment to leave a legacy of love with every person, whether I agree with him or not, because I know that love dissolves fear.



So, what is your legacy? What wonderful quality within you wants to be revealed and shared with others? What would our world be like if everyone thought about leaving a positive legacy with the people they interact with? Maybe that seems like "pie in the sky," but I can tell you for sure that one person sending loving energy from her heart has touched hundreds, maybe even thousands, of people. It starts with claiming your legacy and then committing to one thing that you can do today to assure your legacy for tomorrow. This world has never needed you more!



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