

# LISTENING TO YOUR INSPIRATION

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*If I Were Your Daddy . . . I'd find out what inspires you.  
Then I'd help you build a successful life around it so you  
live in your genius.*



Once when I was in Brisbane, Australia, a lovely woman attended one of my presentations and afterward asked if I could do a consult with her son.

“Certainly,” I said.

“Let me give you a little preface,” she began. “I’m a single mom. He’s sixteen years old, and he’s lazy. I want him to work, but all he does is sit in front of his computer playing video games. He’s not doing any sports, he’s not working, and he’s just a lazy slouch. Can you fix him?”

I smiled and said, “Well, I’m not going to fix him, but I will certainly chat with him.” So I went and sat down with him and said, “What’s up?”

He went, “Oh, nothin’.”

“Your mom asked me to chat with you.”

He said, “Yeah, she’s on my case.”

I asked, “What do you love doing? What are you up to?”

“Well, I’m just doing video games,” he responded, with his head still buried in one.

“What video games do you love the most?”

He said, “Well, I love doing animation and stuff.”

I asked, “Do you love computer video games?”

“Yeah.”

“Are you pretty good at them?” I asked.

“Yeah.”

“Do you love actually developing your own games and being creative like that?” I asked.

“Yeah,” he said.

“Do you know a lot about computers?” I asked.

“Yeah.”

So then I asked him, “What kind of creative activities can you do on your computer?”

“All kinds of creative programming.”

And we kept chatting, and after an hour of hearing about all that he could do I asked him to help me develop part of my website.

When I came out of the room, his mother said, “Well, did you straighten him out?”

“No, I *hired* him.”

“What?” cried the astonished woman. “You hired him?”

“Yeah,” I said, “he’s quite gifted when it comes to computers.”

“You’re joking!” was all she could come out with.

You see, this woman knew almost nothing about computers, so she was projecting something from her generation onto her son, expecting him to go out and play sports and get a job at a hamburger joint or something. I said, “Your son, right now, is a little genius with computer software programming, and very shortly he will probably have his own software development company and make more money than you could have ever imagined, and then you might just be eating some of your words.”

I continued, "Right now, we're living in a computer era. It's something you've repressed, so he's specializing in it. My advice is to go and find out what your son is doing and see if he can't put it into action, doing projects related to what he loves."

He did the website work and a software project for me, and he was brilliant at it. He's now twenty-three and making more money than his mom. Her values were that he should be working and making money, and once her values were being met, she was fine. But originally she was projecting an expectation onto him that didn't match *his* values, so she experienced nothing but resistance. He wasn't really lazy; he was only

seemingly "lazy" according to her values.

*He was inspired within his own values.*

Children are always inspired doing what they value most. As a parent, you have to find out what that is, capitalize on it, and let your child excel at it. He and his mother get along differently now because she's recognizing his genius.

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I have three beautiful adult children: two daughters, Alana and Breccia, and a son, Dan. Two of them work for me, and one does research for me while he's in college, so we've remained close. One of my main guiding principles in parenting was not to impose my values onto my children. Instead, I encouraged them to be congruent and authentic

to themselves. I firmly believe that all human beings, starting right from childhood, have their own natural genius. Whenever they are living congruently with their own highest values, they awaken that genius.

When I wanted to communicate something to one of my children, I *first* found out what was important to him or her. After asking some simple questions, I then communicated my message in terms of whatever that was. For instance, when my son, Dan, was little, he went through a

phase when he was very into Pokémon. If I took him to a Pokémon movie, he just loved it. If I asked him about Pokémon, like what was his newest Pokémon card, he loved it. But if I talked to him about something else, he didn't relate to it. If I asked him how he was doing in school, he'd go, "Uhh . . ." But if I asked him what he learned in school *relative to Pokémon*, he'd open up! When I communicated to him in the *context of his interest* and bridged out from there, he was engaged.

From Pokémon my son moved on to music, and during that period I had to listen to his music (a bit) to know how to relate to him, just like my parents had to listen to mine. During this period I asked him questions like, "What lyrics are you enjoying the most? What do you get from it?" By asking him about what was important to him, he would open up with me.

A child's values are going to evolve, so as parents we are wise to be observant and adapt. Just like adults, children are always demonstrating what's important to them through what I call "twelve value determinates." I look at how they *fill their space, spend their time, spend their energy*. What *energizes them*? How do they *spend their money* when they get it? Where are they *most organized, most disciplined*? What do they *think about* and *talk about* most, *dream about* most, *converse about with their friends* most? What are their *long-term goals* and *what inspires them*?

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If I tried to impose something on one of my children that wasn't in his or her value system, it would basically bounce right back to me, and I'd get a "Huh?" and a blank look. Instead, I paid close attention to their values, and as long as I related new ideas and concepts to the things that were important to them, they'd listen. Just like in sales, if you communicate your message in other people's highest values, they are more apt to buy.

At one point one of my daughters was struggling a bit in school, so I asked her what classes she was having the most difficulties with. I then helped her to think about how those subjects related to her own interests (her values at the time), because if she could make that connection, she could turn things around and likely be more inspired by the process. If not, she was going to bomb that class. It's that simple.

Whether they're aware of it or not, human beings live and make decisions according to their higher priorities and values. And whenever they are living congruently, their genius emerges. They are inspired. They can't wait to get up and do it. When my son loved video games and wild music, I didn't negate it; I just went with it and whenever possible expanded on it. "Let's go look at the video store and explore all the video games," I said. "Who are the heroes and icons in your games? Tell me a few ways they're similar to the ones in history or literature class."

In his Pokémon era, we went to the Pokémon store and I said, "Learn everything you can. Master Pokémon so you know everything about it, and you'll gain confidence with your knowledge." Well, he was so inspired he threw himself into this task and eagerly learned everything he could. This wasn't work; it was an inspiration, because we want to learn about

what's most inspiring to us, and our confidence grows when we're able to do what's most meaningful to us.

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Marilyn Wilhelm is an extraordinary teacher I had the great privilege to study with. By the time her

students are nine, they are learning multiple languages, religions, sciences, and philosophy. By age twelve or thirteen, some of them have become professors at universities. These are initially ordinary children. Critics didn't believe she was able to do this, so they gave her random children from Harlem in New York City, some of them troubled crack children. Within five years she produced the same kind of results.

She did this by first finding out what each child's genius was and what was inspiring to that child. She memorized the top five values of each child and let the children excel at everything they did. She would say, "Okay, Joey, you're interested in music. In 1927, what was the number-one music at the time? I want you to find that out for me. And Shaquille, you're into finance, you want to be a wealthy guy. What was the banking system doing in 1927 and who started that banking system?" She'd get them all involved in whatever they were interested in. She then had them teach the others what they learned, so everybody was listening to everybody else. Each child was the hero and the leader in the class.

## LOVE WHAT YOU DO AND YOUR CHILDREN WILL LEAD AN INSPIRED LIFE

Historian Jacques Barzun said, "A successful education whets the appetite of a person to learn, so for that human being's entire life there's a constant desire to learn more about everything." This was what I wanted for my children, and for all children.

If children are inspired by what they do, they'll not only excel at it, they'll be training themselves to always do what they love. One day they'll wake up and find themselves living an inspired life—doing what they love in life. Unfortunately, 99 percent of the population doesn't do that. They don't live true to their own lives and subordinate themselves to the authorities around them. They have Monday

morning blues, Wednesday hump days, and thank-God-it's-Fridays. The way to prevent this is for children to discover early what's inspiring to them *and then go out and live that*, whatever it is. I may not agree with it at times, but that's not my job. My job as a parent is to understand that it's *their* path, not to try to fix them or change them, but to observe *their* values,

*My* job is not to try to fix them, but to observe their values, love them, and communicate within their value system.

love them for who *they* are, and communicate within *their* value system.

## HELP THEM FIND ANOTHER WAY TO GET THEIR NEEDS MET

Even if things were seemingly going a bit off course with one of my children, and I wanted to intervene by introducing some concepts or ideas that might be helpful, I still found it was wiser and worked better to honor their values than to impose mine. Linking what I thought might be useful to my daughter over to what she was interested in was much more effective than just telling her, “This is what you need to learn,” or even, “This is what you should do,” which would have been an exercise in futility in the long run.

For instance, one of my daughters wanted to leave home to live with her boyfriend because she was infatuated with him. A common parental response might be to forbid it, which would have only created a battle of wills. Instead, I recognized that one of her values was earning money. I routinely collect biographies of people who’ve done extraordinary things and then pay my children to read them and give me one-page summaries. So I found a biography relevant to my daughter’s situation, someone who’d had similar options and made empowering choices. I then gave it to her and asked, “I’d like you to read this and give me a one-page summary, and

I’ll pay you by the hour. Do you want the work?” She said, “Okay,” and was eager to do it.

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After she delivered the report I asked her, “What did you learn?” She said, “That woman went through the same thing I’m going through, and look what she did with her life!” So I said, “Well, then you could do great things

with your life too! This is just a stepping-stone.” She now had an inspiring role model and other options, and it expanded her world. As a result, she made a wiser, more informed decision, and *I never had to tell her what to do.*

Most parents get frightened when they see their child going down what might be termed a “bad road” or off track. I don’t necessarily see it as a bad road because I lived it myself, so I have a different perspective. During my teens in the late sixties I was in a rock band. I lived on the streets in the drug scene, and I almost died of strychnine poisoning. But an elderly man named Paul Bragg intervened and transformed my life. One of the pivotal things he did was to see my genius potential while everyone else saw a messed-up child with a learning disability. And because he saw something different, he was able to catalyze my profound transformation. He awakened me to my inspired vision of becoming a philosopher, healer and a teacher, which I didn’t think I could do. I had accepted my grade school label of “learning deficient” and allowed it to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. But Paul told me I was perfectly able to learn and do amazing things. “In fact,” he said, “you’re a genius.” He made me promise to say one affirmative statement to myself every day: *“I’m a genius and I apply my wisdom.”* That’s when I turned my life around.

They have a need and they’re trying to find a way to meet it.

If not for those wayward years I wouldn’t be where I am today, so I don’t condemn it in others. I sure don’t pass judgment or think, “Oh my goodness, they’re screwing up!” What I see is that they have a need and they’re trying to find a way to meet it.

It’s far more effective to discover what that unmet need is and then provide alternative ways of getting it met—like my daughter wanting to move out. Show them they have options so they aren’t limited to one thing, one path—the way Paul Bragg did with me. I simply ask, “Okay, whatever you’re going through, how is it serving you and how can you use it to your advantage?”

Every child follows a unique path. I don’t find that over protecting children from difficult things serves them in the long run. To do great things requires a challenging path. Many people who’ve done extraordinary things came from very difficult situations. When I did a search on celebrity



orphans, I found hundreds of celebrities who had been orphaned—their father or mother died or they were abandoned. For instance, Sir Isaac Newton didn't have a father; his mother gave him up temporarily, and he went on to do the most extraordinary things. Truthfully, it's not about what you've been through or what you're going through. It's about how you interpret it and how you use it to fulfill what's inspiring to you. I try to teach my children that.

## **LIVING A VALUE-DRIVEN, INTEREST-DRIVEN LIFE EMPOWERS YOU**

I explained to my children that any area of your life that you don't empower is set up for someone to overpower you. But it's important

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to realize you're not a victim of their overpowering; you're just not empowered. I tell them, "If you've got a bully in your life and he's pushing you around, it's partly because you're not guiding or governing your own life. You're not empowered in that area. Once you empower that area, the bully disappears. If you don't empower yourself, the bully just keeps coming in to toughen

you up, to make you stronger so you empower that area. That bully is your hero because he is actually helping you empower yourself."

This didn't happen often with my children because I urged them to live within their own values and become masters of their interests. In doing that they became more empowered and self-confident, and there was no need for a bully in their life.

A lot of children today are labeled ADHD. However, when they're doing what they love doing, often these same children can easily sit for six hours straight in front of a video game, learning things invisible to their parents and educators. Often these children are geniuses, but they're just not inspired when they feel that they have to do other seemingly meaningless activities other people are projecting onto them. As parents we are wise to learn how to communicate within their highest values. By doing this we

wake them up. They're then ready to go out and do extraordinary things that inspire them, even though they live in a society with many boxes of mediocrity, and they're basically told to fit in them and be obedient. But if you look carefully, the people who have left their marks in history are the people who didn't fit into those boxes and were not mediocre. My own life is a testament to this.

When I was in first grade, my teacher asked my parents to come to the school. As we sat in a little semicircle she said to them in front of me, "I'm afraid your son has learning difficulties. He has dyslexia and will never read, write, or communicate. He will never go very far in life; indeed, he will never amount to anything. I suggest you put him into sports because he likes to run." (I was born with a foot turned in and had to wear braces, so when I got out of them, I just ran everywhere.) That's why I dropped out of school and lived on the streets until Paul Bragg came along and showed me how to access and wake up my own genius.

So here's the irony. When my daughter was exactly the same age, her first grade teacher asked me to come to the school to discuss her concerns about my daughter. When she said almost the *identical* things, I simply burst out laughing. Quite irate, she asked, "You don't care about your child?" Still laughing I said, "No, I'm just so inspired, because from what you're saying, I know my daughter is going to do great things!" And today she is!

My children are young adults now, but I still communicate with them through their interests. And I watch them sometimes communicating the same way with those around them. I'm confident that when they become parents (if that is part of their mission), they will pass this same approach along to their children as well. My vision and hope for my children is for them to continually discover what's inspiring to them and be living

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from that state of being. My children are not here to live my mission; they're here to live their own mission, and wherever and whenever they are living congruently with their highest values, their genius appears. This encouragement is the greatest gift I can give them. If I can help them live like this, then I will consider myself a successful father.



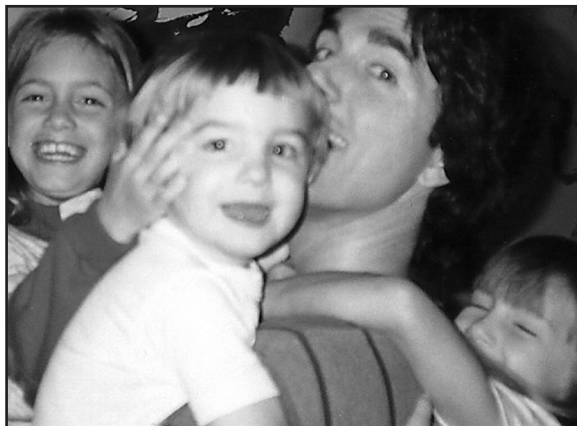
*“Everybody is a genius. But, if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life believing that it is stupid.”*

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Albert Einstein, a theoretical physicist and philosopher, who is widely regarded as the father of modern physics. He was awarded the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics.



## WHO IS JOHN DEMARTINI, D.C.?



*John with (children) Alana, Breccia, and Dan*

Dr. John Demartini is a model of determination, overcoming childhood obstacles to become a wealthy and renowned leader in human behavior. He is founder of the Demartini Institute, a research and education organization, and author of more than forty books. His Demartini Method is used worldwide by psychologists, psychiatrists, and other health professionals to evaluate and reduce stress and resolve conflict.

Labeled “learning disabled” by a first-grade teacher who announced—in front of him—that he wouldn’t go far in life, Demartini dropped out of school at fourteen, illiterate. Through determination and the inspiration of a mentor, he earned a bachelor of science degree at the University of Houston, and a doctorate at Texas Chiropractic College. Demartini went on to build a thriving chiropractic practice before retiring to pursue a deep interest in human behavior.

Featured in the best-selling film and book *The Secret*, Demartini has also shared his expertise through such outlets as CNBC, *Oprah* magazine, and *Larry King Live*. He teaches that everyone has potential, stressing to parents that their role should be to understand their children’s behavior and facilitate their reaching their goals.

Demartini is a citizen of the world, maintaining his residence on the cruise ship *The World*, a community of 165 private residences that continually travels the globe. He is the proud father of three adult children: two daughters, Alana Joy and Breccia Aurora, and one son, Dan David.

# WAIT

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