

## Sample Chapter

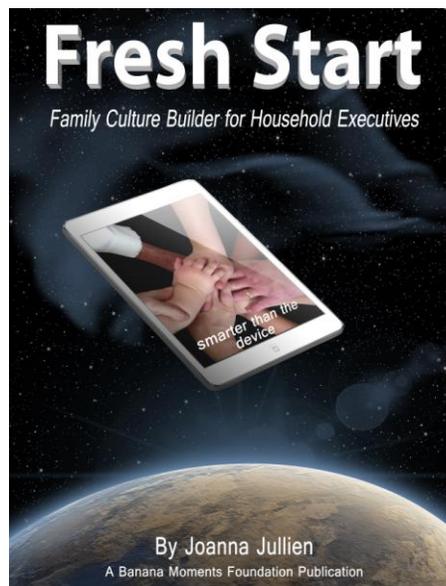
**Title: Fresh Start Family Culture Builder for Household Executives**

By Joanna Jullien, Second Edition edition (June 12, 2015)

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### Training components

- Seven short, high-impact lessons on the network culture, new demands on parents, family culture, communication strategies with discussion questions
- Four exercises and with worksheets to think deeply on how childhood and parenthood are impacted by cyber connectivity
- Glossary of terms to clarify key concepts like private, secret, trust, and faith
- Cyber rites of passage to groom kids for cyber-secure independence in age-appropriate ways
- Final products include: family motto, family creed, and a short set of house rules

## **Why this course?**

### **The network culture and impact on family dynamics**

The network culture is a world defined by unlimited access to people, ideas and information around the globe through personal cyber communications technology of the World Wide Web. In the network culture, dimensions of time and space and perceptions of self are obscured by the seductive call to be connected to communities around the world 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and casts relationship-building as simple connections.

In the network, every individual voluntarily offers up a profile, and expresses preferences to which the “net” responds with opportunities to connect to people who share similar interests, information and things to purchase. Everything is customized and needs are anticipated.

This ease of connectivity also makes sharing intimate details a new norm, which people do freely in their on-line communities via social media and networks (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, texting apps, etc.). The expectation for privacy is being transformed as the first wave of digital natives (children of the Web born circa 1990 who cannot imagine a world without WWW connectivity), enter young adulthood.

Network connectivity seduces us and our children into sharing everything, every thought whether it is kind or cruel, every incident, and every photo; and at the same time perceptions that what we are sharing is going to be private when we send a photo or note to someone, puts individuals at risk for being bullied. And there is tremendous hostility in the cyber-powered peer communities of our children who have not yet been properly trained on how make a peaceful society. Rather, the cyber technology has become an outlet to abuse the power of one-to-many communications, otherwise known as cyberbullying.

And one of the most important things the network culture does is level hierarchies. Democratization of markets, companies and by the early 2,000's, families, has put a premium on authority (the command and control over the individual) as a relational matter. The perception is there are no limits for the individual who is virtually connected to the world. So in order to be secure, find peace and prosper, every individual must be grounded by the core beliefs and values of what it means to be liberated, and learn to think for himself.

## “Smarty pants” syndrome versus self-governing

*“All of humanity is searching for truth, justice, and beauty. We are on an eternal search for the truth because we only believe in the lies we have stored in our mind. We are searching for justice because in the belief system we have, there is no justice. We search for beauty because it doesn’t matter how beautiful a person is, we don’t believe that person has beauty. We keep searching and searching, when everything is already within us. There is no truth to find. Wherever we turn our heads, all we see is the truth, but with the agreements and beliefs we have stored in our mind, we have no eyes for this truth.” – Don Miguel Ruiz in The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom, A Toltec Wisdom Book*

Children at very young ages experience the intoxicating, seductive call to “tap, tap, tap” the touch screen. So without proper guidance, it is easy to believe that all they need to know they can “google”, because search engines, apps and friend communities give them access to information on any topic.

I call this the “smarty pants” syndrome. Because when we know too much for our own good, we lack wisdom and life experience to apply the information or knowledge in ways that prevent harm and improve our lives. We can be fooled into thinking we know more than we do. For knowledge without wisdom is dangerous. And with children, there is a risk of seeing and experiencing things too soon, whether it be gratuitous sex, violence, the how to’s for suicide, drug use, etc., or making contact with a stranger who exploits them through texting or social media. Early and over exposure to such “worldly” content and experiences creates a circumstance wherein a lie can become an experience in your child’s mind that murders the truth. It murders hope for the future. It defines them in ways that are not in their true nature as children of God.

Once your child has been exposed or experienced something traumatic, it cannot be taken back. So in this regard, children begin to live with adult issues at earlier ages. They are simply worldlier earlier and they learn quickly how to shield parents from what they actually experience on and off line out of fear or shame. In doing so, they are likely to make assumptions and conclusions to keep secrets, which harbor the torments of a trauma or ongoing risky conduct.

By the same token, when we train our children to be self-directed to express the values of our homes in their use of technology, and to honor the cyber-safe house rules with the higher purpose of making the technology work for you and your child, the more secure and productive our children will be. Children are very capable of engaging in the governance of your home for personal security and productivity if they are included in practical and age-appropriate ways.

## **Anxiety of knowing too much for your own good**

When we know too much for our own good, it is a problem because, well, we don't know what we don't know. The urban definition of "being too *smart* for your own good" probably is a better phrase, which means that you "believe that you know everything to the point where it can do harm to you and others." The type of harm children experience as a result of believing they know it all is that they are dealing with adult issues on their own, be it bullying, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual exploitation or other trauma. And children wind up believing things that are not true, and cause anxiety. Such as they are alone, and that everything they do in high school determines the rest of their life, as if it is a "you bet the farm" proposition. The general danger is to be in a sustained state of anxiety that can generate mental health issues. Quality of life and good judgment suffers.

When you believe that you can simply "google" everything you need to know, God, parents, teachers, mentors and coaches are removed from the equation. Our children must understand that we are all learning executives. Nobody knows everything. And so it is imperative that they look for guidance and wisdom of their elders in their pursuit of knowledge and how to apply it. By the same token, the elders of digital natives must also appreciate that their children's childhoods inform them radically differently and so they too must be respected as executive learners. They also have something to teach elders in this regard.

## **Disconnect from truth**

As a child my dad told me two things that have served me well. First thing is that something is only true if you believe it to be so in your own mind. The second thing is that a life well lived requires you to apply yourself. It wasn't until much later in life that I came to appreciate the profound clarity of these two thoughts; they simply describe what it means to express your faith. What you believe matters and more importantly, your beliefs and values mean nothing if they are not expressed through your actions. This requires a purpose-driven mindset; it surmises integrity.

The advent of the internet and the mobile phone on the home front created a crisis of faith for me in this regard. Circa 2004, my youngest son was in middle school and the mobile phone emerged as standard equipment for family members. With this disruptive technology, I saw a crisis of the parent-child relationship unfolding with serious consequences. Children were communicating in cyber-powered peer communities well outside the purview of parental oversight, and parents were relying primarily on what their children were telling them what was happening in their world. And with the Internet in the home for nearly a decade by then, it was clear that the role of the parent, teacher, and coach was being edged to the side. Much like a scene from Golding's novel "Lord of the Flies" the children's friend communities operated around norms well beneath the standards of what was civil, legal and safe; the parental voice of wisdom fell silent.

Without the voice of parental wisdom, the disconnect from truth our children experience in their cyber-powered communities is that in order to be free they must surrender their own God-given civil liberty. They mistakenly believe that freedom has no limits; and that parental authority is not essential to their personal security and liberty.

So I stopped working outside the home full time because I wanted to understand the transformation of family life dynamics introduced by the mobile phones and the Internet. I also believed there was an opportunity to strengthen the parent-child bond if our parenting culture responded to the network culture with certain authority.

***Discussion questions:***

a. Can you think of some examples when you knew too much for your own good as a child? How did it affect you?

b. Do you recall experiencing anxiety as a child? Think about the circumstances that inspired anxiety.

c. How has mobile communications impacted your life as an adult? What impact do you perceive mobile communications has had on your family and children?

d. What concerns do you have about how mobile communications and the Internet have had on you and your family?

## Meet the Digital Native

*I hear and I forget, I see and I remember,  
I do and I understand*  
-- Ancient Chinese Proverb

Digital natives have not been conditioned to recognize authority in roles and titles like parent and teacher pre-WWW generations. And they have unprecedented access to knowledge and information outside the home and classroom - making parents increasingly irrelevant on the surface. At the household level, some of the cyber safety concerns resulting from this transformation include:

- General disconnect between children, parents and families
- Over dependence upon friends and friend communities as points of reference for life
- Pedophile access to children
- Easy access to drugs and alcohol
- Degrading values, norms, and beliefs of popular culture reinforced as truth

The children of the Web are conditioned to ignore adults as credible sources of information and at the very best the voices of parents become “noise” to children. So taking charge of family life in this network culture demands that the cover of parental protective authority be established with this understanding. In the network culture, *authority is less ascribed and more the result of rapport* which is increasingly hard to achieve in a culture where children are seduced into friend communities and commercial influence alive with action 24 hours a day, seven days a week outside the home and classroom.

Capturing and holding your child’s attention long enough to focus on truth, core values and family relations is the crux of the matter. Below are some of the highlights.

- *Conditioned for authority as a relational experience.* We do not have authority IN our children’s lives. Rather as parents we have *authority* to provide protective cover for our children that is necessary to lead, discipline and train them until the age of majority. **In this regard parents are the first teachers.** Legitimate authority is based in truth. And because legitimate authority is righteous, it aligns our relationships in harmony and promotes a power balance to serve the individual and the greater good. We must relate authority to them by communicating the boundaries to protect their own individual liberty. The model for this authenticity is the example of Jesus: Meet people where they are no matter how sad, hostile or elated, without judging and condemning, speak

truth with mercy (includes consequences), and offer to lead to higher ground. Here is the basic formula: *Consequences + Love = Empowerment*.

- ***Cyber-powered friend communities consume hearts and minds.*** The social pressure to stay connected to communities and networks outside the home is intense and relentless (24 hours a day) and without a strong moral compass the false beliefs are increasingly difficult for children to counter with truth. Left unchecked, children are engaging in texting and posting on social media well into the night. The technology is addictive, and even adults admit feeling compelled to see what has been tweeted, texted or “liked”. It is addictive unless we make a conscious effort to regulate the use.
- ***Texting is the main artery of communication.*** Texting has become the dominant medium of communication. In fact, it is the main artery of teenagers’ lives. Some of the dangers include: over dependence upon friend communities, and alienation from family and subject to the fleeting, changing whims of popular culture; distracted driving which is lethal, insomnia, and other psychological disorders resulting from addictive tendencies.
- ***Seeking authenticity.*** Honesty and sincerity cannot be faked. Children know the real deal when they experience it. Fearful and controlling behavior is not authentic. So in this network culture, leadership demands on parents shifted from authoritarian (“I’m the boss”) to authoritative (“follow me”). This shift requires more relating and leadership. “Because I said so,” is much less effective.
- ***Trust is currency.*** Kids growing up with Internet powered world are more open and trusting; trust is something to which they attribute great value. As a result there is great *confusion between trust and faith*. When kids challenge parents to trust them, in their minds it is a signal of esteem. It is a BIG deal. Yet they do not realize that it is confusing trust, which is always verifiable among humans, with faith which is reserved for God who does not require proof. The protective cover of parental authority requires the parent to inspect what they expect.
- ***Attention is the scarcity.*** Children know what it means to experience divided attention. It is a way of life. They do not necessarily give one another proper attention. We are multi-tasking, we are in the physical company of one another, while engaged with our mobile devices. The act of paying attention to people and tasks, such as having a meal with face to face conversation and no texting, for example has been diminished in value as we perceive being connected to the network is a compulsory, productive state.

## ***Discussion questions:***

- a. Have you observed that children treat adults differently today than they did in previous generations past?

b. How would you describe the way your children interact with adults?

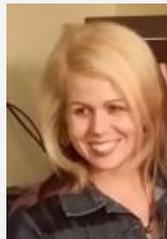
c. How would you describe the way your children interact with you, the parent?

d. How would you describe the way your children interact with siblings and peers?

## Here's what others have to say about *Fresh Start*:



"Family lifestyles are hectic and distracted. Home is often perceived by youth as not a safe place. We work with Joanna Jullien because her parenting philosophy and teaching to help parents relate to their tech-savvy children is an essential aspect of restoring health and peace of mind for children who need to bond with parents in authentic ways." -- **Angela Chanter, PsyD., [Therapeutic Solutions 360](#) in Roseville, Ca.**



Mary Lisa Patton, B.A.Psych, CADCI, IS, NCFAC.

"As a professional, Fresh Start ... opened up my world to new issues my clients and their families may experiencing in their search for connection and healing...The family motto and value section is an invaluable tool. When a family comes together with a purpose or creates a new purpose that was non-existent before, it strengthens the family system." -- Mary Lisa Patton, ***B.A.Psych, CADCI, IS, NCFAC, founder of [Beloved Recovery](#).***\*\*\*



Kim Fredrickson, M.S.

*"Fresh Start is profound in its simplicity... I encourage you to buy this book and dig into its principles. Don't let our cyber-culture take time and relationship away from your family."* -- **[Kim Fredrickson](#), M.S., MFT in Roseville, Ca., and author of Give Yourself a Break: Turning Your Inner Critic into a Compassionate Friend.**