

A Positive Plan for Creating More Fun, Less Whining

Power of a Positive Mom *author Karol Ladd puts the fun into families*

“Do I have to?” Many parents wish they could expunge this phrase from their kid’s vocabulary. It’s right up there with “Can we get...” and “That’s not fair!”

In *A Positive Plan for Creating More Fun, Less Whining*, Karol Ladd compares whining to weeds: “We don’t plant them or particularly want them, but like it or not, they will overtake our garden if we let them.”

Parenting is a 168-hour-a-week position (bereft of sick days or a 401k plan) with a job description as long as a grocery receipt – chauffeur, cook, custodian, doctor, tailor, teacher, manager, banker ... *gardener!* Ladd’s book, *A Positive Plan for Creating More Fun, Less Whining* helps parents turn a demanding job into a rewarding one.

“The overall purpose of this book is to encourage families to laugh together, to have fun together, and to enjoy life together,” says Ladd.

From “How to Handle a Meltdown on Aisle Seven” to “Terrific Travel Tips,” the author and mother of two teenage daughters uses personal experience, as well as friends’ stories, to promote fun family activities for all occasions. The book is geared toward parents with children between the ages of 2 and 12 but a few activities may interest teens. Family devotionals close each chapter with a Scripture reading, questions for discussion, and a family activity.

Ladd feels that parents put too much pressure and expectations on their children as well as on themselves. She explains

that the many options available to moms, dads and kids such as sports, theater, music, dance, and art, causes unneeded stress. “I got trapped into that!” she admits. “Honestly, I was doing everything and trying to get my kids to do everything and not seeing that I needed to choose the *right* things. I finally realized how easy it was to fall onto that treadmill of performing and wanting to do what everybody else was doing.

“And the competitive edge is huge,” Ladd continues. “I think especially in Plano and the North Dallas area, moms look at other moms and assume, She has it all and does it all perfectly and I have to be that. I think that competing with other moms to make their kids the best is a dangerous trap a lot of moms fall into.”

The author doesn’t deny that kids may be putting the pressure on their parents. “That’s why I wrote the chapter called ‘Boredom Busters.’ I think it’s really important for parents to not fear when their kids have downtime,” she says. “It’s not our job to be entertainment central but to teach our kids that they can create their own fun.”

Ladd serves up another chapter called “Five Ingredients for Enjoying a Delightful Meal” where she emphasizes the importance of family dinners and suggests conversation starters. “Research shows that family dinners can have some very positive effects in preventing different types of addictions and even depression,” she says referring to a study done by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. The study reveals that frequent family dinners cut teens’ substance abuse risk in half. “Family dinnertime creates

family bonding. It’s a time to relax and enjoy a meal together without the pressures of the world,” Ladd says. “I had to fight as a mom for family dinnertime.”

The esteemed author lives in Dallas with her husband of 24 years, Curt. She attended Baylor University and majored in elementary education. She stopped teaching to have children and recounts, “I started pouring all of my creative



North Dallas author Karol Ladd encourages parents to concentrate on the positives in family life and make their lives less stressful.

teaching talent into my kids' birthday parties and people would say, 'Karol these parties are so unique. You should write a book!' " *Parties With A Purpose* was published in 1994.

Ladd didn't always want to be a writer but a teacher. "I always wanted to impact kids' lives but then as I had my own kids, I really enjoyed impacting moms' lives. I started speaking at moms' groups, and PTA groups, and encouraged them on how to do creative, fun children's parties. I love sharing creative ideas."

Ladd shares a crop of creative ideas in *A Positive Plan for Creating More Fun, Less Whining*. Her best advice? "Enjoy your families without getting so stressed out over things that don't matter in the big scheme of life. I think it's easy for parents to major on the minors and minor on the majors, but parents need to step back and look at what's really important to their family's growth."

Excerpt from pages 23-24

"Do you remember the 'fun mom' in your neighborhood during your growing-up years? You know, the mom who always welcomed you into her home with a smile. She usually had something for you to eat or drink, and she wasn't worried if the house looked perfect or not. She may have been your own mom. ... Whoever she was, you knew she was special because she welcomed life and laughter into her home.

... Fun begins with an attitude, not things. If you decide you are going to enjoy life, generally speaking, you will! And if you look for fun, you'll find it.

Perhaps you have thought, *I'd love to be the fun mom but that's just not me*. I want to say that you (yes, even you) can have an open heart to fun and laughter. It's a choice. Our attitude toward life is a choice."

Meet the author

Meet Karol Ladd, founder and president of *Positive Life Principles, Inc.*, at *The Positive Women Connection* on the fourth Tuesday each month at *Prestonwood Country Club*. For more information, visit www.karolladd.com.



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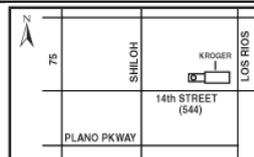
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