

MAY EAMIL TEXT

From: "GFI" <admin@gfi-singapore.org>
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Hi everyone

About 50 people just complete the leadership conference with the Singapore GFI leadership and Bill and Joan Grosser from Australia on May 1st. It is encouraging to see people willing to step forward to just share their lives with others - that's exactly what our society needs - families willing to commit to learning about higher morals, to journey together with other like-minded families. We want to emphasize that you do not need to complete this before facilitating classes - you need to have gone through the classes, are practising the principles and are willing to be available - drop us an email anytime if you are just undecided and want to just interact with someone on this. Of course it is also a great time to catch up as we spend time together at meal times and on the trip to Choa Chu Kang Farm Centre on Sunday. Exchange of experiences is always enriching.

This month we have a treat from the Neo family sharing with us their experience of the "younger" years and what many parents hope for - babies who sleep through the nights! You can probably understand from this article that parenting is a long journey bringing with it different challenges at each phase. The call for patience and perseverance can never be over emphasized. Creativity too is always helpful - together with the consideration of context - the aim is to have fun with our families within structure and orderliness! The photo by the way, is probably taken from an outing we had last month at Marina South.

Jeremy and Suan Ai
for Andj and Dorcas



Student: Would you scold me for something I didn't do?; **Teacher:** Of course not. ; **Student:** I didn't do my homework!

We have 2 boys, Yi-En (4 years) and Yang (2+ years). We are blessed and thankful to have gone through GFI's parenting programs before our eldest son was born. Although we felt prepared mentally to receive this new arrival, when he finally arrived, we still required a lot of guidance. Until now, we dare not say that our kids are "angels" as the road ahead to develop high moral characters in them is still a long one. Everyday bring new challenges and new learning experiences and we are thankful for them as we believe that God is using these challenges to mould us concurrently as parents.

These parenting programs have changed our perspective of parenting. Principles taught are opposite to the ways we were brought up with. As a result, we have encountered lots of oppositions from friends and relatives, especially older folks who insisted and pressured us, and we felt like quitting. Thank God, during this time, God has graciously brought a couple who has also gone



through the same programs to encourage and guide us through this critical parenting phase. This couple patiently guided us one step at a time on dealing with parenting issues of our new born.

One of the most difficult tasks was to let my baby sleep by himself. He would often cry and fuss for almost an hour until he falls asleep from exhaustion. This went on for about two weeks. As parents we were troubled whenever we hear our baby cry and are helpless. It is trying to endure this agony, being patient and waiting till he was able to master this essential skill of sleeping on his own. (For your information, we would investigate all the possible reasons for crying. When we were satisfied that my baby cried for no other known reasons but the need to sleep, then we would allow this continuous cry.) During this time, our relatives would want to interfere by offering to carry him and rock him, and we would politely decline. Parenting is hard work and if we persevere, in due time God will grant us success. Slowly, we observed that the length of 'cries and fusses' gradually reduced. This is just one of the few principles that worked for us. We became more convinced of the parenting principles after we have seen how our children have grown and differentiated themselves from others.

The true test came one day when Yi-En was 8-months old, we have to let Mag's mum baby sit him for a few hours while we have a night out. The instruction to her for his bedtime was to leave him alone in the baby cot, say good-night and close the door. If he cries, just leave him alone and he will eventually settle down and sleep. However, she did not believe it could be so easy. (For your information, she is a mother of seven children and a grandmother of sixteen



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grandchildren.) She did not follow the instruction. Instead she would go in every time he started to cry. Consequently, when Yi-En saw her, he would stand up and cried even louder. She comforted him and put him down on the baby cot again and then walked out of the room. Second time round she waited for about 10 minutes, however there was complete silence. She panicked and went in quietly to check and to her surprised she saw Yi-En sound asleep.

From then on, Mag's mum was convinced of our parenting methods. She even asked Mag's sisters to learn from us though in response they reasoned that every child is different. Subsequently, when our second baby arrived, we trained him in the same ways, our confinement lady was so impressed with our parenting methods that she started to tell other families about it.

Mag's youngest brother who has two children commented to us that our kids are so adaptable that they are able to sleep at wherever they are. In ours heart we reminded ourselves that teaching a baby to sleep on their own is just the beginning of good parenting. If at any point in time we are not consistent in our parenting methods, we will have a lot of re-training to do, which would result in more work as compared to training them right the first time.

Two weeks ago, our eldest (now 4 years of age) has been taking nights out with Daddy and our youngest (now 31 months old) wanted to follow them too. During the first week he would cry and would not stop until they were out of sight from the window he stood watching tearfully. Mag would in turn console him that brother would go out with daddy and Yang would stay home with mummy. On the second week, he fussed a little but he did not cry. After they disappeared from sight, he would began to play on his own and started to sing, "Daddy I'm so sad! Daddy I'm so sad!" with his own tune. I was totally surprised and yet pleased at his response, because he is learning to cope with his own disappointments.

We would like to encourage new parents with the following verses to persevere, to be consistent, to be patient and finally to commit everything to God.

Philippians 4:6, 7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 7: 7, 8

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened

In His Grace,
Neo You Soon + Magdalene Tan
Neo Yi-En
Neo Yang
The Neos....