

# THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

Some friends in Wyoming told us this story about their daughter recently and it was so amazing I thought I would share it with you.

Misty had been a strong-willed child from birth. She was the youngest of three children. Her older brothers', Justin and Hamish, were easygoing and caused very few ripples in the family. As long as her parents could channel Misty's strong will effectively, they felt sure she would become a great role model and leader eventually.

When Justin was 8-years-old his friend next door asked him if he would accompany him to a gym class with him because he was too shy to go on his own. Justin attended the class and was immediately hooked. His new interest developed and he entered many competitions where he became one of the country's best juniors in the sport. Misty also became a very competitive gymnast. Apart from the expense of costume and travel, our friends were ecstatic about their kids' achievements.

Misty was also an A grade student. She loved school and she loved to learn. Then, quite suddenly, Misty's whole demeanor changed. She became impossible to live with and her schoolwork deteriorated. Her parents couldn't believe the change in Misty, but could not get her to tell them what was wrong. Years went by and Misty continued to be moody and obnoxious at home. Her parents despaired, wondering what they could do to get their 'real' Misty back.

In July of this year we called to make a time to come and visit the family. Misty's mother was excited and couldn't wait to tell us their news about Misty. She read us a letter that Misty had written to her 7<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher. This is part of what she wrote.

*"Dear Miss Burton,  
I have decided to write this letter so I could move on with my life, regain my confidence and return to my old self that was lost five years ago. In my early years I was a very happy, enthusiastic, optimistic person and was not afraid to voice my opinion. When I was 12 years old you came into our class to teach us how to give impromptu speeches. A topic was randomly chosen for each of us, and you picked me to be the first one to make a speech. I will never forget that day. I walked up to the front of the class and started to voice my opinion on the topic. Then I froze. I couldn't think of anything else to say, as I was unfamiliar with the subject. I wracked my brain to try and think of something else to say but nothing came. I will never forget the look on your face. You yelled and pointed at me. After lecturing me at the back of the class where everyone could hear, you ordered me up the front to do it again. I said one sentence and broke down.*

*You broke an innocent 11 year-old girl. "Sit down!" you said and then I heard you mutter, "Pathetic." After that day I shut down. Your words haunted me every day. My impeccable reputation was ruined. After that I never spoke unless I was spoken to. I lost my voice and my quirky personality. I became a social outcast at school and became depressed. I started to become violent at home. I cried every night and I started hating myself."*

*Five years later I finally told my Mom. All of those bottled-up emotions came tumbling out. It has only been two weeks since I told Mom and already I feel like my old self again. I am just letting you know that the student you scolded and made feel 'dumb' those years ago is now in the gifted class working a year above my level.*

*I forgive you, Miss Burton."*

This is a story of thoughtless, hurtful, immature and unnecessary words from a teacher, the devastation it caused and the mature way in which this young girl dealt with it. As adults we need to be very careful about our attitudes and the way we speak to others, especially our children. Misty, you have indeed become that happy girl you used to be and along with that, a great role model.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.