

BECOMING A 'WYSIWYG'

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"What on earth is a 'WYSIWYG'?" I hear you ask. The initials mean, 'what you see is what you get.' Isn't it a breath of fresh air to find someone who says what they mean, and means what they say? Yes 'WYSIWYGs' are uncomplicated, plain speaking, straight shooting souls. They are consistent and transparent, baggage free, and not motivated by some hidden agenda. They don't go 'pear shaped' over some little insensitive comment, or get into a huff because they couldn't get their own way. Basically they just 'don't sweat the small stuff'.

Personally, I get very tired of not being able to be 'myself' around some people for fear I might say something that will offend them, or knock over that sacred cow they are protecting. I am not saying it's OK to be insensitive. What I am saying is that it is a wonderful surprise to find people who are mature enough to see the positive side of life and to be free of all those things that make many people feel 'precious'.

How can we become 'WYSIWYGs' and how can we teach our kids to be the same way? The answer lies in how we process potential issues and how we feel about ourselves. We can't change our personalities, but we can change our responses to others. For example, anger is a normal and legitimate emotion. It is what we do with it that is the important thing. We can use anger positively to propel us into defending others or standing against injustice. However, our default mode is set to the negative so, without thinking about it, we find our anger escalates. We smolder and maybe even become vengeful. If we let it get too out of hand we may find ourselves refusing to forgive the offender. Harboring grudges creates baggage and this further clutters our outlook on life.

Recently I was asked to record the female parts for a duo. I waited for months to hear when it was time to go to the studio. Eventually, after attempting to communicate with the organizers a number of times without success, I was told by someone outside the studio that another person had recorded the female parts already! I was livered – momentarily. Then I had a strong talk to myself and forced myself to lay it down. Of course I wondered whether I wasn't good enough. But then I delved into my 'positive bank' and was able to reassure myself that I was good enough for the job and that their choice was not going to affect me.

How we feel about ourselves will always dictate how we deal with issues. Whether we take it on board or whether we toss it off. And sometimes we do actually make some personal adjustments. That is part of development. As parents we are responsible for how our kids feel about themselves and how they deal with offences. We need to monitor the general home atmosphere to ensure that it is positive and that family members appear to be at peace. We

need to make sure that we encourage and support one another through hard times. Such occasions are great opportunities to teach kids how to manage their emotions and learn how to tackle problems with ever increasing maturity.

Do our kids see us rise above offences? When it's appropriate we can discuss particular issues that we, or other family members are having. We can talk about where the 'offender' was coming from and what may be going on in their lives for them to act in an offensive manner to others. We need to reassure our kids that others don't see them in the way the offender did, and if it's necessary, we might have to help our kids to positively change their own behavior.

We need to be vigilant in keeping our conversations positive. We need to do everything in our power to prevent other people's junk from sticking to us, or our kids. When our mind is free to allow us to be uncomplicated, happy, transparent fun people, then we know we have become true 'WYSIWYGs'.

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