



P A R E N T S  
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## My World View Made Me Do It

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Judy has put in a long day. The children were sick and it was Judy's turn to stay home with them. It wouldn't have been so bad but it also couldn't have come at a worse time. Judy is in line to become partner at her firm and she is working on closing a major contract, which will mean a substantial increase in business for Judy's firm. Because of everything that was going on at work, Judy asked her husband if he could stay at home with the kids. Maybe they could trade days – just this once. Judy's husband refused because he has an important meeting he had to be present for. The weather is terrible so there is no way to get outdoors for a few minutes to relieve the claustrophobia of the house – it is being remodeled and it seems at least half the house is off limits to anyone. The kids are sick but not incapacitated to the point where they can't bug each other and then come running to mom – "he/she is picking on me"- using their shrillest voices, of course. Seems like a like a parental melt down waiting to happen, but it doesn't. How can that be? It would seem that for anyone the combination of stresses – the job, your husband not willing to stay home, the kids acting as if they are totally untrained and ignorant of reasonable behavior – would be enough to set anyone into some sort of tantrum. Why isn't Judy loosing her cool?

Judy's world view contributed to her reaction to the day's events. Madeline Cantini described the concept of a world view in her article "Understanding Your Unique World View – This is Your Life". Madeline described a world view as "... an internal state of mind. It is made up of our particular individual beliefs, attitudes, values and perceptions regarding how the world is supposed to be, how things and people in the world are supposed to act, or in other words, all of our "should bes" and expectations". Judy's world view was formed as most of ours' are – by our family and the values they instill, our education and the community that we experience as we grow up. As we move on through our lives our experiences tend to modify or change the focus of our world view. In a sense our world view is somewhat akin to looking out a window in one direction and as we look out that window we move our head to focus on a different object – thereby modifying our view. So how does this apply to Judy and her pressure packed situation? Well I am glad I asked – or else this would be a very short article.

Judy was the fifth of five children who were born within eleven years of each other. The family lived in a town of 2,500 in the rural Midwest. Her mother was a

housewife and her father worked as a production worker in a factory. Judy's family life was hectic, noisy and chaotic. The family always had enough to eat and decent housing but they did not have money for extras such as summer vacations and designer clothes. It was enough of a struggle to keep the children enrolled in the local parochial school and outfitted for athletics. All of Judy's siblings attended college because their parents felt it was the only way the kids could "get ahead". Judy was a good athlete and student but when it came time for college she chose to go to a local state college. She did very well in college, majoring in child psychology. Upon graduation she worked for a couple of years in a pre-school but felt the job was not going to lead to a career so she went to law school. She excelled at law and she met her husband there. Upon graduation Judy was offered a job in a large firm on the East Coast. Judy and her husband agreed they would take the first good offer and the other spouse would follow. The couple moved and in a couple of years they started a family. Nice tale Mike – but what does this have to do with a world view and how Judy treats her children?

As she grew up Judy made some decisions that were based on her perceptions of her life. She valued a family and education. Chaos and confusion were not foreign to her nor did they bother her. She became athletic just so she could keep up with her siblings and take part in extra-curricular activities at school. Judy didn't have the highest IQ in any of the classes she was in but her family instilled a work ethic by assigning chores and having expectations for all of their children. Judy's undergraduate degree and her experience at the pre-school helped prepare her for children. Her experience at law school helped solidify her self-confidence, and that, combined with her work ethic, prepared her for the world of a high pressure job. So when the children started to "go off" when Judy was home with them, on a day she would have much preferred to be at work, she drew upon her life experience – her world view creating experience- and realized she could handle this. She had experienced living in a chaotic household, she had worked in an environment with a large number of children, and she knew that her husband would be home when he could be – all of her past experiences led her to behave in a calm, controlled manner when dealing with the unexpected day at home.

Judy's family life was chaotic and her family did well, so the fact that the house was a mess was no big deal to Judy – just work around it. Her experience in the pre-school prepared her for children's behavior and how to deal with children when they became whiny. Also, Judy had experience both in the theory and practice of child rearing so some minor whining wasn't a huge behavioral issue to overcome. Judy's world view dictated that yes she would like to be at work but by taking each issue that arose she knew from her experience that she could successfully deal with them.

As the social worker at our treatment center I have had the opportunity to observe how a person's world view does directly influence a person's parenting. I

recall how one of our patient's was talking about how his father's behavior directly influenced how he related to his children. As "Ted" was growing up his family was poor and his father had two jobs to pay for the family's medical bills. Ted's father would at times refuse to get treatment for Ted because the costs were so high. It got so bad that when Ted had a bleed his mother would take him to the local treatment center after Ted's father left for the second job. The problem was that this only delayed the anger that Ted's father would express when the medical bills arrived. As Ted grew up his world view was filled with images of an angry father and his mother who would be verbally abused for obtaining medical care for Ted. When Ted got married and had children he vowed to treat his family differently. He was going to treat his wife with respect – at all times. His children would never suffer because they could not get medical care, and he would build a home built on trust and compassion. Ted did all of this for his family. His world view dictated that he would do better than his father had done. Ted used his father as a role model of how he did not want to behave.

I think that our world view also influences how a person adjusts to hemophilia, or any situation that they face. I have met many people who have gone on to do very well in their lives in spite of some of the barriers that were placed before them – hemophilia, HIV, hepatitis. Why do some do so well and others flounder? I think it can be related to the person's world view and how they have learned to deal with challenges. What world view does your family have toward hemophilia? Is it a part of your life that you deal with as bleeds arise and you treat them, or is it a curse that dictates your life? It seems to me that those who treat their challenge (hemophilia, high blood pressure, coronary disease) as manageable and within their control do better – because their world view was brought into focus by beliefs, attitudes, values and perceptions that may have had preconceived expectations that nurtured an "I can do this" attitude.

I admire those patients that I have been fortunate enough to meet, whose world view empowers them to become executives in large organizations, to become aerospace engineers and to excel at athletics. I know my world view has influenced how I wrote this article, how I face challenges in my life and what I think "should be". I did grow up in a household of five children, went to parochial schools, was told that education is valuable, and grew up on a farm. No I am not Judy, but certainly I took things away from my experiences that form my behaviors to this day. I related to our children in ways that would make me wonder – "Where did that come from?" Then I realized that I was becoming my father, for good or bad. As with Ted I found myself looking back at my life and seeing some things I would do differently – my father did not attend many of my athletic events for whatever reason. When my wife and I had children and they grew up I attended every possible event they were involved in.

As with most things in life our world view is open to change and modification. I think events can influence our beliefs, attitudes, values and perceptions. In the last ten years I have had a couple of "events" that tweaked my world view. The

first was when my favorite uncle developed Alzheimer's disease and was put in a nursing home. I went to visit him one day and when I went to leave I hugged him and told him I enjoyed him so much because he was always so much fun. He replied "Michael, it is important to have fun" a motto he truly lived by. Earth shaking - no, but enough of a tremor for me to refocus my world view so I hopefully will take life with a lighter touch. The second was when my father was dying. He had called his children home to let us know it was "time". He had been quite ill for a long time and he no longer had the strength to continue fighting. My brother and I lived closer, so we got home before our sisters. We went into his room to talk and we asked him if there was anything we could do for him. The last thing my father said to me was "Take care of your family". I take family as the focus of my father's world view. It has made me refocus my world view.

I perceive my world view as of the stuff I have experienced to get me to where I am today. Doing the PEP presentation and presenting Session Five "Understanding Your Unique World View" made me stop and reflect on my life – some fun moments, some not so fun. I think it does help you know who you are and why you do what you do. Please take the time to consider your world view – what you discover may surprise you.