

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL 2012

HOW TO LAND YOUR KID IN THERAPY:  
OVER-PARENTING AND ITS PERILS

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Psychologist; Lecturer on Child and Adolescent Issues; Author, *The Price of Privilege*, *Viewing Violence*, *See No Evil: A Guide to Protecting Our Children from Media Violence* and *Forthcoming Teach Your Children Well*

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Jungian Analyst, Psychologist, Speaker, Meditation Teacher; Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Vermont; Consultant in Leadership Development, Norwich University; Author, *Women and Desire*, *The Resilient Spirit*, *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, *The Self-Esteem Trap* and *Forthcoming Love Is Not a Feeling*

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1 P I O C E E D I N G S

2 (8:30 p.m.)

3 MS. MILLER: My name is Jamie Miller. I'm with  
4 the Aspen Institute. And welcome to the last evening of  
5 the Aspen Ideas Festival, 2012. It's my great pleasure to  
6 be here this evening to welcome this panel on an  
7 interesting and important issue. So I'll start at the  
8 end. This is Polly Young-Eisendrath. She's a Jungian  
9 analyst. She is a professor at the University of Vermont,  
10 a frequent speaker and author on parenting issues and  
11 author of *The Self-Esteem Trap*.

12 In a pattern share, here is Lori Gottlieb. She  
13 is a therapist based in L.A. She's also the best-selling  
14 author of *Marry Him: The Case for Settling for Mr. Good*  
15 *Enough*, which is --

16 (Laughter)

17 MS. GOTTLIEB: But it's not about (inaudible).

18 MS. MILLER: Ask her about -- at another time.

19 (Laughter)

20 MS. MILLER: She's also been an advisor to our  
21 program and we're very grateful for all the expertise that  
22 she has offered us in conversations throughout the year.

1 So she's really contributed a lot and we're grateful.

2           Next to her is Madeline Levine. She's a  
3 psychologist practicing in Marin County in California.  
4 And she is the author of *The Price of Privilege*, which is  
5 relevant to this conversation and also the author of the  
6 forthcoming *Teach Your Children Well*. There are some  
7 cards about that. It's coming out -- this month? Is that  
8 right? It's out? It's here.

9           MS. LEVINE: Today.

10          MS. MILLER: Today? Today? Congratulations.

11                   (Laughter)

12          MS. MILLER: There are some cards about it with  
13 lots of interesting parenting insights and expertise. And  
14 then here on my left is Katie Couric. If you don't know  
15 who Katie Couric is --

16                   (Laughter)

17          MS. MILLER: -- you can find me after the  
18 program and we will talk.

19                   (Laughter)

20          MS. MILLER: She is currently serving as a  
21 special correspondent for ABC News. And she has a new  
22 show coming out in September called *Katie* -- daytime talk

1 show -- which will be the next big thing. We are positive  
2 and we love having her at the Ideas Festival. So thank  
3 you all for being here and enjoy this evening's  
4 discussion.

5 (Applause)

6 MS. COURIC: Hi, everyone. Good evening. It's  
7 great to be here. This is going to be a fun panel because  
8 I've had two glasses of rosé and combined with the  
9 altitude it's going to be a lot of fun. Unfortunately, my  
10 panelists cannot say the same despite the fact that I  
11 encouraged them out there before this panel.

12 But I'm very interested in this topic as the  
13 mother of two daughters, 16 and 20 now, which I'm sure  
14 makes many of you feel very old out in the audience. But  
15 this is something that really got my attention a decade  
16 ago and sort of the whole notion of over-parenting and how  
17 baby boomers are -- in particular are parenting their  
18 kids. So I'm very excited to be moderating this panel.

19 I did a panel -- I think it was yesterday,  
20 yesterday morning -- with Anne-Marie Slaughter about *Can*  
21 *Women Really Have it All*. And I made this pronouncement.  
22 I said I thought over-parenting was gross. It was very

1 articulate and got ticked off on -- in the Twitter sphere.  
2 So I'd like to just preface this conversation by saying  
3 that I'm often guilty of over-parenting myself.

4           So I don't -- I'm not preaching and I'm not  
5 being holier than thou tonight. But first, I wanted to  
6 ask -- the basic question is when we talk about over-  
7 parenting, what does that mean exactly to each of you.  
8 Madeline, why don't you start?

9           MS. LEVINE: I think of over-parenting as having  
10 three components. So when you do something your child can  
11 already do, you've over-parented because you've taken away  
12 the opportunity to do something the child's capable of --  
13 that means he feels confident, that means he has true  
14 self-esteem, not this sort of bastardized idea of self-  
15 esteem.

16           So don't do what your kid can already do. And  
17 don't do what is just outside of your kid's area of  
18 expertise. We call it the zone of proximal learning  
19 because that's where a kid pushes themselves a little bit.  
20 And if you need to step in, if they can't get it, you can  
21 step in but let them have a shot at it.

22           And I think the third idea about over-parenting

1 that I have is when it's really your own needs that are  
2 being met as opposed to your kid's needs. And I'd ask  
3 Katie if it was okay to tell you this very quick story.  
4 So sitting in my office. And I've got a dad and a very  
5 bright son sitting in the office with me and the kid is  
6 trying to decide where to go to college.

7           And he's -- and really smart. He's going to a  
8 top tier school and he's listing all the schools that he's  
9 interested in. And he's leaving out the Ivy League, it's  
10 kind of noticeable. And finally he says, well, it may be  
11 Harvard. And the dad jumps off the couch and says, I will  
12 give my left testicle to get my son into Harvard.

13           (Laughter)

14           MS. LEVINE: And that's an example of -- that's  
15 the father's need. The kid has his own developmental  
16 needs of growing up and going to school and figuring out  
17 who he is. He doesn't have to worry about his father's  
18 gonads. So --

19           (Laughter)

20           MS. LEVINE: When you find yourself sort of  
21 putting your own something as opposed to really listening  
22 to your kid, that's over-parenting too, like, try

1 (inaudible).

2 (Laughter)

3 MS. GOTTLIEB: You know, I agree with everything  
4 Madeline said. And over-parenting really comes from a  
5 place of anxiety like this father with his testicle.

6 (Laughter)

7 MS. GOTTLIEB: And an example of it -- I think  
8 sometimes it's easier to describe with example is -- so I  
9 wrote this article called, "How to Land Your Kid in  
10 Therapy: why our obsession with our kids' happiness may be  
11 dooming them to unhappy adulthoods" for *The Atlantic*. And  
12 one of the examples in that piece was a preschool teacher  
13 that I interviewed said, you know, the parents are the  
14 ones who are so anxious.

15 So a kid comes into preschool, the parents are  
16 signing the kid in. Kid runs over to the sandbox, picks  
17 out a dump truck that he likes. The other kid in the  
18 sandbox grabs it from him. They kind of, you know, have a  
19 little back-and-forth over the dump truck. The kid  
20 finally gives him, like, this other crappy truck and says,  
21 no, this one's for you.

22 And so the mother has a fit over this. Mother



1 is, like, that's not fair. The good one was his. And the  
2 preschool teacher has to kind of talk to mom down, not to  
3 go over there and try to orchestrate this thing between  
4 the kids. Well, that's what over-parenting is, what  
5 Madeline said. The kids could handle it. The kid was  
6 resilient. The kid was flexible. The mother was not.

7 MS. COURIC: Polly.

8 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Yeah. Actually, I agree  
9 with everything that's been said already. And I would  
10 only add a couple of kind of maybe refinements of that.  
11 One would be that that kind of interfering or running  
12 interference deprives kids of learning from their direct  
13 experience. They're learning, instead, some kind of  
14 distraction.

15 And that distraction might be the parent-running  
16 interference in a situation in school. It might be what I  
17 call junk praise where the parent says, great job, that  
18 was terrific, when it really wasn't or that's just a  
19 statement for filling space. And when you take in a lot  
20 of junk praise, you want more junk praise; it's like junk  
21 food.

22 And so you can build a kind of an atmosphere of

1 interfering with the child being able to concentrate by  
2 doing this kind of junk praise. I have my own little  
3 story to tell, which is a very good example from my side  
4 of the -- where I live in Vermont. So I get a call from a  
5 woman who is a nurse and obviously feeling kind of  
6 desperate about her son.

7                   And she says, you know, I've read your book and  
8 I'd like to come in and talk to you about my son because  
9 I'd like him to see you in therapy. And so I say, well,  
10 how old is he? Thirty-nine.

11                   (Laughter)

12                   MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: I say, you know, I expect  
13 he probably could call me himself and probably could come  
14 in and talk to me. And she said, well -- she said, you  
15 know, I think I need to come in and kind of set it up and  
16 tell you what's going on. I said, well, therapy is a  
17 confidential relationship. She said, but you wouldn't  
18 have to tell him, you know.

19                   (Laughter)

20                   MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: And I said, I would only  
21 do that if -- you know, if you were -- if you had a  
22 dependant child. She said, well, he moved home when he

1 was 31. He is a dependant child.

2 (Laughter)

3 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: So it was, you know --  
4 and this -- this is an absolutely true story. And I felt  
5 for the mom. I mean she was really desperate. He was a  
6 kid who had graduated from an elite university -- computer  
7 programmer, had done very well and then kind of crashed  
8 and burned, moved home and had not moved out. So that's  
9 my story on over-parenting.

10 MS. COURIC: So when did this whole trend of  
11 over-parenting start? Did it start with kind of the Free  
12 to Be -- You and Me, everybody-gets-a-trophy, it's soccer  
13 practice. And you know, and when -- and can you pinpoint  
14 a moment in time where this seemed to develop? Because I  
15 was raised very differently than the way I'm raising my  
16 kids. And was it in the early '90s? When was it,  
17 Madeline?

18 MS. LEVINE: I think it was a little earlier  
19 than that. I think it -- look, I am an old, old baby  
20 boomer, but it's younger baby boomers. You know, what did  
21 we have on our walls? We had, you do your thing, I do my  
22 thing, I'm not here to live up to your expectations, you

1 are not here to live up to mine. It was sort of like this  
2 highly individualistic, we're so special, never trust  
3 anyone over 30.

4           And -- so that's the '60s. And then the '70s  
5 you have greed, you know, Wall Street -- greed is good.  
6 And so I think there was kind of a shift away from a  
7 collective feeling about what parenting was. And people  
8 were moving all over the place. The rabbi or the priest  
9 didn't stop by anymore. And there was just a shift in  
10 what was value.

11           And metrics became incredibly important. So how  
12 much you made, did your kid get an A -- any way that you  
13 could measure yourself. Because the old way of measuring  
14 yourself was kind of within the community, you know, the  
15 pillar of the community. That was the good guy. Now it's  
16 the guy who makes the most money. Every kid knows how to  
17 figure out the cost of the housing, stuff like that.

18           So I think it's somewhere around the  
19 intersection of our own sense of incredible specialness  
20 and entitlement and a deteriorating culture that has  
21 become increasingly reliant on metrics for measuring how  
22 are you doing.

1 MS. COURIC: Polly, I know you've studied the  
2 self-esteem movement.

3 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Yeah.

4 MS. COURIC: When did that happen and what was  
5 it exactly?

6 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Well, it was in the '70s,  
7 you know. I mean in the '70s there was a movement. That  
8 was an educational movement. It was in the schools. It  
9 was a parenting movement. And it was kind of, like, you  
10 know, you can do anything. You are great. And I actually  
11 went to graduate school during that time. And so when I  
12 came into graduate school I had young children.

13 And I was parenting them more or less the way my  
14 mother had. And I came from a strict background, working  
15 class background. And then I went to graduate school.  
16 And I changed everything. And I was praising them and  
17 putting the stuff on the refrigerator and all the gold  
18 stars and so on.

19 And I think that was really the shift over --  
20 it's when my children start identifying me as a person who  
21 didn't really want to be a parent, wanted to be a friend.  
22 And I think there was that kind of shift in the culture.

1 By the way, I think all of this is really cultural. I  
2 don't think there's any blame for it. I don't think  
3 there's any reason why parents should feel ashamed or sort  
4 of self-conscious about it because we did it together and  
5 we did it for good reasons.

6           And I also think what was happening there in the  
7 '70s was the baby boomers', you know, desire to correct  
8 what happened in our childhood where we weren't mirrored  
9 and we weren't seen and we wanted so much to raise a child  
10 who would be like a perfect flower, would just open up,  
11 and you know, bring sunshine to the world. And it just  
12 worked out to be quite the opposite actually.

13           But I -- that movement then kind of segued into  
14 the things that Madeline was talking about in terms of  
15 other effects in the culture. And then I think to top it  
16 off, one of things that I have observed is that we're sort  
17 of short on miracles in this culture. And so childbirth,  
18 having a child and raising a child has become the biggest  
19 miracle.

20           And so people are investing in their children as  
21 though they were God, you know. I mean this is the  
22 miracle and it -- this I think is a fairly recent thing,

1 that particular -- the miracle aspect which --

2 MS. COURIC: And we'll talk about sort of how  
3 this has been manifested more. But you guys have some  
4 funny stories. I mean I gave the graduation address at  
5 UVA this year. And I talked about the fact that Teresa  
6 Sullivan, the reinstated president of UVA, told me a story  
7 about how a kid who graduated from the Darden School of  
8 Business went on a job interview and brought his mother  
9 with him.

10 (Laughter)

11 MS. COURIC: So I mean, obviously you have all  
12 sorts of stories. Entertain us for a minute, will you?  
13 And tell us some funny stories about, like, parenting on  
14 steroids where it's so embarrassing.

15 SPEAKER: Well, you do know that it's  
16 confidential.

17 (Laughter)

18 MS. COURIC: Okay. Well, you don't have to give  
19 any names.

20 SPEAKER: I'll bet each one in this room --

21 MS. COURIC: Lori.

22 MS. GOTTLIEB: Well, I mean this is -- these are

1 some things through my reporting as opposed to my therapy  
2 practice, so not confidential. There is a school in Los  
3 Angeles where the parents -- one parent complained to the  
4 head of school that the kids were getting the comments on  
5 their papers in red pen. And apparently this was very  
6 traumatizing to this person's child.

7           The red was -- you know, felt very uncomfortable  
8 for this child and asked that the comments would not be in  
9 red. And at the same school this -- the headmaster was  
10 asked if when a kid got a boo-boo in pre-K or K, if they  
11 could use red washcloth so that the kids would not have to  
12 see their blood on the washcloth.

13           MS. COURIC: Red is a big pain here.

14           (Laughter)

15           MS. GOTTLIEB: And -- there's a red theme with  
16 this -- and those were different parents, by the way. But  
17 I think that, you know, that speaks to the kind of anxiety  
18 that, you know, should our kids experience any kind of  
19 discomfort that we're going to go in and solve the  
20 problem. And kids who have their problem solved for them  
21 don't believe that they can solve problems. And the truth  
22 is they can't. They have no experience solving problems



1 because mom and dad have always fixed it.

2 MS. COURIC: Well, I think baby boomers in  
3 particular are living so vicariously through their kids  
4 and can't seem to tolerate their kids' unhappiness. I  
5 mean what is it about this particular segment of the  
6 population that we're seeing this so prevalent in?

7 SPEAKER: What do you consider to be a baby  
8 boomer? Because I think there are people younger than  
9 that who are parents.

10 MS. COURIC: I guess someone -- I -- well, I'm  
11 55. So I'm kind of on the -- sorry, Madeline, (inaudible)  
12 the baby boomers. So what is that? I forget the actual  
13 age span. But what is it like? Fifty --

14 SPEAKER: (Off mic.)

15 MS. COURIC: Sorry?

16 SPEAKER: 1946.

17 MS. COURIC: 1946.

18 SPEAKER: To '64?

19 MS. COURIC: To, like -- no, like, is it to '64?  
20 No. I think it's, like, to '60.

21 SPEAKER: -- GENEX came in.

22 MS. COURIC: Right.

1           SPEAKER: So there are parents out there who are  
2 younger than baby boomers. And I don't know -- Lori is,  
3 but --

4           MS. COURIC: Is it '46 to what -- '64?

5           SPEAKER: Much younger.

6           MS. COURIC: Those are really young baby  
7 boomers. Okay.

8           SPEAKER: You're -- oh, you're next. Okay. So  
9 -- yeah.

10          MS. GOTTLIEB: But you know, I think that a lot  
11 of parents are afraid of having their kids not like them,  
12 which is a big thing. You know, they don't want their  
13 kids to feel like they are like the mean parents.

14          MS. COURIC: But why?

15          MS. GOTTLIEB: Because I think that for a lot of  
16 us it's as Wendy Mogel said. You know, she has this great  
17 line -- "Our children are not our masterpieces." But I  
18 think in a lot of ways we feel like they are, that they're  
19 fragile, that they are an extension of us in a way that in  
20 previous generations they weren't considered and that, you  
21 know, we like to -- I mean can I say something you said  
22 from breakfast today about --

1 MS. COURIC: Maybe.

2 (Laughter)

3 MS. GOTTLIEB: Katie has a very accomplished  
4 daughter. And she was saying that it actually makes her  
5 feel good to say that her daughter goes to Yale.

6 MS. COURIC: It does. I admit it.

7 MS. GOTTLIEB: But -- and that's so normal. And  
8 I think that's the thing is that, you know, there's where  
9 is the line between sort of, you know, parental pride and  
10 then getting our own sense of -- the holes in our own  
11 lives filled by the accomplishments of our children.

12 MS. COURIC: Right. And what about -- well,  
13 Lori, let's talk about sort of the changing social fabric  
14 of society and why parents gravitate to their children  
15 sort of for their whole world --

16 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right.

17 MS. COURIC: -- opposed to what it was like.  
18 And Madeline, you can jump in here too.

19 MS. LEVINE: Yeah. Well, one of the things I  
20 think about that is that we're doing a very bad job of  
21 presenting adulthood as something to strive for. So -- I  
22 have three sons which meant I spent years, if not decades,

1 in the bleachers because that's what everybody did. I  
2 mean they were on the select team and -- you see, I got  
3 that in.

4 (Laughter)

5 MS. LEVINE: And so I went like every other  
6 parent to see them every week for years because there is a  
7 big age difference between them. And at some point, I  
8 realized, like -- my husband is in the audience here -- I  
9 was going to the East Bay of the Bay Area and he was going  
10 up North. And we hadn't seen each other for weekends at a  
11 time.

12 And what did we do? We sort of sat passively in  
13 the bleachers week after week after week watching children  
14 play a game. And when I realized that and realized I  
15 could have had brunch with my husband, I could have spent  
16 some time with a girlfriend, I could have learned  
17 something about broadcasting or jewelry-making --

18 MS. COURIC: Or you could have written another  
19 book.

20 MS. LEVINE: I could have -- you know, sort of  
21 more downtime for myself. And I thought about it in terms  
22 of how attractive does that look as some model of

1 adulthood that your mom has nothing to do every single  
2 solitary weekend, but watch you pick a ball.

3 (Applause)

4 SPEAKER: And --

5 SPEAKER: Went to the bleachers.

6 MS. LEVINE: The bleachers. And if you turn it  
7 around, you know, if you think about what would it be  
8 like, you know -- like, I like folding laundry, right? So  
9 what would it be like if I said to my kids, you know, I  
10 really enjoy folding laundry. I'm pretty good at it. So  
11 for the next, you know, 6 months on Saturday morning,  
12 we're going to watch me fold.

13 (Laughter)

14 SPEAKER: Yeah.

15 MS. LEVINE: So, you know, we've lost the sense  
16 of, I think, what it means to be an adult and have adult  
17 pursuits because we're so terrified that if we take a  
18 minute off, our kid will not have the leg up that they  
19 would had if we were on constant observation of them. And  
20 it's a big mistake.

21 MS. COURIC: And this morning, Lori, we were  
22 talking about the fact that -- I mean I think there is

1 probably a happy middle ground, which we can talk about  
2 later, between over-parenting and under-parenting and  
3 being completely detached --

4 SPEAKER: Right.

5 MS. COURIC: So we were talking about in the  
6 '50s and '60s you were sort of -- your social sphere did  
7 not revolve so much around your kids.

8 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right.

9 MS. COURIC: And now today, it's really so  
10 child-centric that a lot of parents don't have a life  
11 beyond that.

12 MS. GOTTLIEB: That's right. And, you know,  
13 there's a difference between being loved and constantly  
14 monitored. And what we do is we constantly monitor our  
15 children. And we think that we're showing them that we  
16 love them by doing that. But actually, it doesn't have  
17 that effect on them.

18 And in the -- what we were talking about this  
19 morning was that when you look at the divorce rate, when  
20 you look at the number of single parents out there, you  
21 look at parents who don't have their own lives, as  
22 Madeline said, they get a lot of gratification from their

1 children. Part of it is that we are friendlier with our  
2 children than previous generations.

3           There's less of a hierarchy and in some ways  
4 that's good and in some ways it can get a little enmeshed.  
5 So, you know, we treat our kids like friends and then we  
6 don't spend time with our own friends. We enjoy their  
7 company, which is nice, but if we depend on their company,  
8 that's maybe where we're crossing the line.

9           MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: You know, a long time ago  
10 Freud wrote an essay called "On Narcissism." And it  
11 starts out saying that parental love is fundamentally  
12 narcissistic. That seems to be a surprise to people these  
13 days, you know. They think of it as a selfless love, like  
14 I'm giving my selfless love to someone. Actually what  
15 you're doing is you're sort of producing an extension of  
16 yourself that you don't feel bad boasting about, you know.

17           And so there's this way in which you can indulge  
18 your boastfulness about this extension of yourself and you  
19 don't seem to be boasting about yourself. And I think  
20 there's a kind of cultural setup about that now that makes  
21 it -- you know, I have been sitting back not saying  
22 anything about my children and I have also a grandson who

1 is really great. But, you know --

2 (Laughter)

3 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: -- I worked hard not to  
4 say that in ways that I think are, you know, not useful,  
5 not useful. It's, like, we don't think about the words we  
6 use often in conversation about our children. We probably  
7 do think carefully about ourselves because it would be  
8 embarrassing to boast about yourself, how great you are at  
9 folding laundry.

10 SPEAKER: Yes, but --

11 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: You know, you don't think  
12 other people would like to hear that, but --

13 SPEAKER: When you look at Facebook and people  
14 are posting what they post about their children --

15 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Yes, now they --

16 SPEAKER: -- and that's where you can see what  
17 Polly is talking about, which is -- which, by the way,  
18 I've done too.

19 (Laughter)

20 SPEAKER: Look at my son doing this. But you  
21 see these, you know, my child -- this is not me, by the  
22 way -- but you'd see people who would post things, like,



1 look at my child at the science fair who won this, or look  
2 at my child playing the violin at age 4, you know,  
3 whatever it is. And then how many likes do you get. And  
4 then we get a little narcissistic kick from all the little  
5 likes that, you know -- or all the comments that people  
6 make because it is a reflection on us.

7           And if you look at the posts on Facebook and you  
8 look at how many people -- you know, do you really want to  
9 go to -- if you went to your friend's house in the old  
10 days and they got out the photo albums and they started  
11 flipping through all these albums and showing you the  
12 videos of their kids and all of that, you would think  
13 these people are narcissist, they're crazy, what are they  
14 doing. But that's what people are doing on Facebook every  
15 day.

16           MS. COURIC: Well, how much have real-world  
17 problems fed into this? Because I'd sort of thought  
18 about, you know, what's happening in externally that's  
19 creating this problem. And, you know, I think about sort  
20 of the safety and security issues of raising kids today.  
21 You know, I used to ride my banana seater all over  
22 Arlington, Virginia, for hours and hours and hours when I

1 was a kid. And my parents were, like, whatever.

2           And now, I feel like because of all the issues  
3 with child safety and pedophiles and predators, you know,  
4 you feel that you have to be, for safety reasons, more  
5 attached to your child. And also for economic reasons.  
6 You know, I think we've heard so many times that our kids  
7 are going to be less well off than their parents'  
8 generation.

9           So you feel, gosh, I have to make sure my kid  
10 can compete and -- you know, in the future. So I have to  
11 give him or her every possible advantage. So aren't there  
12 a lot of external factors for creating this anxiety that  
13 makes people over-parent?

14           MS. LEVINE: But one of the really interesting  
15 issues that you just raised was it felt safe for you back  
16 then. It's actually safer now.

17           SPEAKER: Safer now. It is safer now.

18           MS. LEVINE: So the observation that there's  
19 pedophiles out there and there's, you know, things to be  
20 afraid of, you know, frankly it's the news that brings  
21 that to us 24 hours a day that makes people feel --

22           (Applause)

1 (Laughter)

2 MS. COURIC: Don't look at me when you say that,  
3 Madeline. That's cable news.

4 (Laughter)

5 SPEAKER: Well, maybe it's also the anxiety that  
6 the parent feels that is so much -- you know, my parent's  
7 knew that there were things that weren't safe. But they  
8 weren't constantly focused on that. They were focused on  
9 their own lives and their -- whatever they were about.  
10 So, you know, it is the fact that it's safer now.

11 SPEAKER: Right, but --

12 MS. GOTTLIEB: But --

13 SPEAKER: Go ahead.

14 MS. GOTTLIEB: Well, you know, your kid has --  
15 you know, statistically your kid has more of a chance of  
16 being injured in a car that you are driving, that you are  
17 actually, you know, driving your child than, you know,  
18 having one of these other terrible things befall them.

19 But I think that because we're -- you know,  
20 we're on the Internet all the time, because we're watching  
21 the news 24 hours a day, all of those things, we feel like  
22 it's everywhere. And so, you know, it makes sense that we

1 want to protect our kids. But the other part of it is we  
2 don't have the community protecting us in the same way.

3 SPEAKER: Yeah.

4 MS. GOTTLIEB: So we're very individualistic now  
5 in terms of the way we raise our children. The kids are  
6 not going out to play in the neighborhood. We don't have  
7 -- because many -- in many households two parents are  
8 working, we don't have sort of the moms talking over the  
9 fence and you know that kid down the street and you'll  
10 protect him, because you know, all the moms kind of know  
11 all the kids in the neighborhood. So we don't feel like  
12 we have that supervision that we had.

13 MS. COURIC: What about the economy, Madeline?  
14 We were talking about that this morning too, this sort of  
15 feeling that, oh my God, my kid's got to compete. We're  
16 losing, you know, the race in global competition. And the  
17 job market is so -- you know, jobs are so scarce, I have  
18 to make sure my child achieves, achieves, achieves.

19 MS. LEVINE: Right. So everybody is concerned  
20 about their child being able to support themselves and get  
21 a job. And actually we're doing the exact things that  
22 would get in the way of our children being successful that

1 way. And I think I told you I was on a panel with one of  
2 the chief engineers of NASA.

3           And he was quite forthcoming about his three  
4 groups of engineers which were Asian engineers, Indian  
5 engineers and American engineers. And so I said, you  
6 know, the obvious question which is, like, are we really  
7 falling behind, or are our skills not as great. And he  
8 said it has nothing to do with our skills, our skills are  
9 every bit as good as other nations.

10           What we don't have are the kind of 21st century  
11 skills that are mandatory. American kids aren't  
12 collaborating. American kids aren't as motivated.  
13 They're the first ones knocking on the door saying, I've  
14 been here 3 months, where's my pay raise. They're the  
15 first ones who say, I can't solve the problem, whereas  
16 other kids just will stay all night long if it takes  
17 staying all night long.

18           So I don't -- I think every time we step in  
19 unnecessarily, every time we don't allow our kids to have  
20 unstructured play, every time we don't allow them to  
21 experience what I call an unsuccessful failure, you know,  
22 every one of us, is my guess, has been guilty of bringing

1 up the lost homework, right. Has anybody here never  
2 brought up the homework -- not left -- I mean, I have, so,  
3 you know, I assume most of you have.

4 In fact, that would be a successful failure. A  
5 10-year-old can cope with the anxiety that comes with, oh  
6 my God, you know, ma, I don't have my homework. You'll  
7 live, you know. And then the kid has to figure that out  
8 for themselves. And we're getting in the way of all those  
9 kinds of things that we call at the end of the day  
10 resilience and that's what -- creativity, resilience,  
11 collaboration, motivation --

12 MS. COURIC: Right.

13 MS. LEVINE: -- that's the whole ball of wax  
14 that everybody is talking about. The only other thing I'd  
15 want to say about that, Katie, is I've been a psychologist  
16 for almost 35 years. This idea that our kids should do as  
17 well as us, I can't say that affluent people are a  
18 particularly happy group of people. I can't say that they  
19 are a particularly unhappy group of people.

20 But this idea that your kid has to -- you know,  
21 the American story is every generation does better, right.  
22 Well, this generation may not. And the question is, so

1 what? Because it -- you --

2 (Applause)

3 MS. LEVINE: Thank you, scattered --

4 (Laughter)

5 MS. LEVINE: You make \$70,000 or more, that  
6 makes a difference. You make \$700 million, it doesn't  
7 make much of a difference.

8 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Yeah. The issue about  
9 happiness kind of enters into all of this, you know. I  
10 mean, I think that parents want their children to do well  
11 because they assume that that will increase their  
12 happiness, that somehow their sense of satisfaction in  
13 life will be deepened. And I have a little story to tell  
14 about somebody who came to see me in therapy, somebody I  
15 call Jason in the book.

16 He was 24 years old, in Vermont just for the  
17 summer because he was working with a landscape architect.  
18 He had graduated from an elite university. He's very,  
19 very good looking, had a family name that you'd recognize.  
20 And he'd spent a year abroad in China. All these things  
21 are sort of requisite these days, I think, for a certain  
22 kind of young person.

1                   And he called me up and he said that he wanted  
2 to see a Jungian analyst. And, you know, he's a young man  
3 and I said, okay, I am one. And he said, okay, can I come  
4 in and see you. So he came in, turned out he majored in  
5 economics so he was pretty naïve about therapy.

6                   (Laughter)

7                   MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: And he -- so he didn't  
8 present his story in a way that was very glossed over. So  
9 he sat down across from me and he said, I suffer from  
10 feelings of superiority.

11                   (Laughter)

12                   MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Now, nobody had ever said  
13 that to me in therapy.

14                   (Laughter)

15                   MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: And I said, well, tell me  
16 more. And he said, you know, I have noticed that when I  
17 meet somebody, at first I'm interested in them, at first  
18 I'm interested in getting to know them, and you know, I  
19 find them attractive or I find them, you know, engaging.  
20 And then some period of time passes and I begin to  
21 deconstruct them.

22                   And I see every way that they're not as good-



1 looking as I am, as intelligent, as well-educated, they  
2 don't have this, they don't have that. And he said inside  
3 of 2 months they're empty and I throw them away. And he  
4 said because of that I am not -- I have decided that I  
5 cannot even meet people socially. I don't go out anymore.  
6 So he was feeling ashamed.

7           He was trying to hang back, cover up this  
8 feeling of superiority after all of this privilege. Now,  
9 he was one of the reasons I decided to write the book. I  
10 mean, I did end up seeing him in therapy. His suffering  
11 was tremendous. His parents would not have understood.  
12 He was his mother's favorite.

13           So, you know, in a certain sort of way he's a  
14 good example of somebody who everybody wanted to do well.  
15 You know, his family wanted him to do well. And over time  
16 I've come to know that he became a therapist.

17           (Laughter)

18           MS. COURIC: Well, there you go.

19           MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: He went to a law school  
20 and then -- yeah.

21           (Laughter)

22           MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: And he went through a law

1 school and it didn't work. He tried to do a rock band and  
2 that didn't work. So he's become a therapist. And I --  
3 you know, I think now he's relatively happy because he's  
4 dealing with the suffering of life. And he's, you know --

5 MS. LEVINE: But you're also talking about, I  
6 think -- is it okay if I jump in?

7 MS. COURIC: Yeah, go for it.

8 MS. LEVINE: You're talking about this  
9 incredibly narrow version of success that we have.

10 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Right.

11 MS. LEVINE: Like, you know, you listed all his  
12 --

13 (Applause)

14 MS. LEVINE: Thank you.

15 (Laughter)

16 MS. LEVINE: -- credentials and stuff like that.

17 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Right.

18 MS. LEVINE: But I think we are so wrong about  
19 what we consider a successful life.

20 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Yes.

21 MS. LEVINE: And that so many of the kids that I  
22 see -- also, you know, *The Price of Privilege* opened with

1 a girl who had incised the word "empty" into her arm, you  
2 know, cut herself --

3 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Yeah.

4 MS. LEVINE: -- which by the way, 17 percent of  
5 kids on, I believe, campuses are self-mutilating. So  
6 there is a --

7 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Yeah.

8 MS. LEVINE: -- absolute epidemic --

9 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Epidemic.

10 MS. LEVINE: -- epidemic of kids who are having  
11 really significant problems. High school girls, 25  
12 percent are clinically depressed, 25 percent of kids on  
13 college campuses are not substance users but substance  
14 abusers, 17 percent self-mutilating.

15 So the -- and I think that part of that has to  
16 do with if all you have is that narrow view and if that's  
17 all people see about you, if you can't really see the  
18 child in front of you, what their talents are, hands-on,  
19 creative, all the different things that kids come with,  
20 you end up putting kids under enormous pressure and they  
21 end up feeling completely unauthentic.

22 MS. COURIC: You know, and in fact when -- and

1 in Lori's article, "How not to land your kid in therapy,"  
2 right, you start by talking about a 20-something --

3 MS. GOTTLIEB: Exactly.

4 MS. COURIC: -- patient who, you know, unlike  
5 patients from yesteryear talked about how screwed up their  
6 parents -- parenting was or their parents were --

7 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right.

8 MS. COURIC: -- had great parents, had every  
9 advantage.

10 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right.

11 MS. COURIC: And yet felt incredibly empty.

12 MS. GOTTLIEB: Yes.

13 MS. COURIC: Can you talk about that patient a  
14 little bit?

15 MS. GOTTLIEB: Yes.

16 MS. COURIC: Because you talked about her in the  
17 article.

18 MS. GOTTLIEB: Yeah, yeah. So, you know,  
19 usually what you -- when you're in graduate school you're  
20 hearing all about, you know, what parents didn't give  
21 their kids, you know, the sort of -- the dismissive  
22 parent, the critical parent, the neglectful parent. And I

1 was getting all of these kids -- I say kids -- young  
2 adults coming in saying, oh, I had great parents, my  
3 parents are my best friends in the whole world.

4           And, you know, they did everything for me. They  
5 were at the birthday parties, they did the homework with  
6 me, they drove me here, they listened to all of my  
7 feelings, they gave me a choice about this, that and the  
8 other thing. When -- they let me take guitar lessons when  
9 I wanted to take guitar and they let me quit when I didn't  
10 like it anymore.

11           (Laughter)

12           MS. GOTTLIEB: You know, all of those things  
13 that they were running interference on and yet here now  
14 you got the kids and they're newly out of college or some  
15 of them are in their early 30s even. And they feel  
16 depressed, they feel anxious, they have trouble making  
17 decisions about little things and big things. They have  
18 trouble committing to a path because when you make a  
19 commitment to one path you're closing off another path.

20           And they have a lot of trouble not having that  
21 option open for them, because when they were younger you  
22 don't like guitar, quit it, go do something else. So, you

1 know, you get a lot of depression and anxiety in this  
2 group that seems to have really loving, really well-  
3 intentioned parents. And they think the problem is that  
4 what parents are doing is very loving and well-  
5 intentioned, but it's not helping their kids.

6           It's not, as Madeline said, you know, what is  
7 our definition of success. They did all the right things  
8 to live up to our culture's definition of success, but  
9 inside they never really cultivated those things like, you  
10 know, disappointment, failure -- failure is a great  
11 motivator, by the way -- you know, humility.

12           As you want the parents to instill in the kids  
13 that you are special to me but not you're special meaning  
14 you're better than everybody else. And they get out in  
15 the world and they're not better than everybody else and  
16 they don't know what to do with it.

17           MS. COURIC: One of the things we talked about  
18 also at breakfast is sort of there's no room today, it  
19 seems to me, for an ordinary or average child. It seems  
20 if you get a B you're a failure and this kind of hyper,  
21 you know, parenting mode or hyper-achievement mode that  
22 we've gotten our kids involved with. Tell, Madeline, the

1 story about when you tried to have that seminar for some  
2 parents in California.

3 MS. LEVINE: Okay. So I do love speaking and  
4 it's usually fairly well-attended. But I gave a talk  
5 entitled "The Average Child" in Marin County.

6 (Laughter)

7 MS. COURIC: And?

8 MS. LEVINE: And that's the end of the story --  
9 nobody came, not one --

10 (Laughter)

11 MS. LEVINE: -- which I guess means there is not  
12 a single average child in the entire county of Marin.

13 MS. COURIC: But the fact of the matter is you  
14 guys were saying to me that 80 percent of people, children  
15 and (inaudible) are average.

16 MS. LEVINE: Sure. If you look at -- sure.

17 SPEAKER: Right. And --

18 MS. COURIC: But why can't we tolerate people  
19 who are not exceptional?

20 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Well, there is a pressure  
21 now to be extraordinary. And that has come with this  
22 whole sort of self-esteem movement in which, you know,

1 kids feel that they have to show up with something very  
2 special in order to fulfill the sense that there is  
3 something extraordinary about them.

4           And that puts them in a frame of mind that is  
5 really kind of a relentless pressure and an enormous  
6 amount of self-focus, like, focusing back on the self  
7 again. And the self-conscious emotions, most of which are  
8 quite negative, like envy and shame and guilt and jealousy  
9 and self-pity, these emotions are very high in this group  
10 and it's often classified as depression.

11           But actually it's more of a shame-based kind of  
12 collection of self-conscious feelings. And so -- and  
13 these kids that have had all these advantages, they end up  
14 actually being obsessed with themselves with a sense that  
15 somehow they can't be just ordinary where actually being  
16 ordinary is a great relief because --

17           MS. COURIC: And more pragmatically a lot of the  
18 things parents are doing are not effective like the  
19 Einstein videos or specializing in a sport, getting a kid  
20 to start going to soccer camp when he or she is 3 years  
21 old.

22           MS. LEVINE: Right.



1 MS. COURIC: And all these kind of hyper-  
2 parenting activities. You're telling me early  
3 intervention isn't really effective.

4 MS. LEVINE: Early intervention -- well, I think  
5 the culture is earlier is better, more is better. And  
6 actually that's absolutely not true. And I know I'm not  
7 supposed to be geeky, but the data --

8 MS. COURIC: No, you can be geeky. I told you,  
9 you can use your data.

10 (Laughter)

11 MS. LEVINE: It is my data. You know, your  
12 child watches *Baby Einstein*. They learn 10 fewer words  
13 per hour watching *Baby Einstein*. You put your child in a  
14 play-based preschool, 3 years later they are doing much  
15 better academically than if they went to an academic  
16 preschool. Child -- early specialization in athletics,  
17 you know, talk to any orthopedists and you have repetitive  
18 stress injuries on very young children. A child had  
19 needed knee surgery by 18 from being a catcher.

20 So it's as if we think we're going to full  
21 development. So what does young -- what does a young  
22 child need? A young child needs to play because it's in

1 play that the world gets miniaturized and they learn how  
2 to do stuff. They -- and it's social.

3           You know, you take something as absolutely  
4 ordinary as the game of chase which looks like nothing is  
5 happening, right. They're just running around. But you  
6 got a chaser and a chasee and a negotiation about who's  
7 the leader, when does the game -- I don't want to play  
8 anymore. Game is over, you know, and now I have nobody to  
9 play with.

10           This is the work of early childhood, not  
11 learning words a few months earlier because it doesn't  
12 matter. You know, Finland, which is the exemplar of  
13 education in the world at this point, doesn't even start  
14 teaching kids until they are 7 years old. So I have just  
15 a slight thing I want to say about we're always incredibly  
16 careful not to say to parents, you didn't do anything  
17 wrong, right. And -- because we're all shrinks and we  
18 don't want --

19           MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: -- want to make people  
20 for worse, you know, it just makes some feel a lot worse.

21           MS. LEVINE: Well, it just makes some feel a lot  
22 worse, but I think -- and I don't know how people feel

1 about this. We have enough data at this point that if  
2 you're ignoring it, you know, if your child has no  
3 downtime, if your child is not sleeping 9 hours a night,  
4 which every single neuroscientist in this country will  
5 tell you is necessary for optimal brain development,  
6 that's not okay.

7           It's not to say you're a bad parent. But I  
8 think that there is enough information out there at this  
9 point that we could -- if we had the will and if we  
10 weren't so afraid that it was going to knock our kids down  
11 a bit, that we would be more proactive and --

12           MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Well, it's a little hard  
13 to apply a corrective, though. This is what I find in  
14 talking to parents because there is this -- within this  
15 sort of perfectionism around parenting -- and I like  
16 Judith Warner's book, you know, *The Perfect Madness*, which  
17 compares sort of mothers in America and mothers in France  
18 and the way we're doing it.

19           Within that framework, it's, like, parents right  
20 away feel like I've got to get it right now doing this.  
21 And that is still another level of trying to interfere. I  
22 mean I think we have to start a new conversation which is

1 what we're doing here. Bring in the kind of information  
2 and then see what we can do to muddle through to change  
3 the culture without making anybody feel too bad about what  
4 -- because everybody is trying to do their best. That's -  
5 -

6 MS. COURIC: One thing I think is important to  
7 point out because when I saw *Race to Nowhere*, you know, I  
8 was really -- which is sort of about homework and the  
9 pressure kids face today. You know, I wanted to know if  
10 these were just problems that were particular to a  
11 specific socio-economic level. And I think the Aspen  
12 Institute sometimes doesn't -- isn't as inclusive as it  
13 could be in terms of lower socio-economic issues in  
14 America.

15 (Applause)

16 MS. COURIC: And so this really does transcend  
17 class because a lot of parents from all different income  
18 levels are putting this kind of pressure on kids. Is that  
19 right?

20 SPEAKER: That's right.

21 MS. GOTTLIEB: And also, you know, the other  
22 side of the coin is there is the earlier, more better that

1 Madeline was talking about. But there is also the parents  
2 who are redshirting their kids, which means that they are  
3 waiting an extra year before they send them to  
4 kindergarten so that they will be a year older and that  
5 they will have a competitive advantage over, you know, the  
6 other kids in the class.

7           They say that it's because oh, my child just  
8 needs more social growth. But what do you do with the  
9 parents when we're talking about socio-economics? You  
10 know, that's something that you have to be able to afford,  
11 first of all, so you can't redshirt a kid if the kid is  
12 kindergarten age. And what are you going to do -- pay  
13 another -- whatever you're paying for childcare for that  
14 year because that's an entire year of expenses.

15           Well, a lot of families don't have that. So  
16 it's kind of a, you know, a high class problem, but again  
17 it's because of the edge. And so this never happened --  
18 when you were 5, you went to kindergarten. Now we have 7-  
19 year old -- people turning 7 in kindergarten. And they're  
20 this tall and nobody thinks that's ridiculous.

21           The other thing I wanted to say is that about  
22 this average idea is that a lot of psychologists nowadays

1 are getting kids sent to them. It used to be that when  
2 kids were sent to a psychologist by the school, it was  
3 kind of -- you know, it was something that the  
4 psychologist was probably going to have to give some bad  
5 news, Like, your child has a learning disability or  
6 something like that.

7           Now, that is what the parents want to hear.  
8 They want to hear your child is dyslexic. Your child has  
9 sensory-processing disorder. Whatever -- your child is a  
10 visual learner, but not a spatial learner, whatever it is  
11 because that explains the B-plus. That explains why your  
12 kid is average even though B-plus is above average  
13 technically, but that helps them feel okay about the fact  
14 that their child is not the star of the class.

15           So if they can get this label, then it helps  
16 them. And psychologists are really flummoxed by this  
17 because why do parents want their kids to have this label,  
18 why is it something that kids are -- you know, the parents  
19 are hoping for. And it's again because it's just that  
20 their kids are not way above average and they can't accept  
21 that that's just what it is.

22           MS. LEVINE: But it's -- I think Katie's point -

1 - and I think it's a really important one is we're talking  
2 about issues that affect an incredibly narrow part of  
3 society in terms of having the time and the resources and  
4 all of that. However, it's also true that we did study at  
5 Stanford and looked at anxiety levels around kids taking  
6 multiple AP courses and kids trying to pass the high  
7 school exit exam.

8           And the level of stress was equivalent. And so  
9 the stress is going -- the resources that people have are  
10 very different, but the level of stress at school, which  
11 was never the number one stressor as long as I've been a  
12 shrink, in a child's life. It was always, you know, think  
13 back to your on adolescence. What was your stressor? It  
14 was, you know, my parents are throwing pots at each other  
15 or --

16           MS. COURIC: -- or my friend didn't let me sit  
17 at the lunch table.

18           MS. LEVINE: That's exactly right. But now the  
19 number one stress, regardless of SESes is school.

20           MS. GOTTLIEB: But even so, when you look at  
21 mainstream magazines like Parents magazine, parenting  
22 magazine, when you look at the cover stories nowadays,

1 there are things, like, boost your newborn's brain. And  
2 you know, that was not on the cover of parenting magazines  
3 when I was a baby because my mother, you know, had  
4 different parenting magazines.

5           So I think that it's all focused on, you know,  
6 achievement and success. And again, as Madeline said  
7 there and Polly too, this very narrow definition of, you  
8 know, what are we trying to do as parents with our  
9 children. And that's where the other-parenting comes  
10 from.

11           MS. COURIC: So what are the ramifications of  
12 this -- you know, we raise these kids, they get to be in  
13 their 20s, so they seem to have a tendency towards  
14 depression or emptiness or kind of no sense of purpose,  
15 right, because they haven't developed these coping skills  
16 yet they feel entitled, which is a bad combo as we  
17 discussed.

18           So what is happening to these kids and what is  
19 happening more macro-cosmically in terms of global  
20 competition. I think it's behind the childhood obesity  
21 crisis because we become short order cooks. And given our  
22 kids, whatever they'll eat instead of what my mom did was,



1 you're eating your peas or you're not leaving the table,  
2 you know instead we're like saying, oh, well, you want  
3 pasta with butter? Let me fix that for you. You don't  
4 have to eat what I've already prepared. I mean ,so what  
5 is it doing for them personally and also what is it doing  
6 to the country at large?

7 MS. LEVINE: I think the big question is sort of  
8 what is it doing for them in terms of their internal  
9 world. So we can talk about, you know, what did it do for  
10 them, can they choose a career, can they succeed in all  
11 these other ways. But I think where it hurts them the  
12 most is in their personal relationships.

13 I think that when we said we want our kids to be  
14 happy, we assumed that they're going to have a fulfilling  
15 relationship, we assumed that they're going to have a nice  
16 group of friends that they can count on and get support  
17 from. But if they don't have the tools for that because  
18 we've been so focused on these other things, you know,  
19 they're really going to suffer in this, you know, what  
20 really are the most important realms of life.

21 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Well, they suffer a lot  
22 in character development, in lying and cheating, and

1 stealing and not knowing what's wrong that because that  
2 seems to them to be a kind of victimless crime because  
3 there isn't an understanding of the social fabric. Like,  
4 you know, I, part time I consult to a military university  
5 and they have a very strong honor code.

6           And it's kind of interesting as a Buddhist to be  
7 consulting to a military university because I've learned a  
8 lot. And I've really learned how discipline and how  
9 training for honor and so on, are very close to a lot of  
10 things that I cherish. And one thing that can happen  
11 there when I'm there is I can leave my keys in my car. I  
12 can leave my computer in the car because actually the  
13 honor code works. And that seems a little shocking. You  
14 know, I mean this is Vermont.

15           So, you know, it might not happen in some other  
16 place, but I think there is a real misunderstanding among  
17 young people about the value of having a social fabric  
18 that holds up the whole community and allows you to relax.  
19 You know, you could just actually relax when you're with  
20 people that aren't lying to you, aren't going to steal,  
21 aren't going to cheat. That's kind of a -- almost an

1 unknown right now. Nobody believes that, you know that it  
2 could be possible.

3           And all of the research on ethics and values in  
4 young people show this trend and that is developing among  
5 all social classes. And so, you know, in a part that  
6 might also be related to the fact that, you know, where  
7 the churches and synagogues used to be there are shopping  
8 malls. So we're also in this kind of period of time where  
9 there's a kind of materialism at every level, and  
10 everybody suffers from it.

11           And I think that the parenting trends that we've  
12 been talking about that leave children without certain  
13 kinds of skills, interpersonal skills, community skills,  
14 character skills also then -- those things will translate  
15 into them as parents. And they, you know --

16           MS. COURIC: I want to -- yeah, I want to give  
17 the audience a chance to ask questions, but before we do,  
18 do you see the pendulum shifting because certainly there  
19 are a lot of articles about this and a lot of people  
20 writing about it. And is there kind of a middle ground  
21 between parenting, like Betty Draper and like the mother -  
22 -

1 (Laughter)

2 MS. COURIC: -- and like the mother who goes to  
3 the job interview with the Darden,, you know, the UVa  
4 business school student. You know, can you give some  
5 really sort of practical advice for parents who want to  
6 let their child -- let their children fail and, you know -  
7 - well, they don't want their children fail, but you know  
8 want to give them the opportunity.

9 (Cross talk)

10 MS. COURIC: I want my kid to fail. I do.

11 (Laughter)

12 MS. COURIC: But no, I mean, you know, who want  
13 to teach them resiliency and want to teach them the  
14 ability to bounce back from setbacks in life. So what  
15 would you tell parents?

16 MS. LEVINE: You know the research is that the  
17 best thing you can do as a parent is to be reliable,  
18 available, consistent and noninterfering. And I think  
19 that if you keep those four things in mind, you know, it's  
20 not so complicated. I mean people have been raising kids  
21 like for a very long -- forever.

22 (Laughter)

1                   MS. LEVINE: And we professionalize parenting.  
2 And I think the one thing to remember in this discussion,  
3 Katie, that hasn't come up is every child is different.  
4 And so, one child may need a certain amount of health and  
5 another child who may just be getting in the way. So, you  
6 know, I don't want to leave the discussion without  
7 acknowledging that the best thing you can do is have a  
8 clear vision of who your particular child is. And then I  
9 think if you're available and consistent and  
10 noninterfering and reliable you'll be --

11                   MS. COURIC: And also you don't see your child -  
12 - your child's achievement as your achievements. I mean  
13 isn't there sort of the healthy distance, Lori?

14                   MS. GOTTLIEB: Yeah, there is. I think, you  
15 know, there is this, you know, -- Winnicott came up with  
16 the "good enough" mother and it can be applied to the  
17 "good enough" father as well. And we forget that we feel  
18 like we have to be the perfect parents and if we're not  
19 the perfect parents we won't get the perfect child, and if  
20 we don't have the perfect child we're going to feel bad  
21 about ourselves.

1                   And so I think we have to remember as Madeline  
2 said it's not as complicated as we're making it that you,  
3 you know, the "good enough" parent is actually really good  
4 for your child as well as really good for you. And the  
5 other thing I wanted to say is, it's kind of like building  
6 up your child's immune system as a parent.

7                   So if you never expose them to any germs, like  
8 failures as a germ or, you know, disappointment or the kid  
9 doesn't, you know -- the friends, picks them out of the  
10 clique, or you know whatever happens and you don't you  
11 know give them an opportunity to be exposed to those  
12 germs, then when they are in college or when they are 23  
13 years old -- and this is a true story, a friend of mine  
14 who is a producer on a -- the *Today Show* said, you know, a  
15 new person was hired, 23 years old, right out of college  
16 and he said, we need this thing right now, we're going  
17 live. And she said, oh, just a minute, I'm checking my  
18 BlackBerry. And he said, I would have been fired for  
19 that, I would have been fired for that.

20                   But these are -- this is what happens this  
21 person had no sort of, you know, their immune system was  
22 very weak. And so this person had never experienced the

1 kinds of things that she needed to have experienced. And  
2 so as parents my advice would be, the best thing you can  
3 do is to help build up their immune systems, let them be  
4 naturally exposed to the germs of childhood.

5 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Yeah, and I would agree  
6 with all of that and I would piggyback on that with the  
7 research that's out there on how kindness, generosity and  
8 gratitude are connected to happiness. And so in  
9 cultivating them within the family, not simply getting  
10 your kid to volunteer in some country that needs -- that's  
11 great too, but within your own family having them pay  
12 attention to what's actually going on.

13 If someone needs help, if someone needs a door  
14 opened, teaching good manners, and the kindness,  
15 generosity and then finally the gratitude. Just asking  
16 regularly and expressing yourself as a parent what you're  
17 grateful for, because that actually increases your  
18 happiness and very little of it increases happiness quite  
19 a lot.

20 And so I would add to that picture of the  
21 resilience and the perseverance that come with the kind of  
22 parent that you described and the kind of parent you

1 described, that there is this other thing as well that's  
2 been well-established by research too.

3 MS. COURIC: Well, you're never going to have a  
4 cheaper therapy session than today

5 (Laughter)

6 (Applause)

7 MS. COURIC: So I sort of suggest that if you  
8 like to have some questions we have Lilly, Wahuva Lilly  
9 (phonetic), UVa grad, over there who's going to have a mic  
10 and also Brad (phonetic) on the other side. So go ahead.

11 SPEAKER: Yes, the sound -- can everyone hear  
12 me?

13 MS. COURIC: Yeah. You can stand, maybe that  
14 would be helpful. Thank you.

15 SPEAKER: okay. The panel hasn't talked about  
16 what the monitoring should be with computers and as kids  
17 are spending more time on the Internet. And I'm just  
18 curious as to what the panels feels the appropriate  
19 monitoring, and what parents can do, and what do you think  
20 the right thing to do is with the Internet with kids and  
21 being on the computer?



1 MS. LEVINE: Before I go, let somebody else  
2 answer what you do with your kids around that, but I would  
3 say modeling for them some boundaries around technology.  
4 If you have your BlackBerry when you're tucking your kid  
5 in at night and you're checking that, if you have your  
6 BlackBerry at the dinner table by telling them ,no, you  
7 can't do this that's going to be very confusing for them.

8 MS. COURIC: What about other kind of  
9 monitoring, do you guys have any advice?

10 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Well, you know, we  
11 learned this warning that children under 2 should have no  
12 exposure to this, and that's what the American Academy of  
13 Pediatrics says. You know it becomes really hard in  
14 adolescents, right. When your kid is going to bed you say  
15 good night and you've gone to sleep. And it's 1:00  
16 o'clock in the morning and your kid is still, you know, on  
17 Facebook and twittering and stuff like that.

18 MS. COURIC: And you see the green light under  
19 their sheet, yeah.

20 (Laughter)

21 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: So there are big pluses  
22 and big minuses. Technology is here to stay and it's

1 outpaced, it's happened so quickly, it's outpaced, one,  
2 the research on it and two, our capacity to know how to  
3 deal with it well. So I think most professionals would  
4 say, you know, if your kid is spending 2 hours a day  
5 between Facebook and whatever screen that's okay. But if  
6 at the point where it starts to squeeze out real life it  
7 becomes problematic.

8           So last year at NYU for the first time they did  
9 in orientation something called "virtual Facebook." And  
10 that was because they had so many kids who felt that they  
11 didn't know how to poke somebody in real life, which would  
12 be looking at you and saying, you know, thanks for your  
13 question.

14           So when it starts, you know, when your kid is  
15 doing 3, and 4, and 5 hours and particularly around what  
16 we know is a particular round of aggressive games for  
17 aggressive boys that's a really kind of toxic combination.  
18 But it's also like the corner store for kids. It's where  
19 they hang out. It's part of their culture.

20           I think when it starts to interfere with other  
21 activities, particularly social activities that you need  
22 to come in. And parents come in all the time and say but

1 what can I do? Well, take the plug out, you know, really  
2 it's not rocket science. So you have to, you know, --  
3 and then expect to tolerating the kid going, you're the  
4 worst mother in the world, then you go, okay, so I am.  
5 And you know --

6 MS. COURIC: Okay. I think there is another  
7 question. Lilly, yeah. Yeah, go ahead, sorry.

8 RYAN: My name is Ryan. Thank you very much for  
9 speaking tonight, I thought you guys did an excellent job.  
10 And I agree with just about everything that you all said.  
11 And I'll say this, did you ever the -- drawing a  
12 relationship or a correlation between over-parenting and  
13 then over -- I guess, welfaring in America as well as  
14 their correlation to what we do in America and what the  
15 government does and how much support we give to certain  
16 people. And if that actually is counterintuitive and  
17 doesn't actually help them but hurts them because there's  
18 always a safety net underneath them. Have you ever drawn  
19 a line or a connection to that or had an opinion on that  
20 or not?

21 MS. COURIC: That's an interesting question.

22 (Laughter)

1 MS. COURIC: Okay, go ahead.

2 (Laughter)

3 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: I'll say this I think  
4 that when it come -- now this is my view, it's, you know,  
5 this is the Aspen institute, this is my own view. If we  
6 really want an educated, well-functioning citizenry we do  
7 need to support it and it needs to have the underlying  
8 foundation for everybody to have education, to have proper  
9 health care. Otherwise, you cannot have an individual who  
10 functions well. And so, I don't see us in any way as a  
11 culture overdoing that piece of it. You know I think  
12 we're underdoing it.

13 (Applause)

14 MS. COURIC: It was interesting when Lori's  
15 article came out in the *Atlantic*. I thought it was really  
16 interesting and I tweeted it. And I thought one of the  
17 most interesting responses was, isn't underparenting in  
18 America a bigger problem than overparenting?

19 SPEAKER: Uh-huh.

20 MS. COURIC: So I mean what do you think of that  
21 comment? I mean wouldn't you say -- .

1           SPEAKER: I think there's a lot of validity to  
2 that. You know, I mean I think that's what striking a  
3 balance in parenting is something that as a country we  
4 struggle with because we have these two extremes. But  
5 it's very hard for us to find the middle. On the one  
6 hand, it's people who, you know, need to be educated about  
7 it and can have choice about it which is all of us here,  
8 and then on the other hand, people who don't have the  
9 resources. And so that's a different problem.

10           MS. COURIC: And while the anxiety level, you  
11 know, Madeline, may exist across socioeconomic lines,  
12 there are certainly so many children in poverty who don't  
13 have the benefit of really any kind of adequate parenting.

14           MS. LEVINE: Absolutely.

15           MS. COURIC: So that's important to point out.  
16 Okay, anyone else have a question?

17           SPEAKER: Hi, how are you?

18           MS. COURIC: Good. How are you?

19           SPEAKER: I'm in the "perfect storm" for all  
20 three of your couches because I'm a boomer, and the last  
21 time I saw Katie was at the 2002 Olympics when my son won  
22 a medal.

1 (Laughter)

2 (Cross talk)

3 MS. COURIC: You just had to get that in didn't  
4 you.

5 SPEAKER: That was a great segue we just did.  
6 And --

7 MS. COURIC: What was it in by the way?

8 SPEAKER: Parallel giant slalom snowboard  
9 racing.

10 MS. COURIC: Wow, impressive. Okay.

11 SPEAKER: Anyway, the point is now I'm in a  
12 position of incredible responsibility. And that is I a  
13 public school college counselor. And I want to propose a  
14 position for parents that I'm working with, and I would  
15 like your comments on it. And it's the parenting paradigm  
16 shift from true parenting of my parents' generation, the  
17 cross between Great Santini and Frankenstein.

18 (Laughter)

19 SPEAKER: And the new parenting which is that  
20 juxtaposition of over and under parenting, to a parent as  
21 a partner. Around 16, 17, 18 -- I asked my kids at the  
22 public school to ask their parents into this process of a

1 post-secondary option exploration to come in as partners.

2 After all, the parents are paying for it.

3           The parents have to be consulted. It has a huge

4 impact on the family. And I'm asking for your comments on

5 is there a way for parents to reenter the conversation as

6 perhaps a partner in a process rather than the

7 authoritative figure or the authority or the expert.

8           MS. COURIC: Can I just ask you a quick

9 question. When you ask parents to get involved, what's

10 the response?

11           SPEAKER: May of them are here tonight.

12 Parents? Oh.

13           (Laughter)

14           MS. COURIC: Awkward?

15           (Laughter)

16           SPEAKER: No, not awkward. These parents are

17 great partners to their kids and I think they do make the

18 shift. And I'm thinking it's a prescription. It does

19 work when it's invited by the kids to come into the

20 process as partners. There's a new relationship, there's

21 a conversation on equal ground of what does this mean to

1 the family if I pick Yale over Colorado Mountain College  
2 here. What does it mean?

3           There is a new grounding and a new conversation  
4 that takes place. And I would just like to think there is  
5 some ground between over and under, that's called the  
6 partnership parenting at a certain age, certainly not at  
7 4, you get into those things -- with them as a partner.  
8 But is there a place in your consultation model that  
9 allows parents back in as partners.

10           SPEAKER: I think part of the reason that kids  
11 might be reluctant to bring their parents in is that  
12 they're at that developmental stage where they are trying  
13 to establish themselves and their sense of separation and  
14 individuation from their parents.

15           And what they're concerned about is that while I  
16 think they do value their parent's input, but they don't  
17 want to get kind of stuck by what their parents wants.  
18 They don't want that to override their own desires, they  
19 want to be heard, and part of them is afraid that that  
20 might happen.



1 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Well, I mean I think the  
2 biggest message around college is that college is a fit,  
3 not a prize, right? And that --

4 (Applause)

5 SPEAKER: It's my -- it's over my door.

6 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: A lot of scattered  
7 applause here, I can't quite --

8 (Laughter)

9 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: But you know, I think  
10 that clearly it's a collaboration but I think that -- it  
11 has to feel like the child's project. I think it's  
12 actually better if the child feels I'd like my parents to  
13 participate in than if they're sort of ordered to have the  
14 parent participate in it.

15 So and you know, it goes back to the same thing.  
16 What happens on panels like this is it's always like  
17 there's one red light, bring the parent in, really good  
18 idea, or, don't have to bring the parent in, you know, it  
19 takes -- and it's not like that. There are kids who  
20 really benefit from having their parents collaborate with  
21 them, and there are kids who say, you know, it's my space,

1 it's my decision. You went to college already, I need to  
2 think about it.

3           And then, ultimately, if they are given enough  
4 space then come back to you and say what do you think  
5 about that. So I don't think there's really a single  
6 answer. I think it depends on the kid and the  
7 relationship that they have with their parents, but I  
8 completely agree with you developmentally. It's the  
9 developmental stage of independence.

10           And so the kid has to feel like they own that  
11 decision. And that it's not the residue of a parent's  
12 disappointment. They never got into Yale, you know the  
13 family got divorced or the brothers have had a father  
14 where all the kids went except the one father who didn't  
15 get in. And goddammit his kid was going to Yale to make  
16 up for his, you know, his disappointment in life.

17           And I think kids are really very sensitive to  
18 that. So I think you let them --ideally, you let them  
19 lead and encourage a collaboration.

20           MS. COURIC: And I will say not getting into  
21 your first choice is a really good thing because that is  
22 the first thing that ever happened to me. You know, my

1 sisters both went into Smith. They love the sisters in  
2 Smith and I got out flat out rejected, not even waiting-  
3 listed. It was devastating, but it worked out. So I  
4 always tell people it's okay if you don't -- you know, if  
5 you -- and my parents were -- they didn't care of one way  
6 or the other by the way. They were happy to send me in  
7 state.

8 (Laughter)

9 SPEAKER: I wanted to come back to something  
10 that she said because I understood her differently than  
11 anyone else did here. I understood you as saying you  
12 wanted to bring the family together so that the question  
13 about college could be a kind of communal question where  
14 people could look at the bigger picture of what it's going  
15 to cost the family, what it's going to mean to each member  
16 of the family. And so it doesn't end up simply being,  
17 here I am, wanting to go to Yale and I don't care about  
18 what it means to the rest of my family.

19 And this the kind of thing that I think is a  
20 very good beginning process to introduce the idea back  
21 that you become a member of a family by having  
22 responsibilities to that family not by being born into it.

1 MS. COURIC: But also giving the child the real  
2 voice in the process.

3 SPEAKER: Well, yes, giving the child the voice  
4 but not the only voice.

5 MS. COURIC: Right.

6 SPEAKER: You know, I think we've got this idea  
7 now, if you're born into a family you're in that family.  
8 There has never been a time historically, where was such a  
9 sort of economic and social disadvantage to have children.  
10 It exhausts people now. You know, the whole reason for  
11 having children originally was that they're actually  
12 prepared to work along with the family.

13 (Laughter)

14 MS. COURIC: Yeah.

15 SPEAKER: Than it was a neutral and now it's,  
16 you know, it exhausts the resources of the parents --

17 MS. COURIC: Yeah, could help -- they could help  
18 on the farm.

19 SPEAKER: Yeah. So, yeah, I think she's saying,  
20 you know, let's come back to the table and look at the  
21 whole family even in relation to one person wanting to go  
22 to Yale. And --

1 MS. COURIC: Yale is getting a really bad rap  
2 tonight I'd like to say. But they'll survive, Madeline.

3 (Laughter)

4 MS. COURIC: I think we have time for maybe one  
5 more question.

6 SPEAKER: Can I say one thing?

7 MS. COURIC: Okay. Yeah, yeah, oh, God, yeah.

8 SPEAKER: I just want you to know because we've  
9 done (inaudible) talking today that they did a study and  
10 they looked at kids who are accepted at Yale. And those  
11 who went and those who didn't go to Yale, and 20 years  
12 down the line they don't look any different. So the  
13 notion that --

14 (Laughter)

15 MS. COURIC: Okay. Wait, I think we have a --

16 SPEAKER: There's somebody back there.

17 MS. COURIC: Oh, hi. Oh, hi, Donna (phonetic).  
18 My friend from New York, I spent with. Go ahead.

19 DONNA: When you talked about good enough  
20 mothering or parenting, I think it's very valid. I think  
21 we all want to strive to be good enough. My issue is I  
22 have three children in private school and I don't think

1 the private schools really help with that because they  
2 require either AP classes or advanced honors classes. So  
3 when you want your child to get that 9 hours of sleep or  
4 you want them to do the best that they can, the schools  
5 aren't supporting us in that regard.

6           And I'm wondering how as a parent body, we can  
7 get the schools to help us, support us in making it less  
8 pressured, less difficult, as is the ways to know where --  
9 which you alluded to earlier. I think it becomes very  
10 competitive, like two-fourth of them aren't working  
11 together.

12           MS. COURIC: I agree.

13           SPEAKER: Right.

14           MS. COURIC: I mean the idea of letting --  
15 having my daughter sleep 9 hours a night is such a joke,  
16 because she's more self-motivated. I'm not saying study,  
17 study, study. She is feeling the internal pressure of  
18 competing with her classmates. So what am I supposed to  
19 say? Turn off the lights and go to sleep right now?  
20 Which I sometimes do by the way.

21           (Laughter)

1 MS. COURIC: Ms. Madeline is going to say yes,  
2 that's why you're supposed to do.

3 (Laughter)

4 MS. LEVINE: That's a good idea, (inaudible)  
5 told her. I co-founded an organization called Challenge  
6 Success at Stanford. And one of the things we do is rent  
7 about a 100 schools in America and we're trying to get the  
8 schools to take all these kinds of best practices which we  
9 know, like we know if you have 2 hours of homework, 2-1/2  
10 hours of homework, you learn. And if you have more than  
11 that, in general you degrade learning. Okay? So there is  
12 no point in doing 4 hours of homework.

13 But you're exactly right. That's a real hot-  
14 button issue in the schools and you can't sleep if you  
15 have 4 hours of homework. And I think frankly, that it  
16 takes -- as Vicki (phonetic) who is here -- it takes sort  
17 of a groundswell of parents saying, enough. You know that  
18 was -- this idea that parents and kids are equal  
19 participants is just wrong. There has always been a  
20 parent child gradient because we've been a lot longer and  
21 we know more and we're supposed to guide our children.  
22 And so to extent to which parents and their communities

1 gets together and walk into the schools and say, I know  
2 you know that 4 hours of homework a night is not my  
3 child's best interests. What are we going to do about it?

4           And I think it really comes from, you know, I'll  
5 talk for moms, When they sprayed chemicals in my  
6 community, our own apples, every one of us was out with a  
7 sign saying, you know, don't poison our children. This is  
8 so much more toxic what is going on now. And I think moms  
9 and dads and everybody else to get together and challenge  
10 it. It's like, you know, take that child or take that  
11 piñata. I mean we have to be active.

12           MS. COURIC: And I also think that you can be  
13 active in your home. So a lot of parents will say well my  
14 kid doesn't take no for an answer, or, my teenager doesn't  
15 take no for an answer. And that's because you're not  
16 actually telling them, no. So there is reason that  
17 they're not. It's like -- recently I was in a shoe store  
18 with this -- with a little kid, and a mom, you know, was  
19 saying that I'm going to count to three and if you don't  
20 stop that then, you know, we're going to leave right away  
21 and you're not going to get any shoes. And so the mom  
22 goes, one, two --



1 SPEAKER: Two-and-half.

2 (Laughter)

3 MS. COURIC: No, she didn't even say -- instead  
4 of saying three she just said, okay, we'll take the  
5 sandals and the white ones and we're out of here.

6 (Laughter)

7 MS. COURIC: You know, so what did the girl  
8 learn? That my mom's going to count to three and I'm  
9 going to get the shoes anyway.

10 But we do that with sleep too. You know, like  
11 you need to go to sleep, you need to do this but we don't  
12 actually enforce that because part of us feels guilty  
13 that, well then they're not going to keep up with all  
14 their friends who stayed up till 1:00 in the morning to do  
15 their homework. And it's confusing because as therapists  
16 we find it ironic that often we're telling parents, you  
17 know, you need to pay less attention to your kid's school  
18 work, you need to pay less attention to their feelings --

19 SPEAKER: Right.

20 MS. COURIC: -- in a way because they're over  
21 invested in their feelings. And then the school is  
22 saying, well, you know, actually it's Multicultural Day

1 and you have to cook this -- well, what is that doing, you  
2 know, you're -- the parent is doing all the homework. The  
3 parent is the one who's worrying about the AP classes and  
4 what's due and so there's a lot of pressure on parents.

5 SPEAKER: And also there may be some -- I mean,  
6 to be real for a minute there maybe some disadvantages to  
7 telling your child, I'm sorry, honey, it's bedtime. You  
8 know, I just went to the Aspen Institute and I heard all  
9 these neuroscientists say you better go to sleep, right.

10 (Laughter)

11 SPEAKER: So there may be a short-term decrement  
12 to that. But, you know, we think so short-term. It's  
13 like what grade did you get this week, or, how did you do  
14 at the end of the semester, or, how did you do at  
15 graduation, what's your GPA. It's almost like a business  
16 model of -- you know, what's the shareholder return at the  
17 end of the quarter.

18 MS. COURIC: Right.

19 (Laughter)

20 SPEAKER: I think we have to think way further  
21 out than that, you know. My kids are 20 to 30 now and I'm  
22 just starting to get a sense of what I did right and what

1 I did wrong. And you want to look at success for your kid  
2 then, not whether or not, you know, they got a three/one  
3 instead of a three/four or a three -- or a four/one in  
4 this group, you know, instead of a four/four --

5 (Laughter)

6 SPEAKER: -- on their test. It's just way to  
7 short-term thinking.

8 MS. COURIC: I think we have one more question.

9 SPEAKER: Hi. I want to profess what I -- my  
10 question just by saying I believe in everything that you  
11 say, but I do want to ask what you all think parents are  
12 doing better or right now compared to say a generation ago  
13 with perhaps positive consequences for the children?

14 MS COURIC: That's a nice positive way to end  
15 this panel.

16 SPEAKER: Thank you, thank you.

17 (Applause)

18 MS. YOUNG-EISENDRATH: Well, I think that  
19 parents actually understand a lot more about child  
20 development than they had previously. And there's a lot  
21 less harm being done in terms of, you know, treating  
22 children aggressively, isolating them, doing so many

1 things that were developmentally wrong for them and  
2 mistimed. I think parents are interested in what is the  
3 timeliness of child development, how can you sort of  
4 cooperate with the natural developmental processes and  
5 strengthen those, even though some of the things that  
6 we've talked about in terms of over parenting interfere  
7 with the natural processes.

8           Still, I find parents interested in reading,  
9 interested in studying child development. And that there  
10 is a kind of a knowledge that we have of our children that  
11 was not there previously. And if we can combine it with  
12 the things that we're learning about, really returning  
13 that sort of leadership authority role to the parent,  
14 working with the negative emotions so that we don't seem  
15 to want to scrape them away, because there really are more  
16 negative emotions in toto in life than positive ones. And  
17 so if you're trying to protect your child from feeling bad  
18 about something this is not good preparation for life.

19           But, you know, in the framework of understanding  
20 more about your child, using this kind of information I  
21 think would produce the kind of parenting that, you know,  
22 we'd really be sort of looking for and benefiting from as

1 a culture too. So I actually do find parents very, very  
2 motivated to understand. They're not necessarily  
3 motivated to short-circuit their own narcissism. That's  
4 the problem --

5 (Laughter)

6 MS. COURIC: Lori.

7 MS. GOTTLIEB: I think that what parents are  
8 doing really well is that they are enjoying their children  
9 in a new way.

10 SPEAKER: Yeah.

11 MS. GOTTLIEB: That they really delight in their  
12 children, and I think that that's really lovely that they  
13 spend -- they really enjoy spending time with their kids,  
14 they really enjoy having conversations with their kids,  
15 they really enjoy passing down stories, and sharing  
16 moments with their kids that a lot of kids from previous  
17 generations didn't have. They don't have those memories  
18 with their parents.

19 And I think when I see a lot of kids now who are  
20 in their 20s and 30s, especially maybe in the -- maybe 15  
21 to 25 group a lot of their really nice experiences are how  
22 much they really know their parents, how much time their

1 parents spend with them, not necessarily in, you know, the  
2 actual increments of time, but how much they devoted to  
3 the time that they did spend together that it was really  
4 joyful for both the child and the parent.

5 MS. COURIC: Madeline.

6 MS. LEVINE: Yeah, I would agree with that a  
7 great deal. And I think -- I think communication is good.  
8 I think, you know, in the old days like parents didn't  
9 really listen to kids. And I think parents now sometimes  
10 spend too much time listening to their kids, but that they  
11 know their children and that they are interested in them.  
12 And that they have a kind of pleasure in their daily  
13 development which is, you know, wonderful and lovely. And  
14 I think that's a big positive.

15 MS. COURIC: Well, ladies.

16 (Laughter)

17 MS.COURIC: Polly, Lori, Madeline, thank you all  
18 so much.

19 SPEAKER: Thank you.

20 SPEAKER: Thank you.

21 (Applause)

