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WHAT IS THE GOAL OF PARENTING?

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. MILLER: My name is Jamie Miller, I'm with the Aspen Institute, and I'm pleased to welcome you this morning to "What is the Goal of Parenting?"

If you could please turn off your cell phones and wait -- during the q-and-a portion wait for the microphone to come to you, we'll have runners who'll get you a mike, and that way everyone can hear you.

We'll get started in just a second, but I would like to start out by introducing and thanking our moderator Lori Gottlieb. She is a therapist and frequent writer about parenting issues. She's based in L.A. and she actually helped inspire this subject track on "The 21st Century Child," with an article she wrote in the July-August issue of *The Atlantic* last year. It was called, "How to Land Your Kids in Therapy," which is actually the topic of -- session we're doing tonight. So if that is a goal of yours, you should definitely come.

(Laughter)

MS. MILLER: But without further ado I'll turn it over to Lori. I also want to thank her because she

1 really did help us shape a lot of the conversations that
2 we have here. So she's a participant and also an advisor
3 and we're grateful for her input.

4 MS. GOTTLIEB: Thanks Jamie. So I'm going to
5 introduce the panelists as we explore this question of
6 what is the goal of parenting. And I should say that I'm
7 going to mention everybody's kids on this panel because
8 we're all parents, which means that we both do and do not
9 know what we're talking about.

10 (Laughter)

11 MS. GOTTLIEB: With that caveat, Amy Chua is a
12 law professor at Harvard and you probably --

13 MS. CHUA: Yeah, Yale.

14 MS. GOTTLIEB: Oh, Yale, sorry. Oh, sorry.

15 (Laughter)

16 MS. GOTTLIEB: We've got Harvard right there.
17 I'm only just mixed those two up. Amy's a law professor
18 at Yale and she's probably -- even though she's written
19 two other bestselling books, she's probably best known for
20 her *Tiger Mom* book, that we will be discussing shortly.
21 Erica Christakis -- I'm going to read now because I don't
22 want to mix up schools --

1 (Laughter)

2 MS. GOTTLIEB: -- is an early childhood
3 educator, former teacher, education consultant and current
4 college administrator at Harvard University where she
5 lives and works among 400 and as she put it "high-
6 maintenance Harvard undergraduates." She writes about
7 issues affecting young people and she is a weekly
8 columnist for time.com. She has three children, ages 19,
9 16, and 14. And those of you who've read *Tiger Mom* know
10 that Amy has two children, 19 and 16.

11 Larry Cohen is a psychologist in Boston; he is
12 also the author of *Playful Parenting*. He has a private
13 therapy practice and he is a speaker and consultant to
14 public and independent schools. He's also the author of
15 *The Art of Roughhousing*, and *Best Friends, Worst Enemies;*
16 *Friendship, Popularity, and Social Cruelty in the Lives of*
17 *Boys and Girls*, and *Mom, They're Teasing Me*. He has a
18 daughter, Emma, and a son Jake, 19 and -- Jake is 19 and
19 Emma's 21.

20 And Ellen Galinsky is the president and co-
21 founder of Families and Work Institute and has served as
22 the president of the National Association of Young

1 Children, which is the largest group of early childhood
2 educators. Her more than 45 books and reports include
3 most recently the book *Mind in the Making: The Seven*
4 *Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs*. She and her
5 husband are the parents of two grown children, Phillip and
6 Laura who probably are in the -- Norman (phonetic), I
7 guess is here and Laura (phonetic) are right there.

8 Now, I will try to keep everything straight as
9 we get started. So before this morning I asked all of the
10 panelists what they thought the goal of parenting was.
11 And they all gave me these very thoughtful, articulate
12 responses that sounded like what they should want is
13 helping children have focus and self-control, learn to
14 take the perspectives of others, make connections, learn
15 to take on challenges, I could go on and on. Larry said
16 childhood is its own thing not preparation for adulthood
17 or a vision of adulthood. Everybody had these very smart
18 responses but then when I asked, well, what did they want
19 for their own kids they all basically said, I just want
20 them to be happy.

21 (Laughter)

22 MS. GOTTLIEB: And so the question is -- I don't

1 think that that's changed. I think you know for a very
2 long time parents have wanted their kids to be happy. So
3 the goal hasn't changed but the meaning of that goal has
4 changed -- what does happiness mean for our kids nowadays.

5 And I want to start off by asking about the
6 level of anxiety that parents seem to have around making
7 sure that their kids are going to be happy. And I want to
8 start with Larry who started off by telling me you can't
9 be average and happy nowadays.

10 MR. COHEN: Right, I think that people
11 especially maybe this crowd a little more so, feel that
12 "average" is a dirty word and that that's just a
13 terrifying thing that your child might be average. And
14 children have -- parents have a lot of anxiety about how
15 children are going to turn out. Some of it is about right
16 now, I can't stand this, what's happening right now and a
17 lot of it like most anxiety is geared towards the future.

18 A story from my own life, my father said to me
19 when I was a teenager I'm not going to control you and
20 tell you what to do. You could be any kind of medical
21 doctor that you want.

22 (Laughter)

1 MR. COHEN: And -- or, as we called it in my
2 family, "a real doctor." So I showed him and I rebelled
3 and became a psychologist instead of a "real" doctor.

4 (Laughter)

5 MS. GOTTLIEB: So, Erica, you had said that
6 there's this assumption in our parenting that we would
7 make our kids' lives better, that that was always the
8 assumption. And that a lot of this anxiety comes from the
9 fact that it's really hard nowadays to make our kids'
10 lives better than our own lives. Can you talk a little
11 bit about that?

12 MS. CHRISTAKIS: Yes, I think that's right and I
13 think you have to sort of go back in time a little bit and
14 look at what the goal of parenting was you know for
15 centuries, millennia even, which was to keep our kids
16 alive so that they could reproduce. And then we sort of
17 got a little bit higher up in the hierarchy of needs and
18 looked at you know, children who could provide for us in
19 our old age. And now we're in this era where we want kids
20 to be happy but secretly we also really want them to be
21 successful.

22 And we think that these things are in

1 opposition. I'd like to argue that they're not. But I
2 also think the economy plays a role in our struggle with
3 making our kids, letting our kids be happy.

4 But I also think there are issues unrelated to
5 economics. We live in the information age and that causes
6 huge stress for families, certainly in our family, because
7 now we're aware of what crummy parents we are, you know.

8 (Laughter)

9 MS. CHRISTAKIS: And in our parents' generation
10 they were in blissful ignorance, you know. We were
11 crawling in the backseat of the station wagon and anyone
12 who's seen "Mad Men," knows that. But now we have a lot
13 of anxiety from the data, the information that's out
14 there. I also think we live in what we call the
15 "epidemiological age," where we have a lot of information
16 about what is unhealthy and healthy. So all these things
17 create a lot of tension in that struggle about happiness.

18 MS. GOTTLIEB: Can you talk a little bit about
19 the terminology in the *New England Journal of Medicine*?

20 MS. CHRISTAKIS: Right. Yes -- the accident-
21 yeah this is really interesting. It's actually in the
22 *British Medical Journal*. I was a public health person

1 before I became an early childhood educator so I always
2 look at sort of the health lens with families. And the
3 *British Medical Journal*, which is one of the leading
4 medical journals in the world, not too long ago literally
5 outlawed the word "accident" in their reporting, because
6 they argue that really are almost no accidents.

7 And if you look at the antecedents for almost
8 all bad things that happen to us in life including famines
9 and droughts, you know, but including things like children
10 getting hit by cars, suicide, that these are really
11 preventable injuries. And I think this is a huge shift in
12 how we view childhood, because if we're starting to think
13 that everything that do, all these bad things are
14 preventable then every time you decide not to put a helmet
15 on your child when they're riding a scooter on the
16 sidewalk you know you start feeling like a neglectful
17 person.

18 And so again it's sort of that crisis of
19 information. I'm not suggesting remotely that we go back
20 in time when children were really less safe physically.
21 But it does create a lot of anxiety I think to live in a
22 world where we feel so responsible as parents. I don't

1 know just how you all feel, but I just feel wracked with
2 responsibility even though many studies show we have a lot
3 less influence on our kids than we think.

4 MS. GOTTLIEB: And Ellen, you as a teacher were
5 saying that you've noticed that there's this propensity to
6 criticize parents.

7 MS. GALINSKY: Well, I'd actually like to step
8 back for a moment and say that about three decades ago I
9 actually wrote a book on how parents grow and change. And
10 I interviewed parents, it's called *The Six Stages of*
11 *Parenthood*, and I interviewed parents in different aspects
12 -- different times in parenthood. And I found that that
13 process of deciding of what kind of parent we want to be
14 is actually a developmental process that starts when we're
15 -- when we're expectant parents, whether it's by adoption
16 or by birth, we start to think about what our parents did
17 that we liked and didn't like and how we're going to do it
18 differently. And then we think, oh my God, you know I
19 shouldn't be a parent, I'm not ready, or, I'll be the most
20 wonderful parent in the world, all these sort of fantasies
21 that we have. And then as our children are born and
22 they're not exactly who we expected them to be and the

1 world isn't exactly what we expected it to be, we change.

2 But you're right. When I was a teacher I used
3 to sit around in the teacher's room, this is my first job
4 out of college, I used to sit around in the teacher's room
5 and listened to the way people talked about parents. And
6 if you substituted a person of color or a woman for those
7 sentences you would be called racist or sexist. I think
8 of it as "parentist."

9 We have such a propensity, and we haven't gotten
10 over that, I mean we haven't stopped criticizing parents.
11 I hear it all the time everywhere. We're so culturally
12 prone to beat up parents. I would like us to pay more
13 attention to not being "parentist" the way we've learned,
14 at least socially not be quite so racist and sexist.

15 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, right. So Amy, you're
16 used to a little parental criticism.

17 MS. CHUA: I noticed you were looking at me a
18 lot.

19 (Laughter)

20 MS. GOTTLIEB: Why do you think it is that --
21 now, I know you're speaking as somebody who wrote a memoir
22 not as, as you like to make clear, not as a parenting

1 expert, but why do you think it is that given the way that
2 we're so anxious about parenting and we all want to do it
3 right, what do you think accounted for the response to
4 your book and the way that you raised your kids.

5 MS. CHUA: You know, it's funny. I think that
6 in a way parental anxiety and the obsession with happiness
7 and -- is in some ways a luxury. You know, so when you --
8 I was a daughter of immigrants, people -- two people who
9 came to this country with absolutely nothing. And when --
10 the way they parented, they didn't have time to worry
11 about happiness and parenting guides and classes. It was
12 just -- parenting for them was about survival. As you
13 know it was about teaching your kids to take advantage of
14 every opportunity because they knew how hard opportunity
15 was to come by, it was education, education.

16 And I just got back from a couple of weeks in
17 China, and I see that now that there's more wealth there
18 actually they now have time to be anxious.

19 (Laughter)

20 MS. CHUA: You know that happiness, they have --
21 they're for the first time interested in this question of
22 happiness. And I do think that the part of the response

1 to my book is -- but what I'd like to say is I think my
2 book accidentally tapped into two of America's deepest
3 anxieties, fear of parenting, and fear of China.

4 (Laughter)

5 MS. CHUA: I just like hit that perfect
6 intersection, just like exploded.

7 (Laughter)

8 MS. GOTTLIEB: So there you were talking about
9 this sort of, this cognitive bias, the "taboo tradeoff."
10 Can you -- which I think relates to a little about what
11 Amy was saying.

12 MR. COHEN: Yeah, I think that what I hear from
13 parents is that play and connection and getting on the
14 floor and doing fun things instead of flash cards, that's
15 all great unless it interferes with learning and success.
16 And that parents have this fear that you have to give up
17 one and give up -- or the other. So the "taboo tradeoff"
18 is, the classic example is the salesman at Toys R Us
19 selling you a car seat and saying this is the best one,
20 it's the safest, or you could pay less and get a less safe
21 one.

22 (Laughter)

1 MR. COHEN: And there's a taboo against putting
2 a price on the safety of your child. And I think we have
3 the same taboo on can we aim at anything less than the
4 absolute pinnacle of success, and if we don't then we're
5 shortchanging our children. And it always makes me think
6 of this quote, or a story from A.S. Neill, who founded the
7 Summerhill School in the 1950s, and this was a radical
8 progressive school. You didn't have to go to class if you
9 didn't want to. And parents were very skeptical and they
10 would say, well, how are they going to get to medical
11 school and he would say, well, would you rather your child
12 be a happy truck driver or -- he was England, so happy
13 lorry driver or an unhappy surgeon. And the parents would
14 think and think and they'd say is that possible to be a
15 happy truck driver? And is that possible to be an unhappy
16 surgeon?

17 And we all know that of course it's possible to
18 be happy no matter what your profession is, what your job
19 is, and we know that it's possible to be absolutely
20 miserable when you're at the top of your -- the most
21 respected field in the world. And so there's much more to
22 that, happiness, than that.

1 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, right. Amy and I were
2 talking yesterday about this idea of the play where you
3 were talking about, and this, you know, it's very trendy
4 in certain private schools to go back to this very, kind
5 of loose non-academic structure. And yet, what's really
6 happening is that the kids are doing that and then they're
7 coming home and they have kind of Amy at home --

8 (Laughter)

9 MS. GOTTLIEB: -- because their parents are then
10 drilling multiplication tables with them or doing some
11 kind of supplemental academic you know exercise with them.
12 And so the kids who are not getting the tutors, or not
13 getting that academic exercise at home are the ones who
14 are just getting the play-based part, because it's what
15 Larry said, you can get the car seat -- you can get the
16 play-based school but you're at risk of maybe them not
17 going to Harvard.

18 MR. COHEN: Right, so --

19 MS. CHRISTAKIS: Can I --

20 MS. GOTTLIEB: So -- I'm sorry, I was going to
21 talk to Ellen a little bit about play-based, but go ahead
22 Erica, and then we'll go over to Ellen.

1 MS. CHRISTAKIS: Well, it's -- you know my
2 career has spanned pre-K through college. And so at
3 Harvard I actually see the kids who have played and the
4 ones that haven't played. So I just want to make a pitch
5 that I don't think these goals are in opposition, and I
6 worry a lot that we forget as parents that the most
7 important way children learn and I'm talking about young
8 children is to play.

9 And we have decades and decades of research to
10 back this up from neuroscience, from psychology, from
11 education research. And so I just want to be sure that
12 we're not creating kind of a false dichotomy. And I can
13 tell you what, when we see students at Harvard, we see a
14 lot of people who have checked all the boxes, they've done
15 all the worksheets, and then they get to college and
16 they're really adrift because they don't have some of the
17 social and emotional skills that are going to get them
18 into the 21st century as functional people. And I don't
19 just mean people with good jobs, I mean people with good
20 relationship.

21 So I just want to make sure that we bear in mind
22 that play, speaking as an early childhood educator I

1 really don't think the assumption that play is an extra or
2 a supplemental is an accurate one. I think sometimes play
3 gets misunderstood or sometimes it's you know it's not
4 implemented effectively.

5 MS. GOTTLIEB: Well, I think a lot of people
6 talk about cultivating play and that concerns me because I
7 think that's another thing that parents are going to try
8 to then micromanage, that --

9 (Laughter)

10 MS. CHRISTAKIS: Yes, yes.

11 MR. COHEN: Exactly.

12 MS. GOTTLIEB: -- we have to cultivate how they
13 play and what they're going to do and if it's educational
14 enough in terms of the kind of play that they're doing as
15 opposed to just organic, let kids run around and do their
16 thing. Ellen, you have a lot expertise in this area.

17 MS. GALINSKY: I think that what we're talking
18 about, the two issues in America that your book hit, I
19 think we have this tendency to think either/or all of the
20 time. It's play or learning; it's cognitive or social-
21 emotional. What I did, because I was concerned that we
22 were -- that we not only have a drop out of school, drop

1 out of college phenomena in America, but we also have a
2 drop out of learning phenomena, that -- far too kids (sic)
3 are engaged in learning. The studies that the University
4 of Indiana did, Howard Gardner's in the audience and he
5 was the one who told me about the study of high school
6 engagement; studies that I did where I found that too many
7 kids were seeing learning as only instrumental, that you
8 learn so that you could get a job, go to the next school,
9 begin support yourself. And all that's good, it's again
10 part of the either/or that we shouldn't fall into.

11 But we've lost that intrinsic survival skill of
12 learning. And in a world where knowledge is changing so
13 rapidly it's really critical that we have it. So what I
14 did was spend, now 11 years, going out and filming some of
15 the best research on how to keep children self-directed,
16 engaged in learning. And often, let's take the issue of
17 self-control, which is one of the skills, life skills that
18 I found were really very important in kids of being able
19 to thrive, I don't use the word "succeed," but the word
20 "thrive," socially, emotionally and intellectually.

21 And how do kids learn self-control? They don't
22 learn it by being chained to their desks. You know, they

1 learn it by being physically active, they learn it by
2 playing games -- "red light/green light," "Simon Says."
3 "Simon Says," simple game, played over the centuries that
4 teaches executive function skills. If you look at "Simon
5 Says," you have to pay attention, you have to -- these are
6 all characteristics of executive functions. You have to
7 remember the rules and you can't go on automatic. And
8 executive function skills are always skill directed.
9 That's used as a test of school readiness and school
10 success, which shows a couple of month's differentiation
11 in kids in all kinds of different -- literacy, math, et
12 cetera.

13 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right.

14 MS. GALINSKY: So I think it's really important,
15 play is very important in learning.

16 MS. GOTTLIEB: It is and one of the things that,
17 you know we've been talking about, is differentiating
18 between our goals. Are -- we want to raise a happy kid.
19 What does that mean? Does it mean that they have checked
20 off all the boxes or does it mean that they have those
21 life skills that you're talking about? And I want to show
22 a video where -- we're going to show a quick two-minute

1 video right now of something that came from Ellen's work -
2 - it's actually Carol Dweck's work that Ellen can talk
3 about. But it has to do with the way that we tell our
4 kids, oh, you're so smart, versus -- and what that will do
5 for them in life versus telling them -- you know, when
6 they go down the slide and we're like "Good job, good
7 job," and they've done it every day. We're going "good
8 job" when they tie their shoes, and the first time, yeah,
9 you say "Great." But you know every morning when they get
10 ready for school, "Good job, you tied your shoes." And so
11 Ellen can kind of cue up this video.

12 MS. GALINSKY: Well, actually, I -- because I'm
13 not sure I'll get it in later, I want to say something
14 about happiness. I don't think my goal for my children
15 was ever that they be happy.

16 MS. GALINSKY: Yes, I want you to be miserable -
17 -

18 (Laughter)

19 MS. GALINSKY: -- be really sad, be miserable.
20 And then what I think of it, happiness is a byproduct of
21 being involved, being interested, caring about something
22 beyond yourself. And so I personally, if we're going to

1 speak as a parent, never really wanted my kids -- that
2 wouldn't have been my goal at all. It was -- it would be
3 more like how you learn to take on tough things, because
4 life brings tough things and how you succeed in life.

5 And Amy I think that's so much about what you
6 write about in *Tiger Mom*. So this is around the skill of
7 taking on challenges, and what I've done is spend 11 years
8 filming the very best research across disciplines in how
9 to keep that fire in children's eyes burning brightly.
10 And sometimes it's counter-intuitive and Carol Dweck found
11 that the "Good job," or the "You're so smart," actually
12 creates a lack of self-esteem.

13 MS. GOTTLIEB: Lack of motivation.

14 MS. GALINSKY: Yeah.

15 MS. GOTTLIEB: So let's take a look at the
16 video.

17 (Video Clip shown)

18 MS. GOTTLIEB: So related to that, Amy, in your
19 book you know there's that scene where you have the famous
20 scene from keeping Lulu at the piano. And I think that
21 that's been very misunderstood by people. Because here in
22 the video we're talking about not saying, "Oh, you're

1 great," and "Don't try harder," and you know, or they're
2 afraid to take on other tasks because then their self-
3 conception of being smart gets shattered. So tell us a
4 little bit about your thought process with the piano
5 scene.

6 MS. CHUA: Okay, this is a little story called,
7 "The Little White Donkey," that I got in huge trouble for.
8 Because it was reproduced in the *Wall Street Journal*. But
9 In our family it's actually one of our favorite stories.
10 But again I'm not the expert, I'm not saying every parent
11 do this but when Lulu, my younger daughter -- she's the
12 one who rebelled and is the reason I wrote the book, but
13 when she was younger she was playing a little piece by
14 Jacques Ibert called "The Little White Donkey," which is a
15 very cute piece. But it's very hard for young kids
16 because the two hands, it's like completely different
17 rhythms and it was hard to do.

18 And we were having one of our -- you know she
19 and I just you know have locked horns in the beginning,
20 but we were having a big argument, she's like, can't do
21 this, I won't do this, and I said, get back to the piano.
22 And at one point, my husband called me a aside and he

1 said, "Amy, has it," -- privately -- "has it ever occurred
2 to you that maybe Lulu just can't do this, that she just
3 doesn't have the coordination yet, that she's too young?"
4 And I said, "Ah, you just don't believe in her. I don't
5 care. You can be the parent they adore because you take
6 them to the baseball games and make them pancakes and
7 water slides and all. But I know she can do this. I'm
8 going to go back." And I went back, and we fought and
9 this is the -- it sort of got so taken out of context
10 because it's like, you know, "Amy Chua will not let her
11 daughter go the bathroom or eat food."

12 (Laughter)

13 MS. CHUA: And "It was Guantanamo Bay," and it
14 was -- anybody who's had a kid you know, you're practicing
15 piano, it's like, after five minutes, Mommy, I need to go
16 to the bathroom. After 10 minutes, I'm thirsty, after
17 five minutes, I've a headache. And so after the tenth
18 time she'd been to the bathroom, I was like, I don't think
19 you need to go to the bathroom anymore. We are sitting
20 here -- anyway we, the end of the story is we went at it,
21 and at a certain point I thought, okay, God, my husband's
22 right. She can't do it. And at that exact moment, her

1 two hands came together. And then interestingly, this
2 kind of pride and joy set in. And I don't know how this
3 relates to happiness or self-esteem, but she would not
4 leave the piano, she just wanted to play it over and over
5 and over. She couldn't believe that she could do it.

6 So what I said in the book is -- the reason I
7 bring it up is my younger daughter, Lulu, has said a lot
8 of mean things about me, you know. I mean, she just
9 texted one, like 10 minutes ago.

10 (Laughter)

11 MS. CHUA: So, you know, we -- it's like -- so
12 it's not -- but one nice thing that she has said is, she
13 tells me, even just recently, you know, she said, "You
14 know Mommy, I remember that exact moment, that "Little
15 White Donkey" moment, because when I'm sitting in a
16 chemistry test in school and I feel a blank, I can't do
17 this I don't know this, I will remember that moment, that,
18 you know there was once a moment when I felt, I can't do
19 this, I know I can't, but just doing hard work, just kind
20 of keeping at it, I actually discovered I could.

21 So I do think that you know the best way for
22 building confidence is actually not having somebody tell

1 you over and over, but knowing in your heart that
2 actually, you once thought you could do something and by
3 sticking with it you learned that you could.

4 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, right, and so in your
5 family you weren't telling your kids all the time, unless
6 they earned it, you're special, you're special, you're
7 special. And there was this commencement speech recently
8 that many of you might know about where the theme of the
9 speech was telling the high school graduates you know
10 you're not that special.

11 (Laughter)

12 MS. GOTTLIEB: And a lot of people took issue
13 with it, and I think what he was trying to say was that
14 out in the world there are this many valedictorians, there
15 are this many -- you're -- in the scheme of life you're
16 not more special than everybody else. And that actually
17 serves you well. And yet, it's really hard I think given
18 that we want our kids to develop the character issues, the
19 character traits. And things like resilience, humility,
20 all of those things, and we feel like we're damaging their
21 self-esteem if we're not constantly telling them how
22 special they are when in fact we're actually preventing

1 them from forming a solid sense of self-esteem. And
2 Larry, can you speak to this a little bit?

3 MR. COHEN: Yeah, I had two things to say about
4 that. One is, I had a supervisor for being a therapist
5 that -- he was the son of a preacher and he said he
6 learned from his father that the job of a preacher and a
7 therapist is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the
8 comfortable.

9 (Laughter)

10 MR. COHEN: And I think that that's part of
11 parenting also, and I think that there's a way with
12 children who -- things come easy to them like in the film,
13 it's like, oh yeah, I was really good at that. And I want
14 to just stick with that. And we have to push those kids
15 and the ones you know -- and the you're-not-so-special
16 commencement speech, these kids who have been told they're
17 special all the time. Their path has been cleared for
18 them in a lot of ways and they have this advantage and I
19 think they need to be discomforted a little bit.

20 But then there are children who need to be
21 comforted. And the other thing I want to say about Amy's
22 "Little White Donkey" story is that when I see the adults

1 in my practice who are the, kind of the casualties of the
2 extremes of the achieve, achieve, achieve, I-don'-care-
3 what-you-think, I-don't-care-what-you-want, and I compare
4 that to Amy's stories, the difference is whether the child
5 is seen, felt, heard. You know with kind of the saving
6 grace, the reason I, reading the book that I didn't have
7 that oh-my-God, you know, we got to lynch Amy Chua, you
8 know, is that her daughters were able to say, I hate this,
9 I hate you, I'm mad --

10 (Laughter)

11 MR. COHEN: -- and I think that as parents we
12 need to listen to that. Our children do get mad at us.
13 And that adults in therapy they always say that their
14 feelings were not welcome, they were not reflected. They
15 weren't allowed to get angry, they weren't allowed to be
16 sad, they weren't allowed to be scared. And that we have
17 to welcome all of our children's feelings, and that's part
18 of that comforting them. And at that point it makes a big
19 difference whether the child is being seen and heard and
20 then when she tells you later, now I know I can do it,
21 that what she's saying is you were really seeing me in
22 that moment. Not what sometimes happens, I had to

1 practice the piano so much when what I really wanted to be
2 doing was x, y, or z. And they didn't know me; my parents
3 did not know me. And that's a very painful thing.

4 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, and when you were just
5 mentioning you know the path has been paved for so many of
6 these kids, part of that is they don't want to hear the "I
7 hate you." It's actually really healthy for your kid to
8 think that they were born into the wrong family and that
9 you know --

10 (Laughter)

11 MS. GOTTLIEB: -- baby -- some "switched at
12 birth" thing happened at the hospital. You want them at
13 some point to hate you, not for a long period of time but
14 you want them to develop their own separation and
15 individuation.

16 MR. COHEN: Well, I call it something to bump up
17 against and I talk a lot with parents who are on the
18 attachment-parenting side, the you know never let them
19 have to walk or cry or be alone or any of that and there's
20 a lot in that that builds connection. It gives a sense of
21 security, but what they also miss is something to bump up
22 against.

1 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right.

2 MR. COHEN: And I often hear from them when
3 their kids are 4, and it's like "Aaah." It was like they
4 need to have a fight.

5 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, exactly, and so a lot of
6 these kids who because we don't want to upset them we
7 don't -- you know, there are a lot of parents who won't
8 have their kids do chores at home, which is just a basic
9 family responsibility. But they're so busy with their
10 homework and they're sleep-deprived, and, how can we do
11 this; they're in the middle of this drawing and we can't
12 interrupt their creativity to come set the table, you
13 know, things like that. And we don't like that our kids
14 will get mad at us, and so they grow up and they don't
15 sort of have basic life skills. And Erica, I think you
16 see this firsthand.

17 MS. CHRISTAKIS: I do see this firsthand and I'm
18 conflicted because you know as a parent and as an early
19 educator I see the value of the -- letting your child be
20 creative, and not putting such rigid limits on them and
21 expectations. But at the same time it becomes so
22 dysfunctional to be blunt.

1 (Laughter)

2 MS. CHRISTAKIS: I mean it does. In my own
3 family when I was a preschool teacher not terribly long
4 ago, you know we would have to put on a circus to get
5 these little 4-year-olds to clean up. You know in the old
6 days they had a sort of intrinsic motivation to want to
7 participate in a group activity that was helpful to
8 everyone. You know so we are raising kids who have
9 trouble doing these things. We see at Harvard -- I assume
10 this is what you're asking about -- you know some really
11 crazy stories. And maybe I could share a couple of them -
12 -

13 MS. GOTTLIEB: Oh, yeah, that'd be great.

14 MS. CHRISTAKIS: You know, I have an e-mail that
15 was sent to a professor. And I will edit it for privacy
16 and length.

17 (Laughter)

18 MS. CHRISTAKIS: But this gives you an example.
19 I mean this is not typical. I mean these are the outliers
20 but it's always fun to talk about the outliers. So here
21 we go. "Hi, Prof," you know that's a formal salutation
22 just in case you --

1 (Laughter)

2 MS. CHRISTAKIS: "I attended lecture yesterday
3 and found out that we have an exam due in the course last
4 week." I'm sorry, "that we had an exam due." "Until the
5 lecturer mentioned it yesterday I was oblivious to the
6 fact that we had one for this course. My attempts to
7 notify you of this yesterday didn't pan out."

8 (Laughter)

9 MS. CHRISTAKIS: "Upon my subsequent
10 reinspection of the syllabus I also noticed that there
11 were two reading assignments to do before the midterm.
12 Those too I didn't know were due at any particular time."
13 Let me interrupt -- this is Harvard.

14 (Laughter)

15 MS. CHRISTAKIS: "I am," -- wait -- "I'm
16 completely astonished about these revelations. And I'm
17 not sure how this happened. I'm also surprised that you
18 didn't notify me of my failure of my failure to complete
19 these assignments. What do you suggest we do?"

20 (Laughter)

21 MS. GOTTLIEB: So this is the kind of thing, and
22 we'll come back, but this is the kind of thing --

1 MS. CHRISTAKIS: And you know, to me this is a
2 failure -- now, I'm not prepared to say this is a failure
3 of parenting. I think, it's, as you said, Ellen, there is
4 a lot of "parentism," and there are huge societal forces
5 working on our kids. My daughter was sort of mouthing off
6 at me one day, and we prided ourselves on not letting our
7 kids watch TV, which was a very pretentious and
8 unrealistic goal but we stuck to it for a while.

9 (Laughter)

10 MS. CHRISTAKIS: And she came home sort of
11 parroting this rude talk, and I realized she got it from a
12 TV show. And you know that's the sarcasm and the sort of
13 bantering. So there are a lot of societal forces. But --

14 MS. GOTTLIEB: But what --

15 MS. CHRISTAKIS: But it is a failure.

16 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, and when you have that
17 where the kids have never -- you know when probably this
18 kid -- I'm, you know, guessing, didn't get to the school
19 play and mom and dad called up and said how could this,
20 you know my child not get into the school play, or, my
21 child got a bad grade, and, let me go talk to the teacher.
22 Or, you know, whatever was -- my child didn't get invited

1 to a birthday party and I better go fix that situation,
2 with the other parents.

3 MS. CHRISTAKIS: We had -- I mean this is
4 hilarious -- we had a student -- my husband and I work as
5 housemasters, and our predecessor was actually a Nobel
6 laureate. And he was called by a parent and asked to
7 check the child's room to make sure that he was cleaning
8 his room and making his bed. And this 65-year-old eminent
9 Nobel laureate said, if he hasn't learned yet, it's too
10 late.

11 (Laughter)

12 MS. GOTTLIEB: But I think that it's
13 interesting, when we look at Amy -- you know, we talk
14 about "helicopter parenting," and Amy in some ways might
15 be looked at as a "helicopter parent" the way she handled
16 the piano by driving to all the lessons and doing all
17 those things. But she also really made her kids take
18 responsibility for you know their actions and what they
19 did in their lives. And you were saying that as they got
20 older, you know, in high school and college where Erica's
21 dealing with, that the kids were really acting very young
22 for their age, and yet, you know, you were very hands off

1 at that point.

2 MS. CHUA: Yeah, I myself kind of see, and maybe
3 these terms are kind of arbitrary, but I kind of see
4 "tiger parenting," as I -- as it was practiced on me, as
5 the opposite of "helicopter parenting" actually. It's
6 about instilling kind of this inner strength -- I mean
7 when it works well, Larry, I could not agree with you
8 more. I got so many e-mails from people who said, look I
9 was raised exactly like the way you're saying and it was
10 horrible. My parents didn't love me, it was like get the
11 A or you don't love me. And it depends what message is
12 conveyed.

13 MR. COHEN: Right.

14 MS. GALINSKY: But didn't it depend also on the
15 relationship with your parents apart from their child
16 rearing?

17 MS. CHUA: Yeah, I think so. But you know,
18 like, I somehow, the message I always got from my parents
19 was whatever the words were, you know, the message I got
20 was, I believe in you. And I was the apple of my dad's
21 eye. But if I told some of the people what -- some of the
22 things my father said to me, I think you'd be horrified,

1 because it's hard to read.

2 But anyway I -- for me this "tiger parenting" is
3 about instilling a sense of focus and self-discipline and
4 a kind of inner strength and resilience in kids at a very
5 young age. So when -- it is true that when my kids went
6 to high school they were able to focus and maybe it was
7 the music, but I would never have written a paper for my
8 daughters.

9 And you know my -- at Harvard now, Sophia writes
10 back and says her friends will e-mail back papers for
11 their parents to edit, right, and Sophia is completely on
12 her own. I mean, that's one thing I am very proud of, my
13 girls are very self-reliant, and I think it is -- so in
14 that sense I do think it's the opposite. I think of
15 "helicopter parenting" as hovering and parents who do
16 everything for their kids and won't carry -- you know
17 don't want them to carry their own sports bags and protect
18 them, whereas I do see "tiger parenting" as kind of almost
19 the opposite in some ways.

20 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, and yet there's this
21 incredible pressure I think, partly because of social
22 media and partly because it's not only keeping up with the

1 Joneses now, but it's keeping up with the Joneses kids,
2 where if they're taking the \$6,000 Princeton review class,
3 then you feel like -- and your child is the only child at
4 that -- in that, you know, in your neighborhood who's not,
5 and this is a very elite neighborhood that we're talking
6 about, then you feel like maybe you're doing your child a
7 disservice.

8 MR. COHEN: Oh and there's these fears about how
9 little room there is at the top and you know, when I read
10 your book, Amy, I was thinking about the history of
11 feudalism and --

12 MS. GOTTLIEB: Sucks --

13 MR. COHEN: Yeah, feudalism sucks, you know,
14 it's like there's just a tiny, tiny, room at the top and
15 no middle and a horrible bottom. And you know when you
16 look around now, and, you know, capitalism sucks, you know
17 it's like -- it's really looking the same way. There's --
18 I trademarked that term so you can't use it.

19 (Laughter)

20 MR. COHEN: But the -- there's very little room
21 at the top and there's this idea like we've got to get
22 that Ivy League education or it's going to be the gutter.

1 Then I took a year off from graduate school and my father
2 felt like skid row was the next step.

3 (Laughter)

4 MS. GALINSKY: Can I respond to that?

5 MS. GOTTLIEB: Yeah.

6 MS. GALINSKY: I think that again, there is a
7 difference between kind of throwing your kids out and like
8 be independent and do-it-yourself versus fixing everything
9 for them. And to me the middle ground is helping them
10 learn to solve the problems. If you -- some of you know
11 the famous marshmallow test, I do have it on video but
12 we're not going to show it, but it looks at the kids who
13 could wait for the marshmallow -- they could then have
14 two. And what Walter Michel is now doing, because he
15 found that the kids who could wait for the two
16 marshmallows were the more likely to thrive as they were
17 older, he is teaching children strategies to wait for the
18 marshmallows.

19 And I think that's really important. If you
20 look at the research again and again and again across all
21 these disciplines, the kids who do best have the families
22 who help them figure out how to deal with not turning

1 their paper in on time, not -- I'm going to -- Mommy's
2 going to call or Daddy's going to call and fix it. I
3 think that's important.

4 Also, I think in stretching your kids you can't
5 stretch them beyond what they can do. You know, your
6 husband's and your conversation about is -- are her hands
7 coordinated well enough, or -- and maybe they were, in
8 this case they were. But it's kind of that zone right
9 beyond what they can do.

10 And then one final thing, in the way that you're
11 talking about success, it's success as externally defined.
12 You are the CEO, you are the doctor, the medical kind or
13 the real kind, whatever it is, and I think that what --if
14 I look around both at the research and at the people in my
15 lives, the people who do best have a passion. And so I
16 mean if there were any advice that I'd give to parents
17 about raising children who have all of these life skills,
18 it's to help them find and build on their passion.

19 MS. GOTTLIEB: But let's be clear too about what
20 that means because I think that parents panic, and we'll
21 talk about -- Larry in a second will speak to that -- but
22 I think that parents think that that passion has to be

1 something that is again an indicator of external success
2 or achievements.

3 And that passion can be cooking, that passion
4 can be surfing, that passion can be a hobby, that passion
5 can be being a parent, it could be anything. It's about
6 engagement with the world and having meaning in life for
7 you. And people are so worried that their kids don't have
8 passions that they're trying to figure out when they're 2
9 and 3 and 4, you know, what activities they should -- you
10 know should they go to math camp, should they -- you know
11 what should they be doing. And Larry has some stories
12 about this.

13 MR. COHEN: Yeah, I got a panic call from a
14 mother who said I'm really worried about my child, I'm
15 really worried about my child. I was like what's the
16 situation. She's like, well, she's 4 and she hasn't found
17 her passion yet.

18 (Laughter)

19 MR. COHEN: And you know she was signed up for
20 12 activities, and you know -- and yes, we want children
21 to be inner-directed but this is just more, you know, it's
22 like parents are -- it's that anxiety, and it can latch on

1 to anything. And so it's like yes you need a passion, we
2 can latch on to that in the same way that parents learn
3 that children learn through play. And so then they
4 thought every play moment has to be educational. So you
5 go to the playground and it's like, how many wheels does
6 that truck have; what color is that truck. And the poor
7 child can't play with the truck.

8 (Laughter)

9 MS. GOTTLIEB: And then they have these
10 playground that -- where they put out -- what are they
11 called, the imaginary -- imagine -- "imaginarium," right.
12 So the kids went to the playgrounds and at first they
13 didn't quite know what to do because it was so
14 unstructured, and you know there were these big foam
15 blocks and these big foam pieces that are just fun for
16 kids, but they're so used to having activities that are
17 very concrete, and that actually holds them back in terms
18 of figuring out what their passions are going to be and
19 figuring out who they are and what they're interested in.

20 MS. CHRISTAKIS: Can I add on to that?

21 MS. GOTTLIEB: Uh-huh.

22 MS. CHRISTAKIS: You know if I had any piece of

1 advice it would be to just listen to children's
2 developmental needs, because we know, and again we have
3 decades of research, that kids need to slow down and
4 that's how they find engagement with other human beings
5 and with their own internal motivation and their own
6 interests. And we live in a very fast world. You know
7 all you have to do is look at a movie from the 1970s and
8 you're falling asleep --

9 (Laughter)

10 MS. CHRISTAKIS: -- and you realize that the
11 pace of everything, it just moves so quickly. And so I
12 think children need to be given a break, you know, they
13 just need to be allowed to just be little kids and to slow
14 down and look at the ground. I saw a wonderful study once
15 where young kids were given cameras, and they photographed
16 the ceilings and the ground because they're small and that
17 was -- those are the things that interest them. We need
18 to let them look at the ants.

19 MS. GALINSKY: Actually, I did a study -- the
20 first nationally representative study that asked them
21 about, this was about how they felt about their parents
22 and particularly their employed mothers and fathers. And

1 we debate quality time versus quantity time. When I asked
2 the kids how they saw it they wanted focus time, which
3 means, I don't want you always there for me, but when I
4 need you to be there for me I want you to be there for me.

5 MR. COHEN: Not on the computer --

6 MS. GALINSKY: Yeah, yeah, just like "earth-to-
7 mom; earth-to-dad, could you come in please." But they
8 also wanted hang-around time. They felt that their lives
9 -- and this was a nationally representative, this is not
10 just upper middle-class kids, this was a group of kids
11 from all over the country, they wanted some hang-around
12 time where maybe they stay in their pajamas on Saturday
13 morning and make biscuits or go for a walk and look at the
14 ants.

15 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, instead of brushing up.

16 MS. CHRISTAKIS: And I would -- and I think we
17 know that that helps to cultivate imagination, you know,
18 which is something there's been research on that there's a
19 decline in empathy and so on and perspective-taking, which
20 Ellen you've written so much about. You know it's hard to
21 do that when you're just always on the go. You need some
22 time to reflect.

1 MS. GOTTLIEB: When my son was in preschool, he
2 was in the car seat in the back and he said to me at one
3 point -- he interrupted me and said, "Mommy can you just
4 be quiet for a minute because I need time to daydream."

5 (Laughter)

6 MS. CHRISTAKIS: And that was a big wake-up call
7 for me.

8 (Laughter)

9 SPEAKER: Yeah, that's amazing.

10 (Laughter)

11 MR. COHEN: Yeah, I remember as a new dad I was
12 like, we're going to have a lot of eye contact, you know.

13 (Laughter)

14 MR. COHEN: And then I have a friend who was a
15 child psychologist, who was like, you know, 30 percent of
16 the time when you're alert -- baby's alert and you're with
17 them you want to have that -- you know and I've tried to
18 not like have a clock about 30 percent of the time.

19 MS. GALINSKY: Ed Tronick, I know who you're
20 talking about.

21 MR. COHEN: But that -- right -- so you kind of
22 -- but, you know, children they don't want that intense,

1 intense, intense, every second.

2 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, and Amy actually talks
3 about how she did -- there was a lot of hanging out that's
4 not in her book, and one of the things that struck me
5 about how Amy handled the criticism to her book, and Larry
6 mentioned this as well, is that she didn't say, well, this
7 worked for our family because my daughter played at
8 Carnegie Hall, she said this worked for our family because
9 we have a really close family.

10 And I think that we forget when we talk about
11 the goals of parenting, where does that fit in, where does
12 this hanging around with the family instead of we've got
13 to rush off to this person as a play date and this person
14 has a birthday party and this person has three activities
15 this weekend. But you know, what about just hanging out
16 and how does that help our kids. Who would like to take
17 that up?

18 MR. COHEN: Well, I just want to say that an
19 idea for defining the success and the goal is something we
20 don't usually think about, which is what kind of a wife or
21 husband do we want our children to be, what kind of a
22 mother and father do we want him to be, what kind of a

1 grandparent do we want him to be. We don't usually
2 imagine that, we're imagining success as career and money
3 and all that.

4 MS. CHRISTAKIS: In some ways we almost need to
5 go back to the lower levels of the hierarchy of our needs,
6 because -- and I think in previous generations that was a
7 critical question. You know the goal of parenting was to
8 make sure your child married well and stayed married, and
9 we've sort of lost touch with some of those relational
10 goals when I think of parenting.

11 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, so in terms of things
12 that, the skills, the friendship skills, the relational
13 skills, as parents when we talk about the goals of
14 parenting where does that fit in with the sort of trends
15 that are happening in parenting today?

16 MR. COHEN: Well, I think that the key is
17 relaxed high expectations.

18 (Laughter)

19 MR. COHEN: And some people forget the high
20 expectations and that's the e-mail there, and some people
21 forget to relax. And we really need both, and that's (off
22 mic).

1 MS. GOTTLIEB: And Larry, how do we do that, can
2 you explain the exercise that you were talking about with
3 --

4 MR. COHEN: Yeah, I think that -- I define
5 happiness and joy as living in line with your deepest
6 values. And you're not going to be happy all the time
7 when you're living in line with your values, you're going
8 to do hard stuff. You do hard stuff as a parent. You're
9 going to say, no, you need to do your home work, or you
10 need to practice, or things that are unpopular, or we're
11 not going to have ice-cream for dinner, you know these --
12 you're living in line with your values.

13 But parents don't have time to reflect on what
14 those values are. And so there's an exercise that I love,
15 and I do it with people in my office a lot, which is --I
16 do it with kids too -- which is write down on cards, eight
17 or ten things that I value, you know, happiness, love,
18 family, it could be anything. And then the exercise is,
19 okay, now go through them and give away one. And they're
20 you know, that was pretty easy. And then, okay now, give
21 away another one. And then not so, and then you keep
22 going and it gets harder and harder and people get kind of

1 really agitated, as if I'm actually asking them to let go
2 of it.

3 (Laughter)

4 MR. COHEN: But you end up with the one or two
5 that are the transcendent values and then, okay, what does
6 it mean to live in line with that. Because as parents
7 we're putting out fires all of the time, and we're tired
8 all of the time and we don't take that time to reflect.

9 MS. GALINSKY: You know interestingly enough a
10 lot of corporate training of executives does exactly the
11 same thing because they think that -- they found that
12 business executives who are the most successful are
13 authentic and are clear about their values and more
14 intentional about their values. So it's an interesting
15 business exercise not just parenting.

16 MS. GOTTLIEB: So I think we're about ready to
17 take questions. But we want to show one final 2-minute
18 video. Ellen, you want to introduce it?

19 MS. GALINSKY: Well, this is a study that I was
20 just talking about, and in this study -- it was a
21 nationally representative study of third-through-twelfth-
22 graders. And the first time anyone had asked the children

1 and I so believe in your kids' ability to text you and so
2 forth. I mean my kids -- I think the most that I learned
3 from my mother was that I could say anything to her as
4 long as I said it not meanly. I couldn't be rude, I
5 couldn't be nasty, but I could tell her exactly what I
6 thought.

7 And I thought -- you know, my mother died at
8 almost a 100 -- I thought that that was probably the best
9 gift that my mother ever gave me. And our kids have done
10 -- there's Laura, but she -- they're done the same thing.
11 I mean they're very free to tell me -- I get lessons from
12 her every single day about you should do this and you
13 should do that, but politely.

14 So this was the first study that had ever asked
15 children and one of the questions that I asked children
16 was if you had one wish -- this is for parents -- who had
17 employed parents -- if you had one wish to change the way
18 your mother's or your father's work affects your life,
19 what would that wish be. And I asked another nationally
20 representative group of parents to guess what their kids
21 would wish and they all thought their kids would wish for
22 more time.

1 But that wasn't the top wish for children. The
2 top wish for children, which only 2 percent of the parents
3 guessed was that their kids -- that their parents be less
4 tired and stressed. Yeah, so it's kind of like holding up
5 a mirror. And this study included children whose mothers
6 were employed and mothers who weren't. So the final
7 question in this study and then I've replicated it on
8 video, was what messages do you want to give the parents
9 of America. So here are the messages to us from children.

10 (Begin Video Clip.)

11 SPEAKER: "My message is to like if you're
12 stressed out and you're tired take a little nap but don't
13 take a long one."

14 (Laughter)

15 SPEAKER: "Be nice to their kids."

16 SPEAKER: "Try to find a good babysitter by
17 asking your kid if you like this babysitter."

18 SPEAKER: "The thing that you can do the most is
19 just be a role model."

20 SPEAKER: "Try to spend some time with your kids
21 but also do some work."

22 SPEAKER: "Your hard work is worth it."

1 SPEAKER: "I would say to work hard and do the
2 best they can, but also be with their children."

3 SPEAKER: "To hang out with the kiddy even if
4 it's like 5 minutes to talk with them about how their day
5 was or if they had a hard time in school."

6 SPEAKER: "Spend time with each other because in
7 life when you don't -- like you're going to regret it if
8 you didn't do it."

9 SPEAKER: "You know, take advantage of the time
10 that you have because you never know what you've got till
11 it's gone."

12 SPEAKER: "To get an idea of what is your child
13 thinking about you on what you're doing, how does he feel,
14 because a parent and daughter or son, it takes a lot of
15 communication and it's a relationship just like a husband
16 and a wife."

17 SPEAKER: "Parents should ask the children to
18 find out what the children think about what the parents
19 are doing with their lives because their work and their
20 other habits are affecting the children."

21 (End video clip)

22 MS. GOTTLIEB: And so on that note, we're going

1 to open it up for questions and we have a microphone
2 coming around.

3 SPEAKER: Hi, wondering if there has been any
4 research or data as whether there should be differences in
5 teaching girls versus boys, given their maturity levels or
6 attention spans. Some of us heard this morning that 60
7 percent of women are attending college versus 40 percent
8 of men. Should there be something done to make that more
9 equal or not. And also I would love to know what was the
10 response of the Harvard professor to that e-mail --

11 (Laughter)

12 SPEAKER: -- because that must have been very
13 educational to that student.

14 MS. GOTTLIEB: Well, I think the boy-girl
15 question, there was a wonderful panel yesterday talking
16 about those issues. I don't know if anybody here wants to
17 --

18 SPEAKER: I was there.

19 MS. GOTTLIEB: Okay.

20 SPEAKER: Well, you were there too --

21 MS. GOTTLIEB: Yeah, we were all there. We'll
22 share the question.

1 MS. CHRISTAKIS: Well, one of the take-homes
2 from that was that actually the differences between girls
3 and boys and how their brains work are actually less than
4 the differences among boys or among girls. And that's
5 sort of the big social science story, as Michael Thompson
6 (phonetic) said yesterday. So there are indeed huge
7 disparities right now, there are problems that boys face
8 that girls don't, in school. But we shouldn't forget that
9 there's a whole range of ways to be a boy or to be a girl.

10 MR. COHEN: There were some interesting studies
11 on -- it's called "Stereotype Threat," and they gave the
12 tests to African-Americans and they kind of hinted that
13 this is a test that white people do better at and they did
14 much worse on this test than if they had been -- not told
15 that. And they did a test at MIT on the two white
16 students, and they said, you know, it's a group of Asian
17 students who did really, really well on this test. And
18 those white students did worse than they -- another group
19 on the exact same test. And this happens with boys and
20 girls.

21 So boys get the message and it's subtle but it's
22 pervasive that school is for girls. You know, boys are

1 the ones getting in trouble, boys and -- you know there's
2 some boys at the very top but there's a lot of boys at the
3 -- who are the ones getting in trouble. And so we have to
4 do something about --

5 MS. GALINSKY: And actually in our studies, the
6 Families and Work Institute, the organization that I had,
7 does ongoing nationally representative studies of the U.S.
8 work force.

9 And lately, I've been worrying a lot more about
10 men than I have been worrying about women. There are a
11 lot of things to worry about women, don't get me wrong.
12 But men's health has declined; men are now facing more
13 conflict and tension in managing their work and family
14 life than women are for a whole variety of reasons that I
15 could talk about. Men's college graduation rights et
16 cetera have gone down.

17 So I think with "Mind in the Making," with the
18 work that I did on life skills, what I found is that just
19 as you're saying, we were -- society reflects what we
20 think gender roles should be. And sometimes those are
21 really not helpful, a lot of times they're not helpful.

22 I think it's important for us to try to not

1 stereotype girls can be this, boys can be that. And I
2 didn't really differentiate in the research about teaching
3 life skills to boys and girls, because I think that it's
4 something that both boys and girls can equally benefit
5 from. And it's a matter of knowing your unique child, not
6 just the gender of your child.

7 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right, with the gender and it's
8 like you said, the context.

9 MS. GALINSKY: Uh-huh. But what did the
10 professor do?

11 MS. GOTTLIEB: Do you want to -- I'm sorry, do
12 you want to talk about the response to the e-mail that, it
13 was sent to your --

14 MS. CHRISTAKIS: Well, I mean, the professor is
15 sitting right here and he's married to me.

16 (Laughter)

17 MS. CHRISTAKIS: So I won't put him on the spot,
18 but let's suffice to say he was not amused.

19 (Laughter)

20 MS. CHRISTAKIS: That said, you know I think our
21 role -- and I'm not a professor, I work with the
22 residential side of the student life, but I think our role

1 is as educators is to redirect students and help them find
2 engagement, help them find meaning, help them learn from
3 these experiences. And not just sort of mock them. I
4 mean I know it's a funny story, but actually it had a good
5 ending because there was a conversation. And we've had
6 all kinds of conversations like that in modeling, you know
7 this is how you talk to someone who' -- you know we live
8 in a hierarchy; here's how you send an e-mail to
9 professors. And those things, I mean it is -- you know
10 it's the parentist stuff. It's easy to laugh at and mock
11 the parents and mock the student and all that, but there's
12 a learning opportunity as well.

13 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right there at back.

14 MR. SHARP: I'm Dan Sharp with the Eisenhower
15 Foundation. If the subject were what are the goals of
16 grandparenting, how different would your comments have
17 been?

18 MS. CHRISTAKIS: I -- can I just jump in? I
19 have a cousin who's a family therapist, and she always
20 said that grandparents and grandchildren have a special
21 bond, because they're allied against a common enemy.

22 (Laughter)

1 MS. CHRISTAKIS: And sometimes I really think my
2 goal as a parent is to become a grandparent.

3 (Laughter)

4 MS. CHRISTAKIS: So, yeah, I think there's a
5 total double standard. I don't -- you're a grandparent --

6 MS. CHUA: I think it's a double standard just
7 from my -- I can't believe -- I mean you cannot believe
8 how much stricter my own parents were than me. I mean
9 it's because my husband is Western, I mean, you know, I
10 was raised in the United States. My parents were really
11 traditional and exactly this. When they come now they
12 just -- it's, you know they just buy my kids ice-cream,
13 all these presents, and you know, why do they have to work
14 all the time, they -- you know so one data point --

15 (Laughter)

16 MR. COHEN: Exactly, it's the corrective
17 experience, so you can make up for, you know, and I think
18 that's great.

19 MS. GALINSKY: And part of the -- what I found
20 in writing the book, *The Six Stages of Parenthood*, is that
21 in part we define our values, our goals of parenting in
22 reaction to what our own parents did but also in what they

1 didn't do. I think, and I'll speak about my own grandson
2 Antonio, he's my step-grandson, he just graduated from
3 high school. And the relationship that I could have with
4 him was very different than my son or daughter-in-law
5 could have, which is -- he knew that my job in life was to
6 help him think through how to live more intentionally.
7 And I would always say, that's my job. My job is -- and
8 so when he -- he was playing video games to the total
9 distraction and horror of his mother. And we talked a lot
10 about that and I said, well, if you're going to love video
11 games I want you to start creating them, you know, let's
12 do something creative about it. But he got then, into
13 martial arts, which helped him learn to focus and took him
14 away from video games.

15 And so my job was to -- he can be real honest
16 with me in a way that he -- if he's having a fight with
17 his mother he can necessarily be, and that's -- and I
18 don't tell, expect to all of you.

19 (Laughter)

20 MS. GOTTLIEB: Well, that's the other thing is
21 that -- we didn't touch on here is that as much as we're
22 talking about the goal of parenting, it's so important for

1 kids to have another trusted adult --

2 MR. COHEN: Absolutely.

3 MS. GOTTLIEB: -- that they can go to because
4 they're so much involved in the intensity of the parental
5 relationship.

6 MR. COHEN: Yeah, especially when they're
7 teenagers. I think of it as somebody who the parents
8 trust that you're going to be responsible in this and
9 somebody the child trusts that you're not going to go
10 running to my mom with everything.

11 MS. CHRISTAKIS: That was one of the biggest
12 predictors we learned yesterday in the panel on boys, one
13 of the biggest predictors of success for boys in school
14 was having -- what Thompson I think said -- called the
15 "charismatic adult" in their lives not a parent, but
16 another.

17 MS. GOTTLIEB: We have time for one more? Okay,
18 right over here.

19 SPEAKER: Thank you for a great panel. My
20 question is in order to reduce the fear of parenting and
21 parentism that you talked about, how can our coacher
22 (phonetic) make steps towards being more parent-friendly.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. GALINSKY: Well, I think that we
3 individually value being a parent, parenthood, mother pie,
4 motherhood, mother -- you know, apple pie, fatherhood,
5 apple pie, and we've seen parents become more -- in our
6 national studies, we've seen parents become more focused
7 on that being important if you look at work and the other
8 aspects of their life. Increasingly people have become
9 more family-centered, which I think is actually positive.
10 I think that we really need to value caring. We don't
11 value caring other than in our personal lives, but as a
12 society we don't value the jobs that are caring jobs,
13 nursing, teaching, those sorts of jobs as much, and we
14 don't really value being a parent. I think that's a huge
15 societal push that we all need to make, so that we value
16 being a parent a whole lot more.

17 MR. COHEN: I think a small practical thing we
18 can start with is -- this is a big level use of a small
19 practical thing is when we see a parent struggling like
20 the toddler's having a tantrum and lying in bed that we
21 not give a dirty look, that we actually smile, that we
22 actually say, can I hold your groceries, and -- or boy,

1 looks like you're having a tough day. Because we're so
2 primed and we hate when people give us dirty looks, or
3 worse, you know, and -- but we all do that.

4 MS. CHUA: One thing I -- it was so fun being on
5 a panel, I mean, like this and the one yesterday, because
6 it's the first one in a long time where the conversation
7 has been elevated for just this reason. But I would say
8 that in the whole uproar, the firestorm that I've been in,
9 I learned a couple of things. One is that I thought that
10 it was a shame that so much of the parenting debate --
11 again, not like the one we're having now, but just kind of
12 mainstream, is everything is boiled down to something
13 else, they're just false dichotomies. You know so the
14 debate is, wait, do you want your child to be creative or
15 do you want them to work hard? And if you put it like
16 that, okay, I want to go with creative, but do you want
17 your kids -- do you want happiness for your children or
18 success, you know, black or white. Then of course we all
19 think, well, I think we'll pick -- I don't know.

20 (Laughter)

21 MS. CHUA: You know, but I would take happiness,
22 I would take happiness. So I -- but it's just so much

1 more complex, life, you know. The relationship between
2 these things -- I mean of course we want both creativity
3 and hard work, right, it's a -- so that's one.

4 And the other thing I was thinking is, you know
5 I -- my previous books were actually, foreign policy ones
6 and my -- the book I wrote before this was about how
7 hyperpowers rise to power and why they fall. And the
8 thesis was that it's actually not military aggression or
9 whatever, but it's actually what I call tolerance, that is
10 the ability to learn from lots of different people's
11 ideas, and it's those societies that can pull in the best
12 from all different cultures.

13 And one of the reasons America's been very
14 strong when it comes to science or business or food or
15 cooking, we're actually unusually good at drawing in --
16 we're very tolerant. But then I wrote in this op-ed, not
17 so when it comes to parenting. I think we are -- even the
18 most tolerant of us who love multicultural dancing and
19 food, when it comes --

20 (Laughter)

21 MS. CHUA: -- you know, when it comes to yoga,
22 but you know when it comes to like a different culture,

1 different way you see it, it looks different, instant
2 judgment.

3 MS. GALINSKY: It's threatening though.

4 MS. CHUA: I guess, yeah.

5 MS. GALINSKY: I mean if someone else does it
6 differently, what it's really saying is maybe we're not
7 right, I always -- my advice to parents was find a genie
8 or find a Nancy (phonetic), find someone in your life
9 who's not going to say, oh, my kid is better than yours,
10 or you did it wrong, and there were plenty of those in my
11 life even a long time ago, you know, when my kids were
12 little. But you've got to find those people who make you
13 laugh and appreciate how hard it is and that you're
14 learning from your mistakes and trying to do it better.

15 MS. GOTTLIEB: Right. Well, I want to thank all
16 of the panelists here for this interesting discussion, and
17 thank all of you for coming.

18 (Applause)

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