



## In the PINES

By T. Lee Brown

### Trying harder

“I yell at my daughter sometimes,” a woman recently mourned on her mommy blog. Then she proceeded to flagellate herself.

Her inability to remain 100 percent cool and calm all the time, with a small child constantly pushing her sanity and stress levels, caused the mom great discomfort. She wondered about the emotional effects on her own small self when she’d been yelled at by her mom.

I appreciated how she processed it all publicly, with thoughtful, engaging writing.

What I didn’t like was her conclusion. After some in-depth emotional wrangling, she decided this: she must “TRY HARDER” [sic] not to lose her temper or raise her voice. Ever.

Sounds great — except it is the usual, self-defeating lesson women are taught. Our culture shows us that emotions like anger are, at worst, wicked things that deeply traumatize children for eternity and prevent “shrews” and “bitches” from rising in politics and business.

At best they are an embarrassment and inconvenience.

Emotions, and the chemicals that cause them to ebb and flow naturally, provide an excuse to dismiss 51 percent of the population. A dozen years ago I was at a business dinner with executives in an old-school industry where historically women worked

only in secretarial, maybe accounting.

Now women had been hired to sell heavy equipment, mostly via phone (where presumably they wouldn’t chip a nail on a rusty bearing). A president, a CEO, and an operations guy shook their balding heads over their sumptuous steaks.

Yep, they agreed, their new saleswomen were doing great work. They weren’t rising in the company; they weren’t expected to. “Too bad about the hormones,” one man said.

This would’ve been an excellent time for me to stand up, knock the table over, and holler, “Wanna see some f&\*^%\$# hormones, gentlemen?”

But hey. I didn’t want to rock the boat. I didn’t want to wreck the deal we were working on — the deal that would allow my dad to retire and my parents to pay off their home.

Anger arose, along with shame and frustration at not expressing it. I kept all those inconvenient feelings out of the steakhouse. Like a good girl. Like the Stepford Wife the mommy blogger expects herself to be.

Where do you suppose those feelings went? Where do yours go, when you repress them for the sake of keeping the boat level, the business moving forward, the children happy?

After dinner my tears of frustration flowed, and I had a good conversation with my dad about the whole thing. He learned something, and the deal went through.

If my client hadn’t been a thoughtful and compassionate man — and my father — my truth would’ve had nowhere to go.

Here’s the thing. “Feeling our feels” is gloriously hard work. To genuinely experience and express emotion requires deep stores of courage, honesty, and trust. Trust that your fellow humans aren’t going to exile you from the tribe for crying, yelling, or occasionally kicking an inanimate object.

As for children: they have

big emotions that move fast. It’s useful for them to see that grownups, too, ride those wild waves.

Should they be exposed to endless conflict or berating? No. That’s abuse. But it might be nice for them to know that if someone yells, it’s not the end of the world.

Maybe it just means Mom lost her cool. Soon the cool will come back. When Mom apologizes and talks about emotions, the child learns tools that my generation mostly didn’t get from our parents.

I have an Irish temper, a mood disorder, and hormonal swings. Like the mommy blogger, I used to feel enormous guilt about my emotional self.

I thought that somehow, while raising a small child and caregiving for an injured husband, running a household and working as a freelance writer and teacher, I should maintain preternaturally steady moods.

Meditation, medication, therapy, exercise, creative outlets like music and writing — these helped me surf the moods, but they didn’t change my underlying emotional reality.

Instead of becoming perfect, after a few years I simply became more human. More compassionate. I gave myself a freakin’ break.

So I raise my voice sometimes? Big deal. What matters is that I follow up with information, vulnerability, and conversation. I even gave the awful, irritable side of myself a name: “Cranky Mama.”

My son makes jokes about my moods and understands they can change with the moon’s cycles. He asks intelligent questions about feelings, rather than viewing them as mysterious negative forces.

He knows some folks have bigger and different emotions (and neurological wiring) than others, and is able to judge people less harshly as a result.

Maybe those pesky emotions have some use after all. Instead of beating ourselves up, maybe we could “TRY HARDER” to feel, express, and understand them.



PHOTOPROVIDED

East of the Cascades Quilters held a sew day at The Stitchin’ Post last month.

## Quilters support kids in Central Oregon

The East of the Cascades Quilters held a sew day to support Quilts For Kids on March 27, at The Stitchin’ Post.

Twenty-seven quilters participated in making quilts and pillow cases that are provided to Central Oregon children. (Quilters Susan DeGroat, Jill Miller, and Janet MacConnell are shown making a quilt and pillow case above).

Last year Quilts For Kids donated 140 quilts to the Black Butte Police Department, Deschutes County Sheriff, Sisters FAN, MA Lynch Head Start (2 classes), SPRD Preschool (2 classes) and Sisters/Camp Sherman Fire Department Toys for Tots Program.

Fifty pillow cases were donated to Sisters FAN and Ryan’s Cases for Smiles at the St. Charles pediatric ward. The quilts and pillow cases serve to provide comfort and reassurance to children in need and who are going through difficult times.

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# Easter

## AT BLACK BUTTE RANCH

Join us for a delectable four course menu that includes Ranch favorites like Warm Cheese Blintzes, Shrimp and Crab Cake Benedict, Ranch Steak and Eggs, Wagyu Corned Beef Hash Skillet and Roasted Leg of Lamb.

The complete menu is available at [BlackButteRanch.com](http://BlackButteRanch.com)  
Call today for reservations: 541-595-1260

### Easter Brunch

Sunday, April 21, 2019 | 11am-4 pm  
\$60.00 per person | Ages 5-12 \$20  
Reservations: 541-595-1260

\*The Aspen Lounge will be open 5pm-close on Easter Sunday serving the limited Lounge menu with specials from the Holiday menu.

### Easter Egg Hunt

11am | Lodge Lawn  
There are 4 golden eggs that can be exchanged for a special prize from the Easter Bunny.  
Bring a basket to collect eggs!  
Age Groups: 1-3 years | 4-6 years | 7 years +

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