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### **Pointers For Parents**

### Finding Wisdom In The Emotional Roller Coaster Of Becoming A Teenager

(NAPSA)-If you had a switch you could flip that would shut off your emotionsor your child's-would you flip it? Some might say yes, particularly during pre-teen and teen years. But making the most of our emotions during those years is essential to growth, notes psychology professor Dr. Dacher Keltner. Keltner served as science adviser to Pixar's hit film Inside Out (on Blu-ray, Digital HD & DVD), which uses an exciting, fun and funny story to help viewers understand how five basic emotionspersonified in characters Joy, Anger, Disgust, Fear and Sadness-influence the mind of an 11-year-old girl named Riley.

"Emotional struggles are actually a good thing," says Keltner, faculty director of the Greater Good Science Center based at the University of California, Berkeley (http:// greatergood.berkeley.edu) and author of the best-seller "Born To Be Good: The Science of A Meaningful Life."

"When the movie opens, Riley's personality is principally defined by Joy," he notes, "and this is fitting with what we know scientifically-that childhood is a period of abundant pleasure and joy. But as the movie progresses, her other emotions begin to have a greater impact on how she perceives the world, expresses herself and evokes emotional responses in others."

The movie dramatizes insights that can be very helpful to parents raising children, especially as their youngsters advance into their tweens and teens. Keltner, a father of two daughters who survived their pre-teen years, also notes, "During that time, kids often lose some of the joy dominating their childhood, and they begin to experience more uncomfortable emotions-emotions like fear, sadness, and anger. These are a normal part of growing up."

Parents may find the scientific findings Dr. Keltner shared with Inside Out filmmakers-especially those about tweens' and teens' development-enlightening.

1. Emotions are good for you. All our emotions exist for a purpose and they help us accomplish things. For example, fear helps us avoid danger; anger helps us make sure things are fair. All emotions, when expressed in the right way, can benefit us in our social lives

2. Emotions provide insights to guide how we see the world. Emotions have powerful influences upon our perceptions, our attention, our memories, our judgment. Every emotion tells us something about our inner experience that might inform how we respond to our personal circumstances. Emotions are guides that provide insights into how we should handle really important life transitions-like moves, loss, and developmental changes.

3. Emotions help organize rational thinking and shape how we relate to others. Traditionally, Western thought tells us emotions are enemies of rationality and disruptive to cooperative social relations. The truth is dramatically different: Emotions guide our perceptions of the world, our sense of right and wrong, and influence our memories of the past in ways that enable effective responses to current situations. 4. Sadness is essential to processing life's losses and healing. Inside Out offers an approach that might not seem initially intuitive: Embrace sadness and let it unfold, while engaging patiently with a pre-teen's emotional struggles. "An important aspect of the adolescent experience, and part of growing up, is loss," says Keltner. "Loss of friends, loss of childhood-it's necessary to human development. Sadness will clarify what has been lost (childhood) and move the family toward what is to be gained: the foundation of new identities, for children and parents alike."

5. Remember, emotions change. As captured in the movie, emotions are fleeting, and they help the individual attend to and act upon important matters in one's present situation. But emotions change, most typically lasting only a half-minute or so. When we recognize fear, anger and sadness are fleeting, we are less likely to be overwhelmed in the moment.

6. Happiness isn't just one feeling. Happiness isn't just about the positive. Happiness is really about the full array of emotions and experiencing them in the right context and expressing them in the right way. While most parents want their children to just be happy, that can't always be. You need sadness, anger and fear to grow into a complete person.

7. Feeling our emotions is a universal human experience. Dr. Keltner adds, "At the end of the day, no matter who we are, we have the capacity to feel the same range of emotions. Therefore, if we can realize we are all just fighting our own hard battles, we might experience this world with more compassion and less judgment. Inside Out reminds us of our common humanity, how similar we all actually are despite our differences.'

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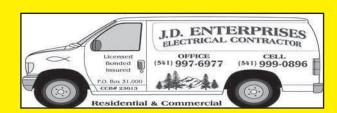
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Correction: Patricia Pope found the National Pastry Day Graphic last week. Not the National Horse Graphic.

**DEBRA BASSANI** found the National Day of the Horse Graphic on Page 9B (Between trees on Ray Wells ad.) She won a gift certificate to Big **Dog Donuts** 

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