disrespected, having just repeated a request forty-eight times or having put your needs aside for your child for the ten-millionth time, even in avoiding having junior turn out like his villainous relative, it's easier to make decisions, engineer teaching consequences and take actions that promote the growth of your child.

Unfortunately, you don't have a scheduled supply of third parties that don't have a dog in the fight to buffer your emotions at home. Therefore you have to work on a mind set that allows you to serve that role, while also engaging in the ongoing struggles on the front line. That mind set is that you are a separate person. You have significant accomplishments in your life and you are as valuable as your son. You deserve respect. You deserve to have your own needs met and to have your own life. And no matter what challenges have been assigned to your child and your family, no matter whether any of these truths are acknowledged by your son, other family members, the community, circumstances or your own beat down self, no one can change these facts. So why do you act like these truths can be taken away? You are the parent. You don't need the acknowledgement of your child to make these things true. The more you demand acknowledgment of these truths from others, the more you reveal your own doubt that you own the role of parent. That social convention of reciprocity, the implementation of the golden rule, does not have to occur for parents. In fact, it doesn't really happen very often while our children are still children.

What I am saying is to believe in yourself, and to refuse to relinquish your parental role as a means to inoculate yourself from the emotional insults of parenting. Remember those tools I love so much? I liked the well balanced and well honed ones. Your tool is yourself. You have to stay well balanced and well honed to stay in your role and handle the emotions of parenting. You have to remain aware of your son and your goals for him and act to further these goals, while balancing all of the other agendas for which you are responsible. You won't receive reciprocity as a parent, but you can use all of your other resources to stay balanced and sharp. You can't afford to have a dog in the fight while you are being a parent. If you do, go feed the dog and replenish its strength so that it can sit this fight out.

About The Author: *Dr. Marty Thomson is Director of Psychological Services at Little Keswick School, Keswick, VA. www.littlekeswickschool.net Phone: 434-295-0457.*

It is against the grain of modern education to teach children to program. What fun is there in making plans, acquiring discipline in organizing thoughts, devoting attention to detail and learning to be self-critical?

– Alan Perlis

OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE INSTITUTE

For many young men and women, leaving home and transitioning to college or the work world is a daunting and overwhelming challenge. Thrust into the real world alone, with few advocates, they often are overwhelmed by isolation and lack of structure and support. Robert Fischer, M.D., psychiatrist, co-founded **Optimum Performance Institute** in 2004 to meet the needs of these young adults, ages 17-25.











OPI Offers:

- Extensive therapy, counseling and emotional support
- Motivational stimulation utilizing mentors and unique opportunities for personal growth
- Boutique educational packages
- Weekend seminars, lectures, and outings
- A multifaceted chemical dependency program
- Special groups for those needing help with social skills

NATSAP National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs

The Woodbury Reports Excellence in Education Award 2005/06 Strugglingteens.com

OPI is located in Woodland Hills, California near Los Angeles
For Admissions call (888) 558-0617.
www.opiliving.com