

Joe, Cathy and Katie

Would you be so kind as to fill these people in on any blanks I'm leaving because I've had a very enjoyable conversation and they have been left out of it. I feel badly for them. Cathy is the mother and Joe is the step-father. Katie you are 13 but your preference would be to be thought of as a 14 year old. And Joe and Cathy are in a relationship that according to Cathy "are the five happiest years of my life". And that has a lot to do when I asked if I could be better informed of the five happiest years of her life with "more caring. . . more sympathy and understanding. . . and we talk". You led me to believe that this had quite a lot to do with a previous marriage that didn't have any of these qualities at all. . . maybe the opposite. I didn't ask you but I suspect from the tone of your voice that that was so. You said that, in fact, when I asked if 'you were godsent to Joe and Joe was godsent to you' that God had put you together for the reason that "we needed each other". And then I asked - 'If God could speak and articulate his purposes or her purposes - whatever your God may be - you said that it had to do with that you "have been so many terrible things" and you not only deserved but should be rewarded with "stability". And Joe, you told me when I asked about the 'five happiest years of your life' that you had "always had a dream of a

loving and caring family”. And that, in fact, the people you are sitting beside are a materialization of that dream almost from the dream world into real life. And I asked where your loving and caring came from. You said it came from your mother but Cathy, you didn’t dispute this but you also saw another source for this which was from his father. You told Elizabeth and myself that Joe’s father has love underneath his shouting. And that you are an advocate for that love. You could discriminate between shouted love and shouted abuse. They are different kinds of shouting and you were pretty clear about that. And then to let Katie know that my interest had got captured by Joe and Cathy that I wasn’t leaving you out, I asked you if from your point of view you agreed with their version of their relationship. Not only did you agree but you sort of added a few pluses to it. You made it clear to me that your girl-friends who know Cathy and Joe think they are the greatest parents. . . how far would it go . . . just in Boston? Or would it go any further than that?

Cathy: Cambridge!

DE: They got the Cambridge prize. There is some envy on their part for your mother and step-father and the kind of family they have. And then I turned to you and I asked you, first checking to see if I wasn’t being too intrusive or too forward but I asked you if you would help me to better appreciate your talents

and abilities. Everyone was pretty quick to know that Color Drill was pretty much one of the natural places where you express these abilities. I didn't know what it was but I realise now that I may have seen it on TV. Everyone here may know but you told me you dance with flags and sabres and stuff and dress up in outfits. And that you really disciplined yourself around this. . . 3 times a week 7-9, 7-9, and 1-6. And I then asked what you had got from this. . . what had this brought out in you and you said something that all of us wish we could say and sort of take after you here - 'I can do anything I want to do'. And that wasn't idle because you, Cathy, drew to my attention that this really showed in her schoolwork which doesn't come easy for her because of learning problems that you mentioned to me. I was just asking if the school appreciated that you were disciplining yourself in the classroom. . . did they know what you are up against and you said they did. And Mr McCann is one of these people and he is your home room or class room teacher. And what he would have been most impressed with was the fact that you were making great progress in your spelling. And I asked you what was the biggest word you could spell but that was too hard a question because you don't memorize them. What you did say was you are spelling a lot better than you were 6 months ago and even better than you were a year ago and you

suspected in 6 months time that you would even spell better. Is that about where we got too? We should tell the people there that I asked your permission that I didn't remember anything about your problems because I just heard it on the telephone but that I asked for this session - because we can meet again tomorrow if you wish - 2 for 1 - could I get to know you just pure and natural without the problems. . . we'll get around to them. . .to see what you've got going to bring against the problems that are besetting you. Katie, can we extend that conversation or have we gone as far as we can go. . . I know that your ability was natural in Color Drill and you went against a problem in the classroom in terms of learning problems. Do you call this ability - 'I can do anything I want to - what do you call this ability? How do you describe it to yourself that ability or talent of yours? Do you have a name for that...grit...determination?

K: Determination.

DE: Determination.Do you think you inherited any of that Determination from your mom?

K: Uhhuh.

DE: She's got Determination too?

K: Uhhuh.

DE: Are you in line for her Determination?

K: Uhhuh.

DE: Do you figure you inherited it or do you figure you

learned it from her by watching her?

K: Learned it from her.

DE: Really. What was the best lesson in Determination that your mother has taught you?

K: That she went to school. . . she's back in college. . .

DE: Your mother is going back to college now?

K: Mmhuh.

DE: What college is that?

K: Bunker Hill Community College.

DE: Do you think in any way that you were a bit of an inspiration for her to take that step in her life, seeing what you could do?

K: Mmh.

DE: How much of an inspiration do you think you were to your mum - a lot of inspiration, a middle bit or a tiny bit?

K: A middle bit.

DE: What in particular that you did could have been an inspiration for your mom to go back to school?

C: Do you know what the word 'inspiration' means?

K: I think so. . .

DE: Well, let's not go past it! Can you think of another word that would fit for inspiration. . . model like you look up to someone else. . . you know how maybe you look up to an older woman at Color Drill who is really good at it. . . a championship team. . .you look up to them to learn how to do it.

K: Mmhuh.

DE: Is that a good enough explanation for that word?

- Probably quite a common New Zealand word but it might not be so common here. You think you were a bit of an inspiration for your mom to go back to school?
- K: A little.
- DE: How would your mom have been inspired by you to go back to school?
- K: I don't know about inspired because the reason she went back was for us to have a better life.
- DE: And a little bit of your mother being able to do that was from watching you?
- K: Mmhuh.
- DE: What did she see about you. . . I know you got Determination from your mom but perhaps you gave a bit back to her. You are sharing it around! Can you think of anything if your mom was watching down over your life from on high and was watching over the ways Determination was being used in your life, she would have picked up anything from you?
- K: (turning to mother) Did you?
- DE: I'm going to ask you but before I ask her, could you take a guess what it might have . . .
- K: Maybe because I never give up.
- DE: (writing and speaking aloud) 'Maybe because I never give up'. Can you tell me this - if she was a little bit of an inspiration for you going back to school, what was it?
- C: Well the fact that I know she has learning

disabilities and she's trying to cope with them and get round them and she has to learn made me realise she has a lot more to deal with in education and trying to learn. I figure if she can learn algebra, I can learn algebra.

DE: Really! Did you know, Katie, that you were a little bit behind your mother's education come-back?

K: No.

DE: Is it pleasing to hear this or would you have rather not know this?

K: Pleasing.

DE: Why? Why do you say that?

K: Maybe because my mom thinks that.

DE: How do you think she's been an inspiration to you in your life?

K: Because when things were hard for her, she went from being a nervous wreck to going to school to going and getting As.

DE: Really! When she's getting As in school, what do you think she's doing it for? What are her reasons? She could just pass you know . . . C is a pass. What are her reasons for committing herself to her education?

K: She wants to be better.

DE: Cathy, what do you think I should know and appreciate about Joe? I don't know him that well and you know him better than I do.

C: Yah, I do.

DE: What do you think I should know and appreciate

about him?

C: He's a very caring person. He usually puts me and Katie before anything about him. If he wanted something to do and Katie and I wanted something else, he would drop it, you know. . . he's very unselfish. It just seems that he keeps giving and giving and giving.

DE: He's a giver?

C: Yah he is. He doesn't ask for much in return except for . .

DE: Does that mean like he's 'all give and no take'?

C: No, he just enjoys giving. At least that's how he leads us to believe. I don't know if its factual.

DE: What do you think? Is he fooling?

C: No, I don't.

DE: Joe, how did you learn to be a giver? It's not that usual in this day and age.

J: My father was a giver when I was growing up as a boy. He would give me everything I wanted. 'Dad, can I have this, this and this!' He would give it to me.

DE: Really!

J : That's how I learned to give.

DE: So is that what was beneath the shouting you might have been getting?

C: Yah.

DE: And do you know if relatives in your family would say that he has a reputation for this. . . being a giving person?

J: Some.

DE: He just gives to his family or . . .

J: He gives to me. . . my cousins.

DE: It's just not you?

J: Yah.

DE: Is this something you admire about your father?

J: Yes. . . very much.

DE: And do you consciously take that on to yourself to try to be like your Dad here?

J: Yah, I try to. I try to give everything. I try to be like my Dad.

DE: And Cathy, do you think Joe's father appreciates this about him?

C: I don't think he appreciates the way Joe has matured. I don't think his parents appreciate him at all. And sometimes they come down on him pretty hard. And I feel like I need to defend him because he is doing a great job and everyone wants to be told they are doing a great job, especially by your parents. And sometimes they don't do that. And I might come to his defence and say - 'He's really made great progress and he's done so great! He's something to be proud of'.

DE: How are you going in convincing them to be as proud of Joe as you are?

C: Because I just bring up all the good things he does all the time.

DE: Are you winning them over to your point of view?

C: Yah, I did hear his momma say: 'Joe, you've

changed a lot for the better'. Yah, I think I am.

DE: Hold on (writing) 'Joe, you have changed a lot for the better'. Do you remember that, Joe?

J: It must have been said but I don't remember that being said to me.

DE: What do you think she meant by that - I know you can't remember it? What do you think she would have been talking about there?

J: Attitude. . . the way I act.

DE: Attitude. Did you change your attitude or . . . ?

J: Not a whole lot.

DE: From what to what?

J: I used to be. . . how can I say it. . .

DE: We're all friends here. . . you can say it!

J: I used to be 'well, I don't care' but now I try to think about people.

DE: Carefree?

J: Yah.

DE: And what are you now?

J: I don't know about 'carefree' but now I have the attitude - 'Whatever I do, I do the right thing or the wrong thing'.

DE: Katie, do you think I should understand anything else about your mum and Joe? Do you know anything about them that you would like me to know? I know they are great parents but I don't know if I've got all of it yet. Is there something that they are even to modest about? Would you agree that Joe is a great step-father?

K: (very vigorously) Uhhuh.

DE: Oh dear, what do you mean by that? Do you think he's over-giving?

K: Uhhuh.

DE: Help me understand that? What does over-giving mean?

K: If he had no money and I asked him for money, he'd go to the bank and get the money even though he didn't have enough money to pay the bill.

DE: Really!

K: Or if I was in the next room and I wanted to use the phone but didn't want to get up, he'd get it for me.

DE: Really ! Would you like to do more for yourself?

J: No!

DE: You like it that way?

K: Uhhuh.

DE: Is there any way you can give back to Joe or is it sort of a one-way relationship-Joe-giving and Katie-taking? I'm not being critical but that's just the way it goes.

K: I don't know. Do I give or do I take? (talking to Joe)

J: You give back to Daddy. You give me love. And you tell me once and awhile - 'You're doing a good job. . . keep it up'. Yap!

DE: What about your mom? Is she a giving person?

K: Uhhuh. . . very giving.

DE: Very giving. And is she the right kind of giving, from your point of view, over-giving or under-giving?

K: The right kind of giving.

DE: They couldn't be giving too much to you or you wouldn't have any 'determination'. You must have met people who are really, really over-given to - what should we say - whenever they have problem, they turn to other people to get given to. Do you know what I mean? Have you seen that happen? Do you think they've got the giving just about right because you do have 'determination'?

K: Mmhuh.

DE: Have there been any times when your 'Determination' had to say 'no' to their giving? You know - 'I'll do it myself. . . keep your giving and turn it back to yourself'.

K: Yah.

DE: You had to do it?

K: Yah.

DE: Was it hard?

K: No.

DE: Was it easy?

K: Yah.

DE: What happened to their giving in the face of your Determination to do for yourself? Is that a bit strange?

K: Yah.

C: I don't think she understands.

DE: Oh that's okay. When you don't understand, I'll just keep going until you understand. You were saying that you've got a very strong Determination and that

expresses itself in many ways - in natural ways like Color Drill where things come easy to you. You even go beyond that. You could have just gone to Color Drill and said: 'I can do this' and not advance yourself in your Color Drill career and trained so hard. But your Determination shows itself strongly in those areas where you're up against something like reading problems and spelling problems. Right?

C: Mmh.

DE: You've got people who bless you with lots of giving and you said that sometimes the Determination has to halt their Giving. You have to say 'no' to their giving. Here's an example - Just say you said: 'Well, I don't want to go to Color Drill. I'm feeling a bit tired. And your mother said: 'I'll do it for you! But that might weaken your Determination. . . it could. So has your Determination ever had to say 'no' to their giving ways. . . to stand on your own two feet?

K: Yah.

DE: Can you give me an example of that.

K: Well if she tells me 'I'll go in your place! I'll say: 'I'll go!!' I'd do that fast.

DE: What's that called. . . rapid come-backs?

K: Yah, a come-back!

DE: You can have a rapid come-back when your Determination has to say 'no' to their giving ways? Well, say you said: 'I really want to go to Color Drill

- and your mother said: 'No. . . no. . .I want to stay in bed. I'll do the training for you'. What would you do then?
- K: It'd be like - 'No, you're not. . . I'M GOING'.
- DE: I see. . . in those sort of circumstances. . .
- C: When it comes to Color Guards, sure. Other things she'll say 'no' to giving when it's a hardship on us. And we try to give it because she asked for it. But she'll say 'it's a hardship. . . I'll take care of it myself'.
- DE: Give me an example of that.
- C: Well, like I had a back problem and I had to take care of the house. And Katie said: 'No, it's my responsibility too. I live here. I put all the clothes there. I'll pick them up. I'll do it! She's good ... very good in that sense. If she decides that that's what she's going to do, then that is what she is going to do.
- DE: You know - your 'Determination' and Katie's 'Determination' . . . do they march beside each other or against each other. . . do they march arm-in-arm or go against the other?
- C: No. . .it goes against. She's determined to do one thing and I'm determined to tell her 'no'.
- DE: Katie, would that be fair?
- K: Mhhuh.
- DE: So sometimes the 'mother Determination' and the 'daughter Determination' run up against each other than march side by side?

C: That's right!

DE: If your 'Determination' was to march side by side, where would you go, do you think, with that energy? Can you imagine where you would stop?

K: Canada. . . I don't know.

DE: You'd make it up to the border?

K: Yah, I guess.

DE: So that 'Determination' when it is going in the same direction is pretty unstoppable?

C: Yes. . . if you put the two of us together and we were determined to do something, then we're going to do it if it takes 2 hours. . . 6 hours . . . that's it. I'm very strong in that sort of thing. So is Katie. When she starts to do something, she finishes it.

DE: Is that right, Joe?

J: Yap!

DE: Is it pretty awesome when you see them get it together?

J: Yap. . . when they do something, they finish it.

DE: Really! You alluded to some things in your past that weren't easy for you and weren't good things. Where you've got to with your 'Determination', has that left quite a bit of that behind?

C: YES . . . I've come a very long way from where I was before . . . an extremely long way. . . in the past five years . . .

DE: What do you put that down to . . .OH . . . THE LAST FIVE YEARS. . .

C: Well, like I said - 'Some stability with Joe and

everything’.

DE: You’ve got to go for your thing (to Katie). Are you getting impatient?

K: Yah.

DE: Can you last a couple of more minutes? I know you want to go marching. Do you call it marching? How did you get ahead of all these things that were in the past and you said it was five years ago and it had to do with this relationship. Anything else?

C: Sure. . . getting a good therapist to help.

DE: Really! How did therapy get you ahead of the past?

C: I’ve been in therapy with a lot of different people for a long time. But the one I’m with now, she’s willing to say to me - ‘You’re wrong’. . . she’s willing to say you could have handled that in a different way instead of just saying ‘That’s the way you felt’. Sometimes I need to be told something’s wrong or better or changed. And I’m just determined to finally make something better of myself and I HAVE.

DE: What percentage of your success would you put down to the family you are part of. . .the ‘stability’ of your family?

C: This family. . . you’re not talking about. .

DE: No.

C: I would say probably 70%.

DE: What would you put down to the therapy?

C: 20.

DE: What’s the other 10%?

C: My own growth.

DE: Would that have just come naturally with age or does it have to do with wisdom?

C: Wisdom. . it did not come naturally by age.

DE: Well, you know the old saying - 'The older you get, either you get wiser or more foolish'. It's not inevitable that you get wiser.

C: No.

DE: Is that something that you cherish about yourself?

C: Now I do. . . now I do!

DE: Are there some other people in your life who cherish your wisdom? Or is it just with you and Joe.

..

C: No. . .no. There are my brothers. . . sisters. . .mother. . .

DE: If I had met them and got to know them and they felt comfortable with me as a confidant, what would they attribute to you leaving these things in the past behind and getting ahead of them?

C: Getting divorced!

DE: They would see that as the secret of your success?

C: Yes. . .yes

DE: I know you have to go. I know we haven't talked much about what you are up against but we now know what we've got to go with! Will we meet tomorrow to continue this discussion.

C: What time?

