



the MIND reader

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THE LEGO MOVIE:

Change your perspective, Change the world.

By: Lindsay Simineo

My husband and I are nerds, beautiful wonderful nerds. It is this great quality that compels us to call grandparents for babysitting and get us to the theater to see a movie that we, as adults, have no reason to be excited about. This time it was *THE LEGO MOVIE*. It was also the first time, in a long time, that I had wished other parents were watching a movie with me.

This movie is about Emmett, a good-natured Lego builder who builds everything by the instructions. It is discovered that Emmett is “The Special”, the master builder who is spoken of in a prophecy that will save the Lego world from the evil “President Business” (responsibility for the awesome character names belong solely to THE LEGO MOVIE). Emmett then embarks on a 2 hour hilarious adventure of self-discovery, overcoming obstacles, and....

And a major plot twist. I do not want to give it away, because it is immensely powerful



watching it play out on screen. However, I do want to talk about its themes. The themes are apparent through the many different battles, more than just the ones between Emmett and President Business. Themes include good vs. evil, creativity vs. structure, imagination vs. order/predictability, and childhood wonder vs. adult rationale. *THE LEGO MOVIE* portrays all these struggles, with the result being how invisible walls can be created between parents and children. (Continued on pg. 3)



Finding the Narrative at the Matinee

By: Doug Blocksma

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What is your favorite movie? I suppose the varying answers of this question reflect the varying types of person and types of movies (even though the correct answer is *Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail*). Or what is your favorite book? Television show? It is not hard to find a good story in the things that we love: from the books of the Bible to old-timey radio hours, engaging in a good plot appears to be bred into us as people in a very deep way.

Understanding that concept is at the heart of a type of therapy called narrative therapy. Narrative therapy asks someone to think about their life in a more externalized way that almost makes them think of themselves as characters in a grand epic. Considering struggles and interpersonal dynamics in this way allows for more honest evaluation and comparison to other similar tales that we may have heard along the way, which only leads to greater understanding and (hopefully!) positive change.

(Continued on pg. 4)



Learned Helplessness

By: Sheri Fluellen

"The problem is not the problem. The problem is your attitude about the problem. Do you understand?"

- Captain Jack Sparrow, Pirates Of The Caribbean

"Everything is awesome, everything is cool when you're part of a team. Everything is awesome, when you're living out a dream.

Everything is better when we stick together Side by side you and I are gonna win forever"

- Lego Movie Theme Song

"Look, I guarantee there'll be tough times. I guarantee that at some point, one or both of us is gonna want to get out of this thing. But I also guarantee that if I don't ask you to be mine, I'll regret it for the rest of my life, because I know, in my heart, you're the only one for me."

— Ike Graham, Runaway Bride

"After all, tomorrow is another day."

- Scarlett O' Hara , Gone With The Wind

Learned helplessness is a very real psychological phenomenon where we learn through situations and time, that even our best efforts are useless. So we stop trying. We give up and roll over and let the world do with us what it will.

Learned helplessness isn't **all** wrong. There is reality that sometimes our efforts don't pay off the way that we would like them to, if at all. But what happens for some people is that they extrapolate that idea and feeling to other situations in their life, creating a very generalized and broad sense of helplessness. When we give up, we really are sealing our own fate because we no longer look for the ways in which we can make a difference.

Learned helplessness is a very common state of mind. You might be trying to lose weight, have a week where the scale doesn't budge, and now you abandon your goals because it "doesn't matter what I do, I can't lose the weight!" You might be in a relationship where your significant other cuts you down verbally. You have tried to let them know how much it hurts, you've tried ignoring it, you've

re-turned the favor, but nothing seems to stop the verbal abuse. You might have tried really hard to impress your boss so that you would get the next promotion. You felt you put your all into it, but you were overlooked. You tell yourself, "I'm just not good enough." These are all real life examples of learned helplessness. While there are a lot of small but powerful ways to get unstuck from learned helplessness, I think one very useful way is to learn from other people who have overcome. There is a lot of power and motivation in learning from others. Here are some inspiring movies that might just help you move from learned helplessness to learned industriousness. (Please review these movies for age appropriateness and content)

-Pursuit of Happyness

-A Beautiful Mind

-The Blind Side

-Hotel Rwanda

-Dangerous Minds

-The Diary of Anne Frank

KidsInMind

By: Sheri Fluellen

Years ago, before I ever had kids, I discovered a way of being able to know exactly what I am getting myself into when watching a movie. It's an independently ran website called "KidsInMind" (www.kidsinmind.com). The staff at this company watch and rate movies for specific content as it falls into 3 categories: Sex & Nudity, Violence & Gore, and Profanity. In addition to the rating (1-10 scale), they list out all the words, images, and content that goes in to those specific ratings. It really allows you to be an informed media viewer. Here's an example of a recent movie at the theaters: "Three Days to Kill" (<http://www.kids-in-mind.com/t/threedaystokill.htm>). (3) Here are the ratings:



It describes the 6 scenes that comprise the Sex & Nudity rating, the 10 scenes that comprise the Violence & Gore rating, and reports the following for Profanity:

"PROFANITY 5 - About 3 F-words (a subtitle contains an F-word and a song's lyrics contain an F-word derivative and an F-word), 7 scatological terms, 1 anatomical term, 5 mild obscenities, name-calling (crazy, Grandpa), stereotypical references to Serbians, the French, Italians, Americans, gays, spies, terrorists, families, teenagers, athletes, 4 religious exclamations (e.g. Oh my God, Oh God, Jesus Christ)"

So why care about the content before watching? There are a number of scenarios that might warrant vigilance. The one I am focused on is when your kids watch. Research has found long-term impact of unsupervised television viewing on kids. For example, when seeing violence through media, kids can become "immune" or numb to the horror of violence, they gradually accept violence as a way to solve problems, they intentionally or unintentionally imitate the violence they observe on television, and identify with certain characters, victims and/or victimizers. All of these impacts will inhibit healthy and well-adjusted development in children and adolescents. Before you let your child watch something that is beyond their years (or even "appropriate" for their age by media's standard), take a good hard look at the content and the messages being sent to your child. It is NOT just an innocent way to pass time or relax.

THE LEGO MOVIE: Change your perspective, Change the world (Cont)

A common mistake made by us adults is assuming that kids have the same brain capacity as we do. It's an understandable mistake because many children have a lot of the same physical capacities as adults, and we assume that their mental and cognitive capacities are the same as well. However, this is just simply not the case. Research has revealed that the brain is in constant development from birth until a person's early twenties. Kids cannot always understand abstract thinking, consequences for actions, or the need to pick up their rooms. Because adult logic and rationality is missing, it also means that great abilities such as creativity, play, and imagination can flourish. What great qualities these are, and how sad that they usually get lost in adulthood, with the structure and demand of adult life! Yet, what is even more sad is when we as adults demand these qualities to be squashed in our children.

This is where the walls emerge in the parent/child relationship. Somewhere between bills, stress, and responsibility, we have become consumed by our adult rationale. Rightfully so, as this has helped us file taxes and keep families fed. However, it is this adult rationale that gotten in the way of offering something so vital to our

children: Empathy. Adulthood has inadvertently made us unsympathetic to the experiences of kids because we've forgotten what it is like to be children and how fun their little minds are.

Our children will always need structure and consequences, it's how they learn. Yet for a healthy relationship with parents, they also need to know that they are loved and understood. Empathy provides that. How do you express empathy to your child? Through play. Through creating with your child. Through encouraging them in their imagination, and discovering it with them. Through acting like a kid. When you take off your work clothes at the end of the day and dedicate a small amount of stupid fun to your child, you can embark on an amazing connection with him/her. One that is fun, but also where love and understanding thrive.

Go see THE LEGO MOVIE. (1)



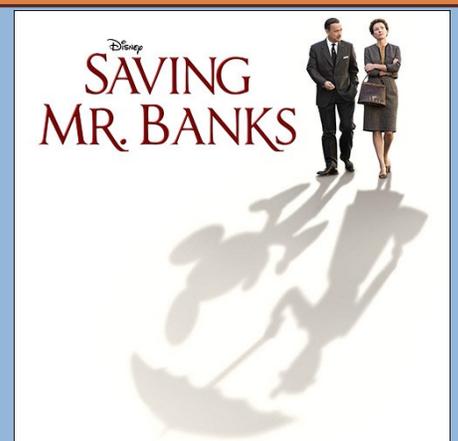
“Saving Mr. Banks”: Movie Review

By : Linda Malm

The movie, Saving Mr. Banks, is set in California during the 1960's. Walt Disney had produced many animated movies for children and opened his theme park, Disneyland. At the urging of his daughter, Disney had turned his attention to pursuing P.L. Travers, the British author of “Mary Poppins”, to make her book into a movie. Travers really didn't want her book made into a movie, but reluctantly agreed because she was almost financially broke. She came to California to sign over rights to her book and collaborate with the Disney screenwriters in the creation of the movie. Travers, however, didn't like how the screenwriters are portraying the main characters of her novel, and she retreated back to England without signing over the rights.

During this process, Disney had come to realize that the characters of Mary Poppins were not just a work of fiction but were characters based on her own life. Disney chose to follow Travers back to England, where he shared his own story of growing up with a very demanding father who had him delivering the newspapers that his father published twice a day in bad weather in shoes with worn out soles, even though his father had the money to provide better. Throughout this movie, we see flashbacks of Travers' life and how she idolized her alcoholic father, who died of the disease when she was 9 years old. Disney recognized that the character of Mr. Banks was based on Travers' idolized view of her father. One obvious clue was her pen name, **Travers**, which is actually her father's first name. This realization by Disney made sense of her staunch protection of the character Mr. Banks. Due to Disney's personal testimony and promise to protect Mr. Banks' image, Travers finally agreed to assign the book rights to Disney.

In this movie, we can recognize the underlying theme- how two people choose to live out their childhood experiences in very different ways. Walt Disney was an upbeat person who transformed his hard experiences into a dedication to provide children joy and happiness through new experiences (movies, television, and theme parks). P.L. Travers allowed her hard experiences to contribute to her abilities as a great writer, but also remained self-protective, isolating and a snob. However, the merging of these two different experiences ended up creating a series of books and one of the most popular movies ever made. (2)



Finding the Narrative at the Matinee (Cont.)

Possibly the best part of engaging this style of therapy, though, is the homework: watching movies! A film can help one consider themselves in new ways in contrast to the screen. The best part is that these movies do not have to be subjectively good at all: one might find the struggle of Harry and Lloyd to make it across the country to the Rocky Mountains just as powerful as Maximus fighting hoards of Gladiators, and the metaphors of each struggle just as helpful.

Thinking about the original Star Wars films – and in particular, Episode IV – can be helpful here as well. The plot of George Lucas' space opera follows very closely to Joseph Campbell's *Hero's Journey* (4), which is also reflected in most every story told today. The idea of a normal individual being found out to have a special talent or gift, going through the struggles of personal and physical growth and eventually triumphing over those challenges touches something deep within us. We respond to these stories on a very innate level, and they can inspire us to remember how our own journey requires conflict in order to be worth watching.

So the next time you can't find a good reason to keep working through that struggle – think about Luke Skywalker. Or Katniss Everdeen. Or even Harry Potter! The films that we love to watch over and over again are more than mere distraction: they can imbue us with hope and encouragement in our own daily lives.



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