

Honey, I Wrecked the Kids by Alyson Schafer

(2009, John Wiley & Sons, 247 pages)

Reviewed by Sharon Baby

This brand new book by Alyson Schafer is a treasure. Buy her book; it will be one of the best investments that you make during this money-cautious year. Having this book will allow you to use a yellow highlighter, turn down the page corners, and let you revisit certain sections again and again. Once you've read it, you'll likely want everyone you know to read it too, but hopefully you can encourage them to buy their own copy.

Alyson has written the newest version of parenting books based on the work of Dr. Alfred Adler and Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs. Many terrific educators have written books in the past along these same lines – books that teach parents how to parent respectfully and effectively using sound knowledge and strategies that will bring about positive change for the whole family. To her credit, Alyson is Canadian, she's a parent, she's a modern woman, and she is a parenting expert. She was raised in the Adlerian tradition and now has her Master of Arts degree in counseling and Adlerian Psychology. She writes, teaches, and speaks to parents and educators about the Adlerian way of living.

With *Honey, I Wrecked the Kids*, Alyson welcomes today's parent with her straight-shooting style, real-life stories, and great insight into the misbehavior of our modern children – toddlers to teenagers. I fear that the contemporary, eye-catching title might turn away some parents who think that this is a book for only the most desperate parents. In fact, **this book could benefit all families – all parents/caregivers would find support somewhere within these pages.**

Parents looking for a quick way to “fix” their children may be disenchanted with Alyson's book. This is not a magic formula but rather a clear, comprehensive guide for teaching and helping parents to understand, support, and encourage each of their children so that the children feel encouraged rather than needy, rebellious, revengeful, or inadequate.

The author expects a committed audience, but she supports her readers all along the way using step-by-step strategies as well as recognizable stories to bring home the ideas. Some parents may find all of the steps, lists, and techniques a bit daunting; however, she also says things that are profound and simple to remember:

“For starters, keep chanting: Children who feel good, do good; children, who feel bad, do bad” (p.142).

Let Routines Be the Boss:

- When your teeth are brushed, I'll know you're ready for juice.
- When your coat is on, I'll know you're ready to go out and build a snowman.
- When your job is done, I'll know you're ready for your video. (p. 276)

She also has included over two pages of valuable **Ways to Show Your Kids You Care and Rebuild Your Relationships** (pp.185-187). Fortunately, there is also an extensive website, www.alyson.ca which parents can refer to for more positive advice.

Honey, I Wrecked the Kids would be an excellent book for a parent group to study. The author covers a lot of material. (An index would have been helpful.) Ideas and strategies are broken into manageable pieces; parents can learn, discuss, go home to practice, and then repeat the learning process for at least eight weeks.

Alyson Schafer *gets* families. She believes children are wonderful people to be encouraged and guided, and she empathizes with parents; she knows from experience that being a parent is challenging. She is asking parents to take a risk, do the work of positive parenting, and be surprised at the life-changing results.

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