

Letting Go

Bonita C. Jacobs

Orientation professionals are well versed in the notion of “letting go.” We typically provide at least one program during parent orientation where we extol the virtues, the mixed emotions, and the pain of “letting the student go;” that is, learning to stand on his or her own feet. We reminisce about the memories, chuckle at the changes, and share a common excitement – and dread – about the upcoming freshman year experience. My favorite quote, and one I often share with parents, is from Coburn and Treeger’s (1988) book *Letting Go*, in which a high school principal wrote her impressions after her last child left for college:

I love the freedom my husband and I enjoy, and I love the quiet orderliness of a clean house. I love having my car to myself, and I love having the radio dial permanently set on...the classical music station. At the same time I miss the exciting confusion that the children and their friends provided. I miss the dinner table discussions about parties, poetry, politics, and English assignments and the silly songs we sang as we did the dishes...I’m ready to go out to dinner more and to cook less, but I’m not sure I’m ready to have my primary parenting years behind me. (pp. 145-146)

It is with this mixture of emotions that I end my term as editor of the *Journal of College Orientation and Transition*. I have wonderful memories of the deadlines, the partnership with the associate editors, and the feelings of exhilaration each time we finished another edition. At the same time, I realize that I have accomplished what was my purpose – to help rebuild the journal, build readership, and establish its credibility. It is now time for someone else to take over and to make the journal even more credible, solicit more manuscripts, work toward abstract certification, and further build its circulation.

I am greatly pleased that Dr. Michael T. Miller, Associate Dean of the College of Education at San Jose State University, has been selected as the new editor. I am well familiar with his work, and we are fortunate to have his level of scholarship involved with the journal. Just as parents are noticeably relieved when they meet your orientation staff and realize they are leaving their “baby” in good hands, I am thrilled that my baby, the journal, will be in such qualified hands. As in the quote above, I will miss the confusion, the deadlines, and the calling in of favors to my publishing colleagues. At the same time, I’m ready to publish more myself, clear my desk occasionally, and find new projects.

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I think it is especially fitting that this edition of the journal is comprised primarily of graduate student authors. My first editorial in this journal was entitled, "The Case for Scholarship." This has been our banner, and the fact that we have been able to attract new professionals into the publishing arena underscores our commitment to scholarship. I am grateful to the graduate school professionals who have undoubtedly worked with these students to help them get, what is for some, their first publication, and obviously, I am grateful to these dedicated students who endured multiple rewrites in order to contribute to our body of knowledge. It is our hope that their level of satisfaction will spur them toward more submissions to professional journals.

Thank you very much. It has been a joy.

Reference

- Coburn, K. L., & Treeger, M. L. (1988). *Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Today's College Experience*. Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler Publishers, Inc.

ARTICLE

A Safer Social Passage: Helping Adult Children of Alcoholics Make the Transition to College

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College student Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOAs) reported less positive feelings about being in college and shorter intimate relationships than non-ACOAs. A description of normal developmental tasks which may be especially troublesome for ACOAs, and suggestions for counselors to facilitate students' transition to college, are discussed as a means to improve student satisfaction and retention.

Many programs have been generated for working with Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOAs) on college campuses (Cutler & Radford, 1999; Harman & Withers, 1992). While some of these efforts address alcohol abuse prevention (Botvin & Botvin, 1992) and self-esteem/assertiveness issues (Crawford & Phyfer, 1988), others take a developmental approach that emphasizes the role of early childhood losses in negatively affecting adult self-concept (Lewchanin & Sweeney, 1997). However, considerably less attention has been devoted to programs that help student ACOAs make the transition from high school to college and to help them develop and maintain healthy intimate relationships. It is our contention that programmatic interventions such as these can be advanced and articulated at the level of the college's division of student affairs and counseling department. In this way, counselors can provide a smoother transition for ACOA students as they begin college.

It has been widely acknowledged among counselors that parental alcoholism affects not only the abuser, but also family members, particularly children of the alcoholic (Fischer & Kittleson, 2000; Heryla & Haberman, 1991). Although findings are not always clear-cut (Harter, 2000; Oliver & Powell, 1998), considerable clinical research suggests that ACOAs experience more psychological distress and behavioral problems than do people without an alcoholic parent (Beaudoin, Murray, Bond, & Barnes, 1997; Belliveau & Stoppard, 1995). Intellectually, some ACOAs have poorer visual-spatial learning skills (Garland, Parsons, & Nixon, 1993) and poorer levels of academic, personal, and emotional adjustment to college (Garbarino & Strange, 1993). With respect to relationships, ACOAs often have difficulties with intimacy, trust, and sharing their feelings (Martin, 1995; Shapiro, Weatherford, Kaufman, & Broenen, 1994).

Empirical research has yielded some interesting findings that contradict some

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