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Playtime – A Lost Art

By Arleen M. Kaptur

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Today's world is filled with violence – from wars – to crimes committed – every day – in every country. There are bombings, explosions, and murders. Our television programs bring up subjects that are "not suitable" for children and certainly "not suitable" as entertainment for adults.

But the world today has taken this violence one step further – they have incorporated it in a child's playthings. The "shoot 'em up, blow 'em up" mentality has permeated even the toy aisles in every city.

While being vigilant or "street smart" is, of course, a major concern for parents of children, the old adage of "What came first – the chicken or the egg" seems to emerge. Was the idea of these recent violent crimes always out there – in the reality world – or was it nurtured and fed by violent TV, movies and now toys?

When is child is placed in a situation of making a choice when angry with another child, does he/she make the decision based on knowing that he/she can't make them disappear into cyberspace by using a laser gun, jumping over tall buildings and disappearing, or eradicating them by all sorts of other means? It seems to be getting harder and harder as toys portray violence from cars turning into robots or bugs, viscious looking creatures that permeate a person's worse nightmares, and now are sold for \$29.99, packed in cellopane, and ready for a child to create their own "nightmare." As parents, the responsibility of helping a child grow into maturity with a "right" sense of preservation and protection for person and property seems to be swaying to the side with help from "ad" agencies and toy manufacturers.

Toys – meant to be an extension of a child's imaginative world – one of finding out what things are made of, and how they can be used – should not be filled with violence that solves all problems and leaves the "hero" surrounded by smoldering buildings and disintegrated opponents. Yes, the world is a violent place at times – but that should be the adults' responsibility to cope and deal with the circumstances. Our children can be made aware of certain dangers as their age allows them the maturity to understand, but why heap on violence and destruction during their recreational times as well.

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Will problem solving, peaceful negotiations, or finding solutions that benefit both sides without any violent act be lost forever? Will today's child grow up with "beating" the other guy at any expense, and showing no mercy? Are parents ready to cope with the problems that anger and violence can nurture as a child is confounded by news, television, movies, and even playthings that prove that the most cunning, and violent victor is really the victor? Will a child learn reasoning, negotiation, and partnership when toys in bright packages are grotesque and chilling?

We certainly want our children safe, but in our endeavors toward this safety, have we robbed our children of having plaything that shows, love, respect, friendship, and just plain fun? Are we, as parents, giving them a choice, or directing their feelings and emotions to victory at all costs?

Childhood, holidays, and playtime were times to "get away" for a while and enjoy being a child. We can't rightfully rob our children of this under the guise that they have the right to know what is really "out there". Yes, in time and with each appropriate age, they will find out and they will deal with the situations because they have had a solid background of knowing right from wrong, peaceful means from violent, and doing the right thing – at all costs.

Isn't this the legacy worth aiming for – and letting toys be toys – and not the elements of bad dreams and vicious plots? Cars do not turn into laser yielding mean robots, and bugs are not taking over the world – to a child – or to an adult. There is a time and place for instructing our children to be vigilant and protect themselves, but there is also time for play and imagination. They need both

Stores sell – parents buy – that's a lot of power and say so –
Enjoy!

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Arleen Kaptur has written numerous books and articles For a free newsletter – please visit <http://www.arleenssite.com>

Reclaiming Your Inner Child

By Ida Byrd–Hill

Remember when you were a child. Everyday seemed to be an adventure filled with laughter and giggles. There was humor all around us. Children laugh 400 times a day up to 4 years old, while adults laugh 15 times a day. Unfortunately, the cares of life weight most of us down. We turn to alcohol, sex and drugs to relive that silly time of our lives. We can reclaim our inner child without the pain of sex, drugs and alcohol.

How does one reclaim their inner child??? First by realizing it is ok to step outside of our sophisticated selves and play. Given our career image, we must uphold it is hard to just play. We develop sophisticated hobbies such as golf, sailing tennis and horseback riding, but do we just wrestle and play? Playtime and laughter keeps us young and joyful. We need play to escape stress, heart attacks and strokes.

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Our lack of play explains why Halloween has become the second largest holiday after Christmas. It is one of the few days where it is socially acceptable to dress up in a costume and become whom ever we choose. We can be Spiderman, a gangster, a witch, a bar maid or a goblin all day without strange looks. We can role play and laugh at others who role play with joy and glee. For one day, we can gallivant throughout the neighborhood with the children and grandchildren collecting treats or delivering tricks. We can party and dance all night in our new role. We can play make believe again. It is our day to be a child again.

Let your playtime begin this Halloween. But don't stop there. Reclaim your inner child at least once a month all throughout the year. The quality of your life and your health will truly improve as your laughter and play grows.

Ida B. Byrd–Hill is the President of Uplift Financial and

. She was the

President of The Harvard Group Wealth Management L.L.C. for 10 years. She created investment portfolios, insurance plans and residential/ commercial financing. She has served as guest columnist for the Michigan Front Page for 2 years and a speaker for the Better Investing television show hosted by David Chilton, author of The Wealthy Barber.



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