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The Last Day of 'Who Cares?'

By Skye Thomas

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by: **Skye Thomas**

Yesterday was the last day of 'Who Cares?' for my oldest child. Today is his first day of high school. From now on, his choices will have a long-term effect on his life. Nothing will ever be the same for him.

Our culture doesn't make a big deal of that moment when a teen is officially considered an adult. Many older more traditional cultures have ceremonies and such so the teen and everyone around him knows from that day forward he is considered an adult and is expected to behave as such. By the time they're old enough to move out, they've had a few years to get comfortable with the idea that they're adults. In America, we just say that at the age of eighteen you are old enough to vote, to get married, to serve your country, to go to jail, and to move out of your parent's home. There's no ceremony, no transition, no empowering.

If we're honest, we have to admit that by the time our children enter into high school, our influence has seriously dropped off. That's not to say that our love, presence, and role modeling isn't still crucial. It's just that we've already taught them most of the really important stuff that we were going to teach them. We've taught them to believe in themselves, or we haven't. We've taught them about religion, or we haven't. We've taught them the Golden Rule, or we haven't. We've taught them to say no to drugs and premarital sex, or we haven't. You get the idea. By the time our children are entering into high school they know what we think of life and what we think of them. They know if our approach to life and towards them is basically optimistic or not. They know if we value higher education or not.

I told my son the truth, "From the day you walk through those doors into high school, I no longer have any real control over your life. You're in charge. If you decide to flunk out of school, there's really nothing I can do about it. If you decide to blow off my rewards and punishment systems, there really isn't a damn thing I can do to stop you. If you blow your grades, all I can do is deny you driving privileges. Legally, I don't have to let you drive. Otherwise, I can't really do much to force you to be a good student. I can't force you to stay clean and sober. I can't force you to surround yourself with quality people.

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You stand four inches taller than me and weigh as much as I do. What am I going to do? Spank you? Put you in time out? I can ground you only if you agree with me that you should be grounded and only if you choose to honor my authority. I can't physically force you to stay home at night. I can't physically force you to show up for classes. Your size alone dictates that I no longer have power over you. I can only lead from a place of having earned your respect.

Up until now, nobody really cared what kind of grades you got. The grades you get now effects whether or not you get into a college. The grades you get now effects whether or not you get scholarship money. Whether or not you join in student government, compete in sports, participate in the arts, it all matters now. The grades you get and the activities you choose to participate in now effects your placement in society when that eighteenth birthday hits.

Will you be a high school dropout or going away to the school of your choice entering into a field of study that fascinates you? Will there be scholarship money to pay for your schooling or will you be forced to struggle and work your way through school? The grades you get now effects how hard will you have to work in the future. The better your grades, the more activities you excel in, and the longer you stay in school, the easier you will have it later.

From this day forward, you're in charge of your destiny. You decide. How much paid vacation do you want as an adult? How many nice toys will you be able to purchase? How nice of a place will you live in? How important are expensive clothes to you? How many hours per week will you want to work to support your children? Will you travel? Will you love your job? You actually have the power now to start choosing for yourself and designing for yourself what your future will look like. You do not have the freedoms nor the responsibilities of an adult yet, but you do have the power to create your own dreams. That means that from this point forward you are really secretly in charge of your future

As a toddler, I taught you society's opinions of right and wrong. As a child, I taught you the laws of cause and effect. Throughout the process, I did my best to help you find your unique and beautiful authentic self. You aren't legally free to leave and do as you please, but you are now at that point where I have to teach you how to create a life for yourself that is meaningful and worthy of you and your incredible heart. From this day forward, you get to choose your soul's journey.

Yesterday, you played at the beach as a carefree child. Today, you began your journey into adulthood. From this point forward people are watching, they care about your work ethic, your personal conduct, who you surround yourself with, and who you have chosen to become. You have four years to design and build your wings. They will carry you when you leave the nest. Choose wisely, my dear.

Who cares? You do."

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Skye Thomas began writing books and articles with an everyday practical approach to spirituality, motivation, and inspiration in 1999 after twenty years of studying spirituality, metaphysics, motivation, and parenting. More of her articles can be found at

as well as free previews

of her books.

Things You Need To Know When Considering A Doggy Day Care

By Randy Jones

Is your dog home alone? Does your pup get excited as soon as you open the door? She probably does because she misses you; she's lonely and wants companionship as well as physical and mental stimulation. Doggy day care may be your answer.

Doggie day cares work the same as human day cares, with a drop off and pickup time, with a safe and healthy interaction with other dogs and people in between. You should tour the facility checking for health conditions and how their staff interacts with the dogs, what type of training do the staff members get etc..

Other considerations; is there an outdoor play area, is it fenced, does the facility seem overcrowded? Are the dogs required to follow basic obedience commands, will the staff feed the dogs and when, will they allow you to bring your own food if needed, does the facility have its own veterinarian if needed in an emergency? Make a list of your own concerns and questions.

Costs of doggy day cares are typically \$8.00 to \$15.00 a day, but can be much higher based on location, facility, and the level of care given. In home daycares are usually cheaper, but provide only the most basic level of care and attention.

Day care centers may also be combined with boarding kennels, training kennels, and grooming spas. But no matter how basic or how excessive, they all require proof of current vaccinations, and good health, with some requiring a Veterinarians examination.

However, day care may not be appropriate for every dog, especially those that are aggressive or over protective. They must be able to interact with the other dogs and the staff of the facility. Most daycare providers are listed in your local phone book and newspaper classifieds, and most local dog clubs and associations and their members can give you a personal recommendation.

Lastly, after placing your dog in a day care environment, take note of his or her behavior. Is it better, worse, or unchanged? Better or unchanged are ok, but worse is a red flag. Bad habits can be learned quickly, and an unhappy experience can leave your dog depressed, more aggressive, or just plain miserable. Don't hesitate to stop or change day cares when behaviors change.

Randy Jones and his partner Brent Jones have been in the pet industry for a long time. Recently they formed

. On the site, customers can shop for the latest dog collars, dog clothes,

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pet supplies and more. Check them out at

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