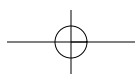
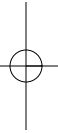
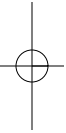
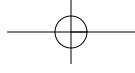


Whale Done
Parenting



Whale Done *Parenting*



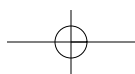
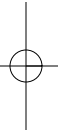
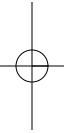
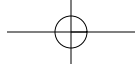
How to Make Parenting
a Positive Experience
for You and Your Kids

Ken Blanchard
Thad Lacinak
Chuck Tompkins
Jim Ballard



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*This book is
dedicated
to
parents everywhere
who
want to make
parenting
a positive experience
for themselves
and
their kids.*

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Foreword

Jim Atchison is president of Busch Entertainment Corporation, which operates 10 U.S. theme parks including SeaWorld, Busch Gardens, and Discovery Cove.

WE FIRST MET Ken Blanchard seven years ago in Orlando, Florida. Ken was promoting his new book with appearances in the three SeaWorld parks. The presentation he gave at Shamu Stadium that day borrowed heavily from the themes of *Whale Done! The Power of Positive Relationships*, a 2002 collaborative project between Ken, marine mammal training pioneers Chuck Tompkins and Thad Lacinak, Ken's longtime friend and colleague Jim Ballard, and SeaWorld. That book would go on to help hundreds of thousands of people establish more productive and positive relationships at home and at work.

Ken had no way of knowing that morning that Elli and I were soon to embark on life's greatest, most rewarding, and, sometimes, most frustrating adventure: We were about to start our own family. In the brief time that has passed since meeting Ken, we have had three beautiful children. Caleb is six, Nathanael is four, and Bethany is two, ages that are represented in many of the young characters in this book. We are pleased to report that every technique you're about to learn has been validated—repeatedly—in the Atchison house.

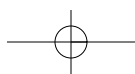
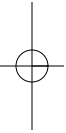
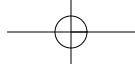
Our chat with Ken that morning in Orlando revealed that he is, at heart, a teacher—a man who reflects on his own experiences and delights in sharing them with others in ways that make life easier, more fulfilling, and more productive. After reading just one of his books, a collaboration with legendary Miami Dolphins coach Don Shula, it was clear that an association between Ken Blanchard and SeaWorld was inevitable.

As Ken likes to point out, SeaWorld does many things well, but one thing better than anyone else: caring for, training, and showcasing marine mammals. SeaWorld's sophistication in marine mammal care translates for our guests to really only one thing: fun. But it meant a great deal more to Ken. From his first visit to our San Diego SeaWorld in the '70s, he realized that training marine mammals, including large predators like killer whales, must have applications for human relationships. How could it not? A killer whale can weigh 13,000 pounds. It is the ocean's top predator. As SeaWorld trainers are fond

of pointing out, a wise person demands *nothing* of a killer whale. You rely on a relationship based on mutual respect and trust, then you *ask* something of a killer whale.

All of us at SeaWorld are delighted to continue our relationship with Ken in this latest evolution of the Whale Done philosophy, *Whale Done Parenting*. We hope the lessons in this book provide meaningful insights that work as well in your home as they do in ours.

— Jim and Elli Atchison





Introduction

Redirecting Your Thinking about Parenting

AS A PARENT, have you ever had a child throw a tantrum or refuse to go to bed on time, eat good foods, or share toys? Do you find yourself scolding or yelling at your child and overusing the word *no*? Have you despaired of training your child to use the potty? Do you struggle with getting a child to do homework or chores? Do you deal with teasing, fighting, or poor manners? Do you need better methods for setting limits and handling time-outs and discipline?

Parenting can be trying. As challenges pile up, it's easy for a mom or dad to get into a rut and become locked into a negative, downward spiral that makes the relationship unpleasant for both parent and child. At such times

it's difficult even to imagine that there might be a better way. But that better way is precisely what this book offers. Simply put, it's a way to feel good as a parent—good about yourself, good about your relationship with your child, and good about life at home again.

Whale Done Parenting contains a formula that is positive and based on principles that are scientifically validated. Most important of all, it works! This is a book about bringing to the parenting of children the behavioral principles that have succeeded spectacularly in marine mammal training. The principle is a familiar one: Accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. It's actually simple, but it is anything but easy.

Much of the book focuses on children up to the age of five, but later chapters explain how the same techniques can be applied to older children, including teenagers. Indeed, the Whale Done approach works with people of all ages because it is based on universal principles of behavioral science.

Most new parents model their approach on what their own parents did. In some cases this turns out okay; more often these parents perpetuate the negative aspects of parenting they remember. The results can be disastrous. The principles and techniques presented in *Whale Done Parenting* are taken not from memories of childhood or armchair speculation, but from solid behavioral science principles.

As we described in the first book, *Whale Done!*, modern marine mammal training is based on positive rein-

forcement. It wasn't always so. In the early 1970s animal training was a different world. At that time, there was very little science in the approaches animal trainers used.

Animal training at that time was a male-dominated profession. In most cases, individual trainers forged their own styles and strategies with limited success and with limited attempt to cooperate or share ideas with their fellow trainers. Back then we weren't purposely ignoring the science of operant conditioning—we simply didn't know what operant conditioning was!

SeaWorld animal trainers began to think *there must be a better way*. They undertook a thorough examination of the field of behavioral science. The result was that SeaWorld was instrumental in pioneering the reinforcement-based training now used throughout the world.

We were very limited with the kinds of reinforcement that we used. The use of one reinforcer—food—was limited in its ability to develop deep, lasting relationships with the animals. Gradually SeaWorld trainers — using a wide variety of things whales liked, to reward and reinforce desired behaviors — evolved stronger bonds that eventually allowed us to get in the water with the animals. This led to the spectacular performances you see from these animals today.

As Thad and Chuck were learning about training killer whales, Ken Blanchard was observing the negative effects of command-and-control leadership on people in organizations. Ken was suggesting that the key to developing people was to catch them doing something right. Serendipity

4 WHALE DONE PARENTING

brought Thad, Chuck, Ken, and Jim together, and the result was *Whale Done! The Power of Positive Relationships*.

Since its publication in 2003 *Whale Done!* not only has achieved extraordinary success, but it also has changed lives in the process. It's a story of how a man established good relationships with his family and company by applying the same set of principles used by professionals to train killer whales. In the years since bringing out *Whale Done!* we have often been asked, "Can the principles featured in that book be applied to parenting young children?" It became very clear that a second book was needed that would provide a resounding *yes* to that query. Applying Whale Done training to children is a natural process. In fact, it's much easier and more lasting than with adults.

Whale Done is much more than a set of techniques. It is an entire philosophy, one that is sorely needed in the world today. Simply stated, what we call Whale Done is a way of looking at people and seeing the best that is in them. Our hope is that this book will educate and inspire mothers, fathers, grandparents, and others who help raise children to look at their roles with new eyes. And we trust that as you read the story of Amy and Matt and their son Josh, you will recognize what you knew all along: there's power in being positive.

CHAPTER

One



An Exciting New Job and Challenges at Home

TAKING A BREAK at SeaWorld, Amy Sheldrake sat deep in thought by a large pool, watching several of her favorite killer whales. *How can it be possible that a whole year has passed since I came to work here?* she thought.

“You all are some of my closest friends,” Amy said aloud. As the great gleaming black-and white-forms moved by, their eyes lifting and their great heads nodding at her, she imagined they understood every word she spoke.

“Not only that, you’re the best teachers I’ve ever had. I can’t tell you what it means to me that you’ve given me such a great start as a mom. You’ve helped me lay the foundation for all the years ahead that I’ll be spending with my son. What a difference it’s made, to be here and watch how you’ve responded to your trainers’ kindness and consis-

tency. Every time you perform your incredible aerial maneuvers in the show, or ride us on your backs, or lift us high out of the water in one of your super leaps, the fans in the stands applaud in amazement. To them, it's a mystery how we trainers get you to do those things. But we know, don't we, my friends?"

Amy fell silent and spent time just watching her finny companions. She loved all the whales, whose names were derived from the Alaskan Indian culture. The name of the big whale, Kusti, meant "way of life." Sagu stood for "joy," which was fitting. Kagan meant "light." Tutan translated to "hope," and the youngest, Taat, meant "night."

Amy continued, "I've always been able to count on you guys to show me when I'm being inconsistent. You've not only taught me the Whale Done process, you've also inspired me to apply it in my role as a parent. Watching my boy Josh respond to the principles is always a thrill to me. I just hope I'll always remember what you have taught me so well!"



One year earlier . . .

Amy was sitting with her fellow trainees, Steve Gutierrez and Lorraine Ackerman, high in the stands of the aquatic park stadium.

"There's the signal for the whale to leap out of the water! Come on, Kusti!" Amy whispered eagerly.

Moments later a chorus of *oohs* and *aahs* rose from the stands as the audience responded to a spectacular leap by the eleven-thousand-pound killer whale. They watched in breathless fascination as a female trainer—whose wet-suited form had been seen moments before treading water in the center of the pool—was catapulted out of the pool on the nose of the gigantic animal as it rose suddenly and spectacularly from the blue depths below her. Up, impossibly up, went the huge glossy black-and-white form until it seemed to hang in the air, water showering down from its sides. The woman stood relaxed and poised atop the whale's nose until, at the height of the lift, she made a perfect thirty-foot dive back into the water.

"Let's hear it for Kusti and Laurie!" the announcer's voice enthused over the loudspeakers. While thunderous applause and shouts broke out from two thousand spectators around them, the three trainees grinned and gave each other high-fives.

"You called that one, Amy," Steve said admiringly.

"Yeah, Amy," said Lorraine, "nice job picking out the signal. I missed it."

Amy smiled. "Thanks," she said. "I was lucky."

The three trainers-in-training had been assigned to watch the famous SeaWorld killer whale show from the stands in order to identify the hand signals, whistle toots, and other prompts given by the trainers that cued the animals during their performances. As the show continued,

Amy and the others took notes, carefully observing the cues the show staff gave for actions by the whales. As each feat ended and the audience's attention was cleverly diverted elsewhere, the trainees observed the reinforcing techniques that the trainers surreptitiously used to reward each animal's performance.

"They are hardly using any fish," Lorraine said.

"I think it's because it's a late afternoon show," Amy replied.

"Right," Lorraine came back. "The whales have had ninety percent of their food for the day by this time. That's why we're seeing mostly tactile and some of the whales' favorite toys used today."

Amy added, "I notice them using underarm rubbing for Kusti. He likes to be massaged under his pectorals. But I found out the other day that Kagan doesn't go for that. She's strictly into back rubs."

"Look," Lorraine said, pointing to the far side of the pool as the audience watched an event at the near end. "Jared is using the water from the hose to massage Sagu's gums, to reinforce the back flip he just did. He really likes that."

"You can't have too much variety of rewards for these animals," Steve concluded.

Throughout the event, the crowd reacted with awe and delight. The show ended with the huge stars sliding out on a ramp and waving to the crowd with their huge tails, called *flukes*. As the audience began leaving the stadium, Amy overheard the familiar comments: "Those

killer whales are amazing. How do they get them to *do* those things?” While the bleachers emptied around them, the trio sat comparing notes. Finally, they rose and made their way down to the pool and toward a door that led to the backstage area.

“Can you believe,” said Lorraine, “that soon the three of us will be out there performing for that audience?”

“I know. It’s amazing,” Steve said.

“But of course,” Amy reminded her peers as she opened the door, “the whales are the stars. We’re along for the rides.” She gestured toward the series of habitats where the huge rounded backs of five graceful killer whales were calm in the water. As she and the others moved toward the office with their notes for the debriefing session, Amy looked out at the now familiar scene. Kusti and Sagu, the two whales that had performed in the recent show, were now serene in contrast to the explosive energy and strength they had just demonstrated.

A whale named Tutan left the feeding area and swam over, eyeing Amy and lifting its huge head in greeting. The young woman felt a familiar tingle in her spine. It was the excitement of experiencing the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. From the time she was a tiny tot with a puppy named Scooter, Amy had been drawn to animals. Through the years, a succession of pets, from fish and turtles to gerbils, dogs, and cats (and one sick squirrel) occupied her home. It was when her father took her to see the dolphin movie *Flipper* that her passion for large aquatic animals was born.

In the end, it was the majestic killer whales that stole her heart. All those times sitting in the audience at the SeaWorld show, her mind had been fixed on one goal: she wanted to become a killer whale trainer. Following college, where she'd majored in behavioral psychology, she'd married Matt Sheldrake. And now there was Josh, their two-year-old son. Thinking of Josh, Amy couldn't wait to get home and see him again.



The day wore on, replete with hard work and demonstrations by coaches. On her way home, Amy had mixed feelings. On one hand was the excitement of being at SeaWorld. On the other hand, she missed Josh terribly and had concerns about leaving him. Like many youngsters his age, her son was a rambunctious child. Energetic and high-strung, he already knew how to manipulate his mom and dad. It seemed he was always pushing the limits of their control. Often their attempts at problem solving with the youngster seemed to lead nowhere. This, more than anything, was the reason Amy felt guilty starting a new career. By the time she pulled into the parking lot at Sundance Playschool she was thinking, *What kind of a mother would leave her tiny son to start a fun job as an animal trainer?* When she stopped the self-blaming and analyzed her feelings, she saw that, at bottom, she was really just missing Josh.

She hurried inside the center, noting other mothers helping their kids into their coats. Then her heart

leaped as she saw Josh come running, holding out his arms and grinning. She gathered him up in her arms, and they started out the door.

“Don’t forget the parent meeting tonight,” the head teacher called from the office. “It’s at 7:30.”



That night as Amy drove home after the daycare center meeting, she was thinking over the exciting day she’d put in at SeaWorld. She couldn’t wait to tell Matt all about the new things she’d learned in working with the killer whales. But as she opened the front door, her enthusiasm was stifled. Matt was sitting on the couch with his head in his hands. The place was littered with toys and other small articles. Screams and cries were coming from Josh’s room.

“What happened here?” Amy asked in wonder.

“What happened?” Matt said loudly in great frustration. “What happened was *Josh!*”

“Trouble getting him to bed, huh?” Amy asked.

Matt shook his head. “The kid wore me out!”

As Amy thought back to all the times she and Matt had picked the baby up and held him when he wouldn’t sleep, she realized regretfully that they had helped Josh form a bad habit. Now, at the age of two, the tyke was still acting as if Mom and Dad were at his beck and call after he’d been put to bed.

Amy and Matt looked at each other as their son’s moans continued. “He’s trained us well,” Amy said.

Matt sighed. “That’s right. I wish we could reverse it and become the trainers ourselves.”

“Funny you should say that,” Amy said, smiling. “I’ve been thinking there are some things I’m learning at Sea-World that we could use to get ourselves back into that role.”

“I guess it’s never too late to change,” said Matt, yawning and looking at his watch. “It’s late and we’re tired. I say we hold a meeting tomorrow and plan our attack.”

CHAPTER
Two



The Bedtime Waltz

Establishing a Bedtime Routine

THE NEXT MORNING at SeaWorld, the staff and the three trainees gathered at poolside for a demonstration by Clint Jordan, the park curator and head trainer. He began with a warm greeting to the three newcomers. “The staff and I want you to know you are very welcome in our training program.” Cheers and whistles broke out from the group of trainers. “Each of you,” Clint went on, “has survived a rigorous interview and background-checking process to ensure that you are in the right place. I needn’t tell you that you are entering into a job that many people would love to have. In the entire world, only a handful get this opportunity. In fact, there are more astronauts than killer whale trainers.

“Let’s talk about safety,” said Clint. “There is an element of risk in working with these animals, especially

with new people they don't know. Killer whales are the top predators in the ocean. Adult whales can reach lengths of eighteen to twenty-three feet and weigh up to twelve thousand pounds. We have guidelines and emergency procedures in case someone were to jump or fall into the pool with the whales. In our shows we have safety guidelines for the public and for our training staff. It's imperative that you follow instructions carefully as you get to know these animals.

"New trainers also need to learn all the behavior terminology so that communication between the trainers is consistent." Clint held up the whistle he wore around his neck. "For instance, the whistle is used to tell the whales *yes* when they've performed a particular behavior correctly. We speak of the whistle as a *bridging stimulus* because it bridges the time from when the animal does the correct behavior to the time the whale receives the reward such as fish, a rubdown, or a whale toy. Now I'd like to have you watch Jody demonstrate some maneuvers with her friend Kagan."

Jody, an experienced trainer Amy had watched many times in the shows, stepped to the pool edge. She gave a quick hand signal, and a giant form was suddenly racing through the water and gliding to a stop at her feet. For the next few minutes Jody put Kagan through a series of drills, carefully rewarding the animal after each performance of the desired action. From the looks on their faces, Amy saw that the trainees were in awe. Watching Kagan flawlessly obey the signals, they undoubtedly were won-

dering how the training of the whale had been carried out. They were about to learn the answer.

As Jody gave Kagan an appreciative rubdown, Clint again took center stage. “There are three basic rules of animal training that we try to follow at all times.” He gestured to a sign on the wall by the pool that listed three steps:

1. *Set the animal up for success.*
2. *Ignore failure and/or redirect.*
3. *Reward success.*

Pointing to the first rule, he said, “Part of setting Kagan up for success was learning her habits, her past history, her likes and dislikes, what part of the day she has the most energy, which trainer she responds best to, and so on. Setting up for success includes eliminating any reinforcement for doing an undesirable behavior.”

Pointing to rule 2, Clint commented, “You don’t regard failure as a bad thing. You try to call the least amount of attention to a behavior you don’t want, so as not to reinforce it. Meanwhile, you look out for success, and when it comes, you jump up and down and reinforce it like crazy.

“That leads us to rule 3,” Clint continued. “Success isn’t just reaching the finish line—it’s in a number of small approximations, each of which needs to be observed and rewarded. In as many ways as you can, you make the

animal feel good about what it's done, even if it's just a slight movement toward the target. Food, play time, toys, rubdowns—you make sure that this whale is going to associate all those good feelings with doing it right."



That evening, Amy couldn't wait to share with Matt what she had learned and see how they could apply this knowledge to Josh's bedtime issue. "Clint Jordan, our head trainer, gave us a talk today about the basics of whale training," she said. "He calls it the Whale Done method." Amy told Matt about the three basic rules of training—setting up for success, ignoring failure/redirecting, and rewarding success.

"I've been thinking about the first rule and what we might do differently to *set Josh up for success*," Amy continued. "One idea I have is to limit his naps, so he's sleepy in the evening. I could talk to the teachers at his day care center about keeping him more alert. If I explain why, I'm sure they'll cooperate."

Matt nodded. "Sounds good."

"We could also make sure that evening activities are quiet. No TV blaring. No running around or rambunctious play, like you and Josh have been doing," Amy continued.

Matt frowned. "I don't think the Hulk is going to appreciate us canceling wrestling matches where he defeats all opponents."

"You mean *you're* not going to appreciate it!" Amy chided.

Matt smiled. "On the other hand, if the Hulk and I moved our match to the early part of the evening, he would be worn out later on. Then, as you say, the later part of the evening could be calmer. I could read him a quiet story."

Amy nodded approvingly. "That covers the first rule for now," she said. "Let's talk about the second rule, *ignoring failure*. This, to me, is one of the biggest learnings I'm having at work. I'm in awe of the patience and persistence those trainers have in bringing the least amount of attention to what the animals do wrong. How do you think that rule might play out for us in this going-to-bed issue?"

Matt thought for a while. "Ignoring failure will be a real change for me. I guess you'd say I was 'calling attention' to our boy's not going to bed the other night! But if you and I do all we can to make sure he's sleepy and peaceful, we don't have to make a big fuss if he still doesn't cooperate. Just leave him in bed if he hollers and stay calm ourselves."

"And make no reference to his negative times," Amy added.

"Okay, good, so we ignore failure," Matt said. "The third rule says *reward success*. How does that work? Does it mean we make a big deal the next morning after he's gone to bed with no fuss?"

"Absolutely," Amy replied, "especially at first. We don't miss a single chance to recognize even the slightest improvement in Josh's cooperation about going to bed. This is the most powerful strategy of all. The first two

rules just prepare the way for him to do something right, so we can be all over him with hugs and surprises and other things he likes. Whenever Josh goes to bed without a fuss, we make him feel really good in every way we can.”

Matt shrugged. “Have to admit, it makes sense.”

Amy’s eyes lit up. “It’s like what Clint told us today,” she said. “Success isn’t just reaching the finish line—it’s in a number of small steps, and each step needs to be observed and rewarded. The idea is to make the animal feel good about what it’s done, even if it’s just moving toward the target. So success doesn’t have to be perfect. We can reward in increments.”

“So if Josh is good about going to bed,” Matt chimed in, “we don’t have to wait until morning to reward him. Each time I put him in his crib and he’s peaceful, I can say, ‘Daddy’s proud of you for going to bed so nicely and quietly. That’s really helpful to Mommy and Daddy!’”

Amy laughed. “You are really getting it, Mr. Behaviorist.”

“It’s worth a try,” Matt said, “since nothing else we’ve done so far has worked!”



That evening Amy and Matt carried out each step of their plan. Nevertheless, Josh made his usual protest at bedtime. As the couple sat down in the living room, listening to the cries coming from the bedroom, Amy said, “Josh was looking sleepy this afternoon when I picked him up, so I played a game with him when we got home. He’s got to be pretty tired by now, though he’s fighting it.”

“At SeaWorld they stress the importance of communication, so earlier today I talked to Josh about bedtime. I was very calm and picked my times when he was playing happily. I said things like, ‘It’s going to be fun to go to bed tonight.’ Once I took him to his crib where his stuffed toys are, I said, ‘Poodles and Ralph are going to be so happy to see Josh coming to sleep with them.’”

Matt nodded. “We did it all—keeping him up fairly late, making sure to eliminate any noise or strenuous activities close to bedtime.” He smiled. “Then I read him his favorite story. It felt good to have him snuggling up to me.”

“That bonding time is probably most important,” Amy said. “When I put him in I made sure he had his friends close to him. One thing I’ve learned in working with the killer whales is that routines are good, but they shouldn’t be too rigid. We want predictability with Josh, but we also need to vary the routine so we don’t create expectations that he’s going to insist on.”

“I get it,” Matt said. “We shouldn’t always have story time be exactly fifteen minutes long. And maybe we should substitute something else for story time once in a while.”

“That’s it,” Amy agreed.

They listened again as Josh’s sounds turned to drowsy moans, then subsided to whimpers.

Matt sighed. “We haven’t gone in there once. What a change from the battles we used to have! I always dreaded his bedtime, but even this first night of the new plan, I feel more in control.”

“Don’t forget the all-important third rule when he cooperates,” Amy said. “We’ll need to call attention to anything he does toward the goal of going to bed and to sleep on his own, and make a big deal about it.”

Matt grinned. “I’m not going to go in there as soon as he’s asleep, wake him up, and say, ‘Nice job, kid.’”

Amy laughed. “No, I mean in the evenings ahead, as we keep this up, we’ll need to be on our toes to praise progress. And in the times Josh really goes to bed well, we should be in there first thing the next morning telling him we’re proud of him for it.”

“I’m beginning to see why this stuff you’re learning works,” Matt said thoughtfully. “What hits me is how common it is for parents to do the thing exactly *backward*—to call attention to the bad stuff and ignore the good stuff. I think what we unknowingly do by those responses is train kids, employees, and even each other to do the wrong thing!”



Each evening after that, Amy and Matt continued to follow their routine to help reshape Josh’s bedtime behavior. They began to see progress and were careful to celebrate each instance of it. After two weeks, Josh was making hardly any fuss about going to bed. Clearly, the hour before bedtime had become his family time, and he was enjoying being the star.

During the training period, Amy was able to arrange with Josh’s day care teacher to keep him alert during nap

time by allowing him some special quiet activity. It seemed the parents were covering all the bases—with one exception.

Since he was an infant, Josh had insisted that his mother be the one to tuck him in each evening. One evening Amy had to be away late attending a meeting, and it was clearly Matt's night to solo. All went well until story time ended and Matt indicated that he and Josh were headed for the bedroom. That's when the howling and fussing began. Later, when Amy returned, she found Matt exhausted and a great wailing coming from Josh's room.

"I've practically had to tie myself to the couch to keep from going in there," Matt said.

For the next several nights, both Amy and Matt put their son to bed for a few nights. Then they began to alternate. Soon it didn't matter so much who did the tucking in.

Later, when bedtime had become fun time, Amy was able one night to say to Josh, "I'll bet you could pick up all your toys before sleep time!" To his mother's delight, Josh hurried around, collecting toys and putting them away. Amy rewarded each put-away by laughing and applauding.

"Now, you're so sleepy you're ready for bed," she said when the job was done. With much praising and rewarding, this cleaning up soon became a bedtime ritual.

One evening the parents were talking about their new regimes with Josh. "Seems like you have to build

backward if you started out the wrong way,” Matt said one evening.

“That’s right,” Amy agreed. “And playing catch-up as parents is okay, as long as we know where we’re going.”

“Even with these Whale Done ways,” Matt said worriedly, “things seem to take longer that I expect them to.” He sighed. “Do you suppose we’re, you know, *behind* some parents? Is our kid . . . you know . . . *normal* in the time he takes to learn these basic things?” Then he quickly added, “It’s stupid to worry about these things, huh?”

Amy smiled and patted her husband’s arm. “Not so much. In fact, I asked the head trainer at work about those same concerns. His answer was, ‘Worry not. Compare not. Normal is what’s normal for Josh.’”

Whale Done *Notes*



BEDTIME

Set things up for success

Establishing a bedtime routine is an effective way to calm and help your child transition from activities of the day to the quiet of the night. The routine should move from active to passive; noisy to quiet. Add a warm bath, soft music, or a special going-to-bed song, and a small glass of water so thirst is not a reason to get up. Above all, make going to bed fun. Keep the event the same, but vary its length and frequency, and make it appropriate to your child's likes and dislikes. If your child naps, make the nap early.

Ignore failure and/or redirect

Avoid calling attention to the negative by *redirecting*—putting attention on something for which you can praise your child. The redirection you choose must be easily doable, developmentally appropriate, and based on your child's preferences. A warm bath is a good part of the bedtime routine. If your child is hesitant, dip his hand in the water, then a foot, until he is immersed and realizing it is fun. If your child refuses to take a bath, do necessary cleaning with a washcloth, and then take one of

your child's toys and start washing it in the tub, saying how nice the toy feels to be so clean. Invite your child to participate, and praise him for the help. Another example: Ask your child to dim the light in the bedroom. If he refuses, pretend to show a teddy bear how the light goes up and down in brightness. ("See, how fun this is!")

Give a Whale Done!

Reward every evidence of your child's interest, attention, or participation. For instance, when your child helps to bathe the toy, reward him with praise or a hug. When he contributes an idea or helps with establishing the going-to-bed routine, reinforce each such attitude with a Whale Done. If appropriate, keep a chart of bedtimes and wake-up times. Highlight those times that indicate success and celebrate them. When your child sleeps all night, make a big deal of it.