

<<raising freethinkers>>

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内容概要

Praised by Newsweek as “ a compelling read ” and Library Journal as “ accessible and down-to-earth, ” Dale McGowan ’ s Parenting Beyond Belief offered freethinking parents everywhere a compassionate introduction to raising caring, ethical children without religious guidance. Now, for the more than 40 million people in the United States who identify themselves as nonreligious, Raising Freethinkers offers solutions to the unique challenges secular parents face and provides specific answers to common questions, as well as over 100 activities for both parents and their children. This book covers every important topic nonreligious parents need to know to help their children with their own moral and intellectual development, including advice on religious-extended-family issues, death and life, secular celebrations, wondering and questioning, and more. Complete with reviews of books, DVDs, curricula, educational toys, and online resources relevant to each chapter topic, Raising Freethinkers helps parents raise their children with confidence.

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作者简介

Dale McGowan (Atlanta, GA) is a writer, editor, and parenting educator. He edited and coauthored Parenting Beyond Belief. Molleen Matsumura has been a humanist activist and writer for more than 20 years and has contributed to Free Inquiry and The New Humanist. Amanda Metskas (Albany, NY) is the Executive Director of Camp Quest, Inc. Jan Devor is Director of Religious Education for the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis.

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## 章节摘录

CHAPTER 1: The Inquiring Mind Dale McGowan How does white milk come from a red cow? Why doesn't the sun fall down? How is it that all rivers flow into the ocean without ever filling it? These questions, which could have come from any child today, are from the Rig Veda, a 3000-year-old Hindu text; and wondering and questioning are surely much older still. Early Homo sapiens, endowed with the same cranial capacity as your Aunt Diane, had to be asking similar questions 125,000 years ago. And once oral language developed sufficiently to share these thoughts, parents and others around a child would have had to respond, one way or another, to the endless stream of questions. It's the human impulse to wonder and ask questions that eventually gave birth to both religion and science, two different ways of responding to the same challenge: an overdeveloped neocortex hungry for answers. In preparing to write this book, I plunged into the current parenting literature from many perspectives, including religious parenting books. Some are very sound, like the well-grounded work of Christian parenting author Dr. William Sears. Some are mixed, including (to my admitted surprise) James Dobson, who serves up some solid parenting advice along with his unfortunate enthusiasm for corporal punishment, gender stereotypes, and homophobia. But if book sales and general prominence are any measure, one parenting author has had more to say about questioning and the life of the mind than any other: author and televangelist Joyce Meyer. Meyer has sold over a million copies of a book called *Battlefield of the Mind: Winning the Battle in Your Mind*, for which this passage can serve as an encapsulation: I once asked the Lord why so many people are confused and He said to me, "Tell them to stop trying to figure everything out, and they will stop being confused." I have found it to be absolutely true. Reasoning and confusion go together. In 2006, Meyer issued a version of *Battlefield of the Mind* for teens, including passages like this: I was totally confused about everything, and I didn't know why. One thing that added to my confusion was too much reasoning. This mantra comes back again and again in her advice, in millions of books and throughout her broadcasting empire: Don't even start thinking. Most troubling of all is the attempt to make kids fear their own thoughts; right at the age they should be challenging and questioning in order to become autonomous adults: Ask yourself, continually, "WWJT?" [What Would Jesus Think?] Remember, if He wouldn't think about something, you shouldn't either. . . . By keeping continual watch over your thoughts, you can ensure that no damaging enemy thoughts creep into your mind. (from *Battlefield of the Mind* for Teens) Many progressive religious parents are outraged by Meyer's "fearthought" approach. But even those of us who don't consciously sign on to this kind of thinking must look it squarely in the eye; because it's in our cultural blood. Most of us were raised in homes that were religious to some degree, and many of us carry remnants of these fearful ideologies into our own parenting. Whether we are religious or nonreligious, our attitudes toward questioning and moral development too often include some undercurrent of anxiety and mistrust, the unspoken feeling that our primary job as parents is to stave off a bubbling depravity that lurks just below the surface of our children. When University of Texas sociologists John P. Bartkowski and Christopher G. Ellison compared dozens of secular parenting books with conservative Protestant parenting manuals, they found that a literal interpretation of the Bible's childrearing advice contributed directly to a worship of authority in all spheres of life, including the political. . . . They also found that conservative evangelical parenting gurus disagreed with mainstream counterparts on virtually every issue. According to their study, secular, sciencebased parenting advice emphasizes personality adjustment, empathy, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, egalitarian relations between parents, nonviolent discipline, and self-direction. Conservative Protestants, on the other hand, stress a tightly hierarchical family structure and a gendered division of labor, with a breadwinning father at the top of the pyramid and children at the bottom. --Jeremy Adam Smith, senior editor, *Greater Good* magazine In this chapter, I hope to make the case that this trembling view of human nature is simply not borne out by the best of our knowledge. We will focus on the moment of the question, a moment that is the foundation of freethought parenting, encouraging an approach that holds no question unaskable and no thought

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unthinkable. I want the idea that questions can be feared because of the answers they might produce to baffle my kids. I want them to find hilariously silly the idea that certain lines of thought cannot even be pursued, lest they be caught. That requires a certain amount of parental self-discipline. It requires the ability, for example, to not paint the far wall with soup when the 5-year-old asks if monkeys have vaginas, or why black people have big lips, or who will put her blankie on her grave when she dies—all three of which have come up at our dinner table. It requires a firm conviction that there is no rock that can't be upended if you think there might be something under it. And, of course, there always, always might. Let's begin with a conversation about wonder and curiosity, the incentives that drive questioning, then dive into the art, science, and joy of questioning itself.

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媒体关注与评论

&#8220;This unique resource will help parents looking for useful ideas and information on being a nonreligious family. Recommended for public libraries.&#8221; Library Journal

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## 名人推荐

From the Back Cover I raised my own freethinking sons not that long ago, and I had little choice but to do it without much practical support. This book is the best, most comprehensive compendium of secular parenting strategies and tips I can imagine. It shows how, without the aid of any supernatural overseer, you can raise kids who are moral, compassionate, curious, and fully aware of the nuances of a truly civilized human society. Susan K. Perry, Ph.D., social psychologist and author of *Playing Smart and Loving in Flow*, creativity blogger for PsychologyToday.com, and advice columnist for Netscape.com and TheCradle.com As a freethinking parent, you face a unique set of challenges in raising children without religious guidance. How will you help them understand issues like death, sexuality, morality, and religion itself, all while encouraging them to think for themselves? Dale McGowan's popular and compassionate guide *Parenting Beyond Belief* was the first comprehensive book to offer a general philosophy of nonreligious parenting. *Raising Freethinkers* is a practical sequel, providing specific answers to common questions and more than 100 activities for parents and their children. *Raising Freethinkers* covers every topic nonreligious parents need to know to help their children with their own moral, intellectual, and emotional development, including sound advice on religious-extended-family issues, death and life, secular celebrations, wondering and questioning, and more. Here parents will discover practical and effective ways to:

- Help children achieve religious literacy without indoctrination
- Explore life's meaning and purpose
- Promote a healthy perspective on sexuality and body image
- Encourage ravenous curiosity
- Help kids come to terms with death and loss
- Find and create community

Complete with reviews of books, DVDs, curricula, educational toys, and online resources relevant to each chapter topic, *Raising Freethinkers* helps nonreligious parents raise their children with confidence. Dale McGowan is a writer, editor, and parenting educator. He edited and coauthored *Parenting Beyond Belief* and lives in Atlanta. Molleen Matsumura has been a humanist activist and writer for more than 20 years and has contributed to *Free Inquiry* and *The New Humanist*. Amanda Metskas is the President of Camp Quest. Jan Devor is Director of Religious Education for the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. For more information and parent resources, visit [www.ParentingBeyondBelief.com](http://www.ParentingBeyondBelief.com).



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