

Joan Callander, author of *Second Time Around Help for Grandparents Who Raise Their Children's Kid* has written a new book with the grandson she adopted, Chad Dingle who is now 21, called *Addictions & Families: A Survival Guide*. It's for any parent or grandparent who is parenting kids or teens when a spouse, adult child—even a live-at-home sibling has a drug addiction or drinking problem.

"There are things I learned from Chad in writing this book that I never knew he felt," says Joan. "I want others to know they aren't alone and at times we all need help," says Chad.

You can contact them, or order their new book, at www.joancallander.com or email callander3@comcast.net. Book is also available at Amazon or through other bookstores or outlets.

Below is an update of an article she wrote many years ago.

Parenting: Take Two!

By Joan Callander

You might be a parenting grandparent...if

- ♥ You have a refrigerator covered with kid art and orthodontist's schedules.
- ♥ There are low-fat animal crackers and Metamucil in your shopping cart.
- ♥ You give Girl Scout cookies for hostess gifts.
- ♥ Christmas is fun again.
- ♥ Little people buses and airplanes litter your hardwood floors or the computer is in the family room so you can monitor websites and emails.
- ♥ Your bucket list includes a weekend of uninterrupted sleep or dad's weekend at college—not cruises, zip lines and golfing with the masters.
- ♥ You're buying updated baby paraphernalia and toys off Craig's list that you sold 20-years-ago in garage sales.
- ♥ You join AARP hoping for a Disneyland discount.
- ♥ Lacrosse umpires hide when they see you coming.
- ♥ You've quit making excuses for why mom/dad never show up when they are sober or expected or why God needed them in heaven.
- ♥ You answer to 'mom' or 'dad' and have to bite your tongue not to explain that you weren't the exception to kids after hysterectomies.

People laughed when I told them I wasn't having a late mid-life crisis when I was buying new skis at sixty, but then they weren't raising grandchildren. Being a parenting grandparent is not about tweeting from Florida in the winter and buying too many presents for grandchildren on their birthdays.

It's about sitting on tiny, tiny school chairs for parent teacher conferences and praying you can somehow get back up! It's about being a counselor at camp when you are so old that the other parent's all worry that you might have a heart attack.

It's about trading in the 65 corvette that you spent a lifetime restoring so you can buy a used SUV to haul mounds of football gear, tons of groceries or birthday party guests to swim centers.

When my grandson was nine I wrote that I was still "trying to get a grip" but that my world kept lipping saying it took me five years to really stop feeling sorry for myself and joyfully move forward.

Eleven years later I can tell you that God took me places that made me a much better person and helped me feel—if not look—young. I've kept on dying my hair so I could blend in with other "moms" for the love of my life—my son.

Sure it hurt when he said my wrinkles used to embarrass him but I wouldn't trade one single thing in the world for the picture that sits on my desk with has dancing the mother/son dance at his wedding two months ago. His arms now circle me and the tattoo he got at age 18 now doesn't bother me at all.

Was this an easy journey as we went from Chad's being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome at age four to cutting and suicidal in high school to now being on honor roll and a junior in college? NO it was HARD. There were years that I cried everyday and years that I wanted to give up.

But I was blessed at times with hearing prayers that ended in "love and kisses" rather than "amen". I had someone who called me the "wicked step mom" with an impish grin when I ran out of patience with his 'forgetting' his chores. Someone who ended our book with, "Thank you God for sending me Joan, my beloved mom forever, and Bob, the only person I will call dad. They have brought me from darkness..."

I met people from all over the country that I would never have know who were or are now walking similar paths holding little hands who desperately need someone stable and loving in their lives. We're not a small club...over one in ten grandparents morph back to being parents again for at least part of a grandchild's life. If you're lucky enough to be one of the other 'nine' then hold out your hand to friend or relative who is struggling. Offer to babysit, take their grandchild out and buy them new shoes or to just sit and listen.

If you're the one in ten, get on with living. We can't always control our circumstances but we can take charge of our attitude. A crisis always passes and we're stronger, less judgmental and a lot more grateful when we look for things to like and be thankful for in whatever becomes our new normal.