

Chapter 1 Acceptance is a Powerful Tool

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Brian, now an aspiring stem cell medical researcher, had a difficult entrance into the world. His first memories are not of playing with peers on the playground — they are of recovering in hospitals.

"I was a baby born with severe trilateral cleft lip and palate, two inguinal hernias, dental and orthodontia issues, and bad eyes and ears. As I grew older, I had an inferiority complex due to the lack of acceptance from the majority of my young peers. I was awkward, and because of all of the surgeries and experiences, I had no connection with kids my age." Brian explained, however, that his strongest source of support was his grandmother. "In my life, I have not met anyone since who has so readily accepted strangers, put others before herself so selflessly, and cared so readily about her friends and loved ones, as demonstrated by the lengths she would go to take care of me, her family, and her friends." Brian explained that his nana was his tether. She planned activities, introduced Brian to friends she knew would accept him, made lunch, and even overcame her fear of driving to take Brian to school as a child and ensure he was in good hands every single day. Brian attests that, because of the unconditional acceptance his nana demonstrated, he himself is an accepting, caring person who welcomes new friendships and experiences — even though he admits he could have easily become incredibly lonely, selfish, and bitter toward the world.

"Based on my previous experiences, one would think I have little faith in the future of humanity, but because of the people I have met and the friendships I developed, I am more hopeful than ever of the kindness and love of people and still do all I can to help those in my life meet their goals and succeed in life."

Brian's grandmother didn't simply tell him to accept others, she demonstrated its value each day. Acceptance not only of Brian's gifts and deficits but also his difficult situation made their relationship a huge source of love and support. Knowing that acceptance is a powerful tool is something that he brings with him to every single relationship and challenge.

Excerpted from *Raise the Child You've Got—Not the One You Want*, by [Nancy Rose](#). Calling herself “The Acceptance Advocate,” Nancy offers presentations and workshops, and writes about the fundamental need of children to be accepted as they are, and her new model of parenting called Leading with Acceptance. nancyjrose.com

[Read Nancy's article on page 9 of the December issue of Livingston Parent Journal](#)

