



## *The Birth of a Scientist*

I recently heard a story from Stephen Glenn about a famous research scientist who had made several very important medical breakthroughs. He was being interviewed by a newspaper reporter who asked him why he thought he was able to be so much more creative than the average person. What set him so far apart from others?

He responded that, in his opinion, it all came from an experience with his mother that occurred when he was about two years old. He had been trying to remove a bottle of milk from the refrigerator when he lost his grip on the slippery bottle and it fell, spilling its contents all over the kitchen floor - a veritable sea of milk!

When his mother came into the kitchen, instead of yelling at him, giving him a lecture or punishing him, she said, "Robert, what a great and wonderful mess you have made! I have rarely seen such a huge puddle of milk. Well, the damage has already been done. Would you like to get down and play in the milk for a few minutes before we clean it up?"

Indeed, he did. After a few minutes, his mother said, "You know, Robert, whenever you make a mess like this, eventually you have to

clean it up and restore everything to its proper order. So, how would you like to do that? We could use a sponge, a towel or a mop. Which do you prefer?" He chose the sponge and together they cleaned up the spilled milk.

His mother then said, "You know, what we have here is a failed experiment in how to effectively carry a big milk bottle with two tiny hands. Let's go out in the backyard and fill the bottle with water and see if you can discover a way to carry it without dropping it." The little boy learned that if he grasped the bottle at the top near the lip with both hands, he could carry it without dropping it. What a wonderful lesson!

This renowned scientist then remarked that it was at that moment that he knew he didn't need to be afraid to make mistakes. Instead, he learned that mistakes were just opportunities for learning something new, which is, after all, what scientific experiments are all about. Even if the experiment "doesn't work," we usually learn something valuable from it.

Wouldn't it be great if all parents would respond the way Robert's mother responded to him?

🐾 **Jack Canfield**

*A 2nd Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul*

*It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.*

Albert Einstein

One year when I was teaching second grade, a new child entered our class mid-year. His name was Daniel, and he brought a special light to our class.

Daniel came over to me one afternoon at the end of the school day. He said, "Ms. Johnson, I have a note for you from my old teacher. It's not on paper though, it's in my head." Daniel leaned over and said, "She wanted me to tell you how lucky you are to have me in your class!"

🐾 **Krista Lyn Johnson**

*A 4th course of Chicken Soup for the Soul*