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by Robert L. Woodard  
The Wynnefield Barber

**S**ome people consider strict parents as dominating. I believe that children raised by parents who demand the best out of their children did not get the proper guidance along their way to adulthood. These types of parents don't want their children to experience failure. Michael Jackson's father Joe Jackson didn't want his children to be complacent about the seriousness of life. Hence, Michael Jackson never got a chance to experience a true childhood. Michael Jackson was one of the greatest entertainers that ever lived but he lost a very important part of his childhood. Michael thought he could buy back the precious time he lost during childhood.

This is the very reason he created Neverland. Similar to Peter Pan never wanting to grow up and even Walt Disney in his creation of Disney Land, Michael set out to create the childhood experience. Never having a childhood can make a person who never had the experience yearn to be a child. Most adults can remember their past as a child. Michael, however, could not. There was no childhood to remember.

It is my belief that Michael Jackson was not a pedophile. However, he was in love with the most valuable natural resource on earth known as the Human Race. Michael's appreciation for all people was felt around the world. His memory still goes on even after his death and it enlightens people of every ethnicity and culture around the world.

Stevie Wonder once wrote a song entitled "With a Child's Heart." Michael Jackson always had a child's heart but in his father's business, there was no time to be a child. His only job was to become the greatest entertainer of

all time, an accomplishment he achieved.

At Woodard's Barbershop, I got the chance to cut Michael Jackson's hair. As he sat in my chair, I shared with him that I also had a very strict father coming up. He had 10 children and didn't have time to tell you the same thing twice. So, when Dad said something, you had better listen. That conversation opened up a variety of other topics as Michael talked about his Dad. I even shared with Michael that after I finished all my chores, I would always look for time to experience the freedom of being a kid myself. Michael Jackson said he felt the same way. But most of his time was directed to rehearsals with his father and brothers.

I truly understand, even now as an elder, how important it is to find time during the day to relax with no need to worry, no need to fear and have the mind of a child. Being raised with strict discipline could cause anyone to become an adult early on in life. Practice makes perfect. Anyone who practices to become the best in their field learns to live it, eat it and breathe it every day of their lives. It leaves no room for play.

Michael Jackson was loved by people from every country and continent in the world. He was truly a good neighbor. It takes a village to raise a child and if it were not for good neighbors, where would we all be today? So, keep in mind how we as Americans view differences. Differences can divide us as real people. Seeing people as real people helps us understand that we are all a part of "One Human Race." Most children already know this naturally. How they viewed Race as a child and now view it as an adult may have changed because of the influence of an adult who taught them to think differently. Take the "RACE Test" today for a better way at www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org. **PRH**

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