

HOW HE DOES IT:

"A current parenting minefield in our house is the explosive topic of fart humor. My two boys think these jokes are hilarious. I do too (you never grow out of it). My wife, on the other hand, has no interest in hearing the latest gas-passing gut-buster, particularly at the dinner table. I've had to explain to the boys that there is a time and a place for it. Of course, if one of them offers up a joke with the punch line 'and then he farted!' (okay, that was the whole joke), I can try not to laugh. But I'm not making any promises."

—BRETT SINGER, FOUNDER OF DADDYTIPS.COM



Fart and the world laughs with you (well, Dad anyway).



Her Highness will see you now.

LOVE, HONOR, AND OBEY... THE CHILDREN?

Cultural historian Pamela Haag argues that kids have taken up roost at the center of marriages in her new book, *Marriage Confidential: The Post-Romantic Age of Workhorse Wives, Royal Children, Undersexed Spouses, and Rebel Couples Who Are Rewriting the Rules*. She shares the details with REDBOOK.

Q: What compelled you to write this book now?

A: Couples seem to be much more overwhelmed by parenting than I remember my parents feeling. In my house, when company came over, the kids sat on rickety folding chairs at the kiddie table, which just doesn't exist anymore. What interested me was the child's migration from folding chair to throne.

Q: How did we get to this point?

A: There didn't used to be so much focus on the outcome of parenting, on doing it right. I've sometimes thought, *Is my son losing out because he's playing—not learning a second language—on the weekends?* But this is how most of us grew up. Playing with a variety of people, kids learn tolerance; they learn to imagine.

Q: How can you bring back hands-off parenting?

A: Let your kids play by themselves. Get a babysitter and go out. Stretch your own imagination. Children are a priority, but they shouldn't be your *only* priority.

Survival skills your family needs

In the aftermath of the Japanese tsunami, you have to wonder: If disaster were to strike tomorrow, what would *you* do? Catherine Hooper, founder of the crisis preparedness consulting firm Black Umbrella, shares key steps every family should take now.

1. Create a communication plan. Who in your family is most reachable, has the most access to the news, and is most decisive? That person's your family marshal, and the chain of command stems from him or her. Also choose a family meeting place: one close to home (say, a friend on the other side of town) and one farther afield (like your aunt's, 10 miles away).

2. Copy critical documents. Scan birth certificates, passports, even your marriage license and wills. Store files on a Web-based data storage system (such as Mozy) and on thumb drives, and make paper copies for your go bag (see next step).

3. Make a go bag. For a complete packing list, go to fema.gov. Update the bag periodically with seasonally appropriate clothes, prescriptions, etc. "Think of the bag as a living thing, not something to put in the closet and forget about," Hooper says.



Have a plan so you can act fast.