the adult dealing with an injured child to be as truthful as realistically possible. He taught me never to attempt to falsify or to trivialize physical pain—rather, to present a clear and understandable reality to the child so that the child can take charge as soon as possible.

I will now pass the microphone to my younger sister, Roxie.

ROXANNA ERICKSON KLEIN

The topic I have selected is the balance of giving, sharing and receiving.

Due to the broad nature of the topic, I want to begin by emphasizing that Dad and Mom nearly always agreed on concepts of child-rearing. I credit them with being equally responsible for our childhood experiences and the way we each have grown. The memories that I have are not merely interactions with Daddy, but of interactions in which Mama played a significant part.

Every individual must learn the interaction skills of giving, receiving and sharing. The balance of, and the ability to derive pleasure from, each of these experiences is an individual quality that is learned. Parents role-model their values to their children, and create situations so that the offspring will have opportunities to experience these interactions. The balance of giving, sharing, and receiving is stressed differently within different individuals, different cultures, and different situations. Over time, a healthy child learns that all three can be pleasant experiences. Striking a balance that blends with the expectations and opportunities of society is a challenge.

I feel that our parents dealt with this issue by placing an emphasis on sharing, and I have selected three illustrations to demonstrate how the pleasures of sharing were instilled in me.

The first took place in 1954. I was about five years old at the time. On weekends, the family used to take a drive out to the desert. On these excursions, we would all find “pretty rocks” which we would bring home. Each of us kids had our own collection of rocks. That year, my oldest brother, Bert, completed construction of a fish pond in the backyard. He reached the stage where the cement was setting, and we had a triumphant family gathering to admire it. At that time, a decision was made for each of us to donate our most beautiful specimens from our rock collections. We eagerly ran to our collections and selected our most prized specimens. Robert even donated some of his favorite marbles which we pressed into the cement. After all, they deserved to be displayed in a setting where they could be appreciated by everyone.

The second illustration took place in 1967. I had just graduated from
high school and was eager to find a summer job. I was disappointed to learn how tight the job market was, but the disappointment didn’t last long. Daddy called me into his office to offer his advice. “Wasn’t I lucky to have not yet found a job. Mama had just become aware of a position where I was truly needed. Not only would I derive the satisfaction of knowing how much I was really wanted and appreciated, but a summer’s work as a volunteer would be an invaluable asset to my resumé. I would have the additional benefits of setting my hours at convenient times, and of taking off a week if I chose to go on vacation.”

I snapped up that opportunity to be a volunteer at Head Start, and even recruited Kristi and a girlfriend to join me.

The third illustration is not a memory, but an ongoing experience. It is how I share the values I hold with my children. Because my children are young—the oldest is four years old—the techniques are very basic. However, these few points might illustrate the concepts that I am trying to express:

1) If one of my children draws a “beautiful” picture, we often either give it to someone, or mail it to someone. (This serves the additional purpose of keeping my house clear of some of this excess.)

2) If one receives a treat, I inquire, “Are you going to share that?” expressing my expectation that, of course, they are going to want to share it.

3) For lunch I make one sandwich for the two older children. One gets to cut it in half and the other gets first choice of which half he or she will take.

4) I encourage participation in planning special events for each other. For example, for my daughter’s birthday, my son Ethan, who is two years old, helped wrap all of Laurel’s birthday gifts.

In conclusion, we all learn the skills of giving, sharing, and receiving. Mom and Dad both seemed to get the most pleasure from sharing. I think we all do too, or else we probably wouldn’t be here.

Now I will introduce my youngest sister, Kristi. She is the youngest in the family.

KRISTINA K. ERICKSON

As my brothers and sisters have indicated, a prominent feature of our particular home setting was my parents’ support of one another. Without my mother and her warm and loving but strong support of my father and the entire family, I believe that my father would not have achieved
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