



Mr. Put-It-Together

by Joe Gandolfo

After Christmas, during the remainder of the holidays, I transformed into “*Mr. Put-It-Together*” around our house. I had about 10 or so items to assemble for my boys, my wife and myself. Initially, that was just fine with me. Like most guys, whether we are or are not – we believe we are the best fit for these assembly jobs. Off to my new toolbox.

We all like, and need, to feel needed. To feel valued and to feel important in others lives is even better. As the week of assembling began, I felt in one way, the importance I have within my family. As the 5 days of assembling progressed I ended the week with a trampoline in front of my eyes, and yes it had a net too!

At this point in the week, I had my fair share of being important and valued as “*Mr. Put-It-Together*”.

While assembling the trampoline, my oldest son who is eight years young was playing in the backyard with a friend. To keep myself from going over the edge after a week of “*being important*” – I, was being a goofball. I was hooting, hollering and singing – just plain trying to lighten up.

It was during my goofiness that my 8 year young son came over to me and politely asked “*Dad, can you stop that, you are embarrassing me*”. ‘*Embarrassing*’, I thought, ‘*don’t we do this together at times*’. That was the first time I had ever heard those words from my now 8 year OLD son. And I must say that at first I was most surprised by those words, but sadly after a moment or two, I was not surprised at all.

In that moment I realized my oldest was at the beginning of a very important shift in his life. He no longer sees everything that I do.... as cool. The way that he has related to me and needed me over these 8 years is changing. My value and importance to him is not ceasing just because I now at times “embarrass him”, it’s just changing. He’s changing and growing as he should be, and I must shift and change the way I relate to him and support him.

Parenting is physically demanding when children are young, mentally demanding when they are older and always emotionally charged because they are our flesh and blood. I want to continue to have importance and value in his life. I now, again, just want to be “*Mr. Put-It-Together*” – to just assemble bikes, basketball goals, legos and trampolines.

I was awakened and reminded that afternoon, as I grudgingly was assembling the trampoline, that “*Mr. Put-It-Together*” does more than put stuff together as his children grow, he also is needed to help his growing children put their life together long after the bikes, legos, trampolines and such have been assembled.

Listen to Joe’s free daily podcast – ***Teen Success Radio*** – available on iTunes.
His new book ***The Greatest Teenage Myth in the World*** is now available @ www.JosephGandolfo.com or www.TheGreatestTeenageMythInTheWorld.com

Joe Gandolfo is on a mission to ***champion the greatest commodity in today’s world – our youth, teenagers, young adults and college students***, and to rally, strengthen and energize the adults – parents, educators, mental health professionals and organizations - who work with and care about our greatest commodity in the world.

Joe works as a ***professional speaker, success coach, seminar leader motivational counselor and author***. He brings 20 years experience working with youth, teen-agers, student-athletes, professional athletes, adults, parents, educators, public and private schools, organizations and associations.

His clients have included: *Georgia Tech Athletic Association, Rockdale County Schools, Cobb County Schools, Cobb Teen Leadership, YMCA, Childcare Resource Network, University of Clemson, University of West Georgia, PGA of America, Milwaukee Brewers, Coca-Cola, SouthCoast Hospitals, Owens-Corning and MPI Georgia Chapter.*

He has been an adjunct professor at Georgia Tech (1996-2000) and Georgia State (2005-06). He was on staff at the Homer Rice Center for Sports Performance (2000-07). He has had a private consulting practice since 1991.

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