

## The Day the Guinea Pigs Died

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It was a warm summer day and I was getting ready to drive kids to a week-long summer camp. Before loading up the van, we were doing some cleaning -- sweeping and mopping the kitchen, loading the dishwasher and vacuuming the living room. After driving the windy road through the Santa Cruz mountains and back, I arrived back home.

Walking through the house to the back deck, my heart sank and I felt sick to my stomach. There was the guinea pig cage which I had moved outside while mopping the floor and had forgotten to move back! In the summer heat, the guinea pigs ran out of water and perished. In disbelief, I cried, yelled and wanted to deny that this was my fault. How could I have been so careless? I wanted to hide my mistake or go back and redo this but of course, this was impossible.

I was reminded about this incident while preparing for one of my webinars on "Real Love in Parenting" by Greg Baer. Dr. Baer says that being inadequately prepared for the job of parenting, we unavoidably make many mistakes. Most of us do not do anything as drastic as my guinea pig example but we often respond in unloving ways. We get angry at other people -- including our kids -- not because of what they do in any given moment but because of a lack of Real Love we have received and experienced for our whole lives. As parents, we can learn how to give and receive unconditional love and improve the quality of our relationships.

Whether you:

are in the beginning stages of family life with young children and feeling overwhelmed

have a relatively happy family and want to find ways to improve what you are doing

are in the middle of painful challenges with a son or daughter

want to support your adult children raise your grandchildren

you can find principles and tools to help you raise responsible, loving and happy children as well as find more Real Love for yourself.