

# Familylab

## magazine

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Jesper Juul: People  
At All Levels Are  
Irrational Beings

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Leadership Within  
A Family

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Power



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# The Key To Your Child's Self-esteem, Dignity, And Integrity

## Hello,

And welcome to the first edition of the Familylab magazine.

Since our beginnings in 2006 we've grown into an international organization spanning 22 countries across the world. We've touched the lives of thousands of people through our work with families schools and kindergartens.

Today, we are a broad, grass-roots movement of people who work to foster healthy family dynamics and competency-based child development. We provide support and guidance to parents and grandparents along with training to educators and practitioners working with children and families. We also offer information and insight to anyone who is interested in fostering positive relationships in any environment.

Our core values are equal dignity, authenticity, integrity, and personal responsibility. We believe these values

provide the basis for healthy relationships with children, as well as between adults.

Familylab was founded by the internationally acclaimed family therapist, Jesper Juul who, in 1995, published 'Your Competent Child', a book which caught the world's attention with its groundbreaking and nuanced insights into the modern family dynamic.

Jesper Juul's ideas struck a chord with readers. The book was translated into more than 30 languages and sold more than one million copies worldwide. Many more readers were reached through Juul's other works, counting more than 30 titles, plus some with co-authors. On top of this, Juul appeared in many interviews and was responsible for hundreds of articles, including weekly columns in major newspapers and magazines in several countries.

Charting the evolution of family power structures from traditional, authoritarian

units, 'Your Competent Child' argues for a modern, equal-dignity approach in which children are regarded as inherently competent beings.

When we speak about competency in this sense, we mean a recognition of the fact that children are real, complete people. Even a newborn baby has the capacity to relate and learn, and the basic competency and ability required to express his or her perspective and needs.

Obviously, the means of expression are not as developed as with an older child or an adult but the needs, feelings, and perspective of a child should be taken seriously nonetheless. Just as we would those of any fellow human.

Recognizing and encouraging this competency — as opposed to denying or inhibiting it — is key to a child's developing sense of self-esteem, dignity, and integrity. It is also an essential part of effective parental and adult leadership.

As Juul notes, "We often think and act as if our relationship with children is a one-way street on which the traffic flows from us to them". Instead, we should foster healthy dialogue and view our interrelationships with children as a two-way street in which everyone's views and feelings are taken seriously and power is not abused. This is equal dignity.

Once these two-way relationships have been formed, adults are also open to learning from children. Be that in their role as an educator, a parent, or as a professional who works with youth.

In many ways, children encourage us to confront and analyze our own emotional reactions and ways of communicating. As such, one of the primary goals of Familylab is to foster and support a space for this learning process in adults.

Jesper Juul's work on competency and equal-dignity relationships have been influential across the world. And not just among pedagogues, family counselors, therapists, and parents. Equal dignity, in particular, has multi-disciplinary appeal and can be applied to any existing structure where power dynamics exist.

For this reason, our work is increasingly popular in schools, kindergartens, organizations, and companies.

In 2012, Jesper Juul was diagnosed with a neurological condition. This resulted in physical disabilities and a weakened speaking voice. As a result, the leadership of our organization was transferred to a Swiss-based NGO, Familylab Association.

Since then, we have continued to guide parents, families, educators,



and child specialists alike toward a philosophy that encompasses our values while providing actionable ways of putting that philosophy into practice.

Jesper Juul passed away on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2019 after several years of severe pain. It is with great sorrow and humility but also with fond memories that we continue our work inspired by the values and ideas he formulated.

Our aim with this magazine is to have a voice for our movement. With this voice, we can present ideas, connect and inspire our current members, and welcome new members to the organization. We are eager to hear your own voices too. But for now, we'll leave you with some parting words from Jesper Juul.

"It is perhaps truer now than ever before that the way in which we behave towards our children will determine the future of the world."

Together we can promote healthy relationships in families, kindergartens, and schools across the world. We can boost the well-being and vitality of our children. And by extension, we can shape the future of our societies. It starts here.

## Happy reading.

## Team, credentials and copyrights

### Editors:

Hans Holter Solhjell  
*Leader of Familylab Norway*

Ivana Gradišnik  
*Leader of Familylab Slovenia*

### Team:

Sandra Lee Braganza,

Dmitry Tereschenko,

Volodymyr Kushnir

Roman Denykevych

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### Photo by:

Janne Rugland,

Anne Kring



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## familylab.de – die Familienwerkstatt in Deutschland, gegründet im Jahr 2006

Wenn Sie Eltern mögen sind Sie hier richtig!

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[familylab-Familienberaterin](#)

[familylab-business-Trainerin](#)

Kontakt: **Mathias Voelchert** Gründer & Leiter familylab.de  
[info@familylab.de](mailto:info@familylab.de) | Tel.: 09962 2035110

[www.familylab.de](http://www.familylab.de)

»Das Schlüsselwort heißt Beziehung. Ihre Qualität entscheidet über unser Wohlbefinden und unsere Entwicklung als Mensch. Kinder werden mit allen wesentlichen menschlichen Qualitäten geboren und haben

daher auch dieselbe Verletzlichkeit und Überlebensfähigkeit wie Erwachsene. Eltern zu sein bedeutet, eine Rolle im Leben einzunehmen, die uns vor große Herausforderungen stellt.« **Jesper Juul**

# When Parents Disagree

Children are fully capable of living with their parents' differences.



**"Not long ago experts recommended that parents should always agree on issues related to the upbringing of their children."**

**T**he experts said that it was not good for children to receive one message from the mother and another from the father. Part of their reasoning was that many of the interactions between parents and children were ongoing power struggles, therefore parents had to present a united front against the children.

The experts said that it was not good for children to receive one message from the mother and another from the father. Part of their reasoning was that many of the interactions between parents and children were ongoing power struggles, therefore parents had to present a united front against the children.

Children were certainly not allowed to win these battles.

Today we know better. There is only one aspect of the past that makes sense, namely the idea of parental leadership.

If leadership is left with children they do not thrive - neither do they develop as healthy human beings.

## Parents are different

The notion that children need parents who are in absolute agreement is outdated. The fact is that parents are different. They have different backgrounds, different personalities and different genders (mostly).

They might agree on the basics, nevertheless, their individual differences will show in their day to day interactions. This cannot - and should not - be otherwise. The only other option is to nominate one of the parents as the "boss" which reduces the other to assistant, maid or perhaps servant - even so, uniformity is impossible.

The fact is that children are fully capable of living with their parents' differences. They will not feel unsafe or confused as it was once thought. One might wonder why children initially were given two parents if they had to be identical, agree on everything and act as one. However, parents do need to agree on one thing, namely that it is alright to be different.

**"Ironically, our children are so dear to us that we often become both irrational and unreasonable when we interact with them."**

An interesting aspect of parenting is that we automatically end up doing many of the things we did not like about our own parents. We all do it - even though we try hard not to. There is no point in blaming each other or feeling guilty about it. There

is, however, a good reason for stopping it - instead of trying to justify it.

When parents' individual differences lead to arguments and conflicts it is a good idea to consider your own

upbringing and share this with your partner. It will prevent unproductive discussions about the right way of being a mother or a father. Instead, you will be able to work out what kind of parent you are - and perhaps why this is so.

The focus of discussions about upbringing should not be about who is right or who is wrong, but about the best conditions for the children. Children will always benefit from having a father and a mother who feel comfortable about themselves as parents - and who truly accept each others differences.

## Parents disagree

There is a difference between being different and disagreeing. Disagreeing is really about principles, theories or ideologies. Disagreements are often about "right" and "wrong" opinions and attitudes. The ultimate aim is inevitably to highlight that we are "right" and the other is "wrong". It is not good for children to grow up with this role modeling.

## Attitudes and actions

When it comes to upbringing, we often present our attitudes after we have acted. Most parents are against violence against children. If a parent has felt hopeless and desperate often enough and ends up hitting their children they have two options.

1: Slowly adopt the attitude that it does not harm children if they occasionally are smacked - after all, it is the children's own fault. This is how many parents justify their actions.

2: Seek help to control their actions.

The first option is inappropriate - but understandable. It is difficult to cope

when we constantly do things we do not really want to do. One coping mechanism is to turn a "wrong" into a "right".

## Theories

The world is full of theories and ideas about upbringing. They all tell parents what to do in various situations and different types of conflicts. It is not a good idea to follow any of this advice too closely - especially not while your children are young. They are generalization. At best, they refer to an average child - they certainly do not take

into consideration your individual child. You also need to remember that most of these theories are created by pedagogues so they might be suitable for the use in institutions. They are rarely about relationships

between parents and children - none of them take into consideration the complex reality of your family.

It is more important for parents to consider and discuss the general values and principles they would like to be part of their family. Then, leave the pedagogical theories for

**"Bringing up children is like any other aspect of family life. It is a mutual learning process where everyone learns from each other"**



when you need to select a daycare or school.

Some theories quickly become dogmatic ideologies. This is dangerous - especially when they become more important than the people involved. Then, we are approaching a totalitarian system - no matter how loving and child-friendly the ideologies might seem. It can only ever offer parents some kind of security. The children will always end up as victims.

### **What can you do?**

Ironically, our children are so dear to us that we often become both irrational and unreasonable when we interact with them. This is the way it is - and it is perfectly alright. When an argument or conflict is over we can take a more level-headed look at things. Then it is time to enter into a sensible conversation about the actual content.

Parenting is like a mixed bag of lollies. There are bits of our own upbringing, various parenting theories and attitudes - combined with our individualities, differences, disagreements and a desire to get things our way. Therefore, it is a good

idea to go through some kind of structured discussion:

1. What do I stand for - and why? What does my partner stand for - and why?
2. Are our discussions about our children - or are they really about something different?
3. Do my actions correspond with my ideas?
4. What is the real problem - the child or us as parents?
5. What kind of expert advice is available relating to this particular problem?
6. Can we agree on doing some things differently?

### **And most importantly...**

Bringing up children is like any other aspect of family life. It is a mutual learning process where everyone learns from each other. It is no good

for parents to agree that something is right if the children react negatively - become unhappy, are constantly frustrated, aggressive or sad. Then the

parents must take another look at their attitudes or theories - until the children regain their happiness and zest for life.

**"The fact is that children are fully capable of living with their parents' differences."**

It is not pleasant - neither is it good - for children if their parents are constantly insecure, perplexed or opinionated. This makes them feel lonely, isolated, and ignored. It is perfectly alright to have certain values and thrive with these - as long you are prepared to accept that other members of your family do not feel the same way.

Regular arguments and power struggles between parents make children insecure, anxious and make them feel guilty. If your family functions like that, it is a good idea to seek professional help - for the sake of the entire family's well-being. It is silly to argue over what is right for so long that things go seriously wrong. ■

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*By Jesper Juul and Hayes van der Meer, [www.familylab.com.au](http://www.familylab.com.au)*

**"There is a difference between being different and disagreeing."**

## Interview

# Hedvig Montgomery

## How My Children Led Me to Familylab

Hedvig Montgomery is a clinical psychologist from Norway. She has over 20 years of experience and specializes in family therapy with a grounding in systemic theory.

Hedvig is the author of the book *Parental Magic* (2018) and has also written articles and columns on the topic.

Her motto, both professionally and privately, is to keep it simple.



Photo by Janne Rugland

**W**ould you please tell us a bit about your background and how you were introduced to the work of Jesper Juul?

I guess this started during my training as a psychologist in Oslo, Norway. I immediately discovered I had an interest in systemic therapy, which is therapy for the whole family. Or at least, the therapist has the whole family in mind when treating an individual. This made sense to me because no client is just an individual person. They are part of a family and other social groups that influence them.

At the time, the theory of behaviourism was a significant aspect of the education of psychologists. I thought parenting was all about disciplining children and teaching them not to misbehave. I had the impression that dealing with children is more about their behaviour and what you teach them than it is about seeing them as real people with valid personal experiences and perspectives.

Then I had my first child in 1993, and I realized everything I had believed about bringing up a child was completely wrong. When they put him on my chest, my child looked at me and I looked back at him. And it was just, wow! He is a person!

So I started searching for a better understanding of children. That

brought me to Jesper Juul's book, *Your Competent Child*. That book really resonated with me — with that experience of meeting my son for the first time. It resonated with how I was thinking about seeing and raising my children. It was just right somehow.

*How did you go from discovering Jesper's book to working with Familylab?*

Jesper Juul dares to say things that no one else in our field says, while also presenting a moral perspective that points to the responsibility of adults. Traditionally, adults hold all the cards, including owning morality. They can easily shame children for being wrong or bad, but they don't accept criticism from children.

Jesper turns this around. He says that adults are responsible for the quality of the relationship and for what children learn from us, simply through the way we relate to them. This is especially true when we perceive a child as a problem. Jesper accurately describes this.

His thoughts are so radically different and straight to the point, a reader can't help being provoked by them. And that continues to fascinate me to this day.

So I signed up for the Familylab training. Initially I just wanted to meet



Jesper Juul and try to figure out how he could be so brave. That really was my motivation! I wasn't planning to spend so much of my time working with Familylab. But here I am. Clearly, I was hooked!

I really admire Jesper for describing things as they are, for telling the truth, for having a moral perspective, for talking about adult responsibility, and for not hiding behind systems and theories. He really just wants to help.

So that's why I wanted to be a part of Familylab and make a contribution myself.

*In your opinion, is there anything that is central to being a good parent that parents often forget?*

Definitely. There are three main things that I think are extremely important for parents to remember.

First of all, raising a child is a long-term project! It's not something you can do perfectly for the first few years and then call it a day. You've got to be there for your child for all 20 years!

If you're not there for your child all the way, the relationship could fall to pieces by the time your child is an adult. And then you will lose them.

Putting in the time and effort pays off, but it is a lot of time and effort. Bear that in mind!

Parents often focus on solving practical problems in the here and now, forgetting that parenting is not only about those immediate problems. It's about the child's emotional, social, and moral development. The first 20 years form the foundation for the rest of their lives.

Another major aspect of being a parent is being aware of your own patterns. All of us have parenting patterns we picked up during our own childhood. How did my parents comfort me? Was I bullied in school? How did the grownups around me handle that? All of these experiences, big and small, cause you react instantly, based on your patterns, to situations with your child.

To avoid this, you have to know something about yourself. To have a good relationship with your child, this knowledge of yourself is important. Otherwise, you will automatically react to situations using the old patterns you learned when you were a child instead of the new and more mature ones you want to establish with your own child.

**"Adults are responsible for the quality of the relationship and for what children learn from us."**

# Familylab Sweden – Seminarie – och familjehandledarutbildningen



**NYHET – Alla Familylabs utbildningar går nu att genomföra på distans.**

Denna utbildning förbereder dig och ger dig material för att leda relationsföreläsningar, föräldrakurser, snabbhanda föräldrar, utveckla din relationskompetens som pedagog, fortbilda kollegor och kan ses som fortbildning för dig som är terapeut.

Läs mer: [www.familylab.se](http://www.familylab.se)

## Familylab Sweden – Utbildning till EMCC Certifierad Föräldracoach och Familjecoach

**NYHET – Alla Familylabs utbildningar går nu att genomföra på distans.**



Välkommen till en unik utbildning till föräldracoach, för dig som vill coacha familjer, par och föräldrar. En ettårig utbildning som ger en internationell coachcertifiering som granskats av branchorganisationen EMCC. Utbildningen till Föräldra- och Familjecoach utgår från relationistiskt förhållningssätt och coachingens grundsyn. Kurslitteraturen kommer från Jesper Juul och det senaste inom coaching.

Läs mer: [www.familylab.se](http://www.familylab.se)

The third important element of raising a child is actually the child. Having three boys myself, I can assure you that children are all so different. They each have their own set of problems, their own set of challenges, their own sense of humour, their own ways of playing, their own interests, and their own perspectives on small and large issues. Children are not the same.

Thus, a child brings something to their own upbringing as well. And you have to see and relate to the perspective of each of your children to help each child deal with their specific challenges. You can't treat all children the same. That's not how it works.

Just thinking through these three points makes you stop and think about how difficult it is to be a parent! It's not enough to know everything about being a parent, it's not enough to know everything about yourself, and it's not enough to know the problems your child has. You have to understand all three; keep them all in mind, all the time. And that's difficult.

*If you could give parents one piece of advice, what would you tell them?*

I think that it's really important to keep conversations alive with your children. This is the most important and the most difficult work we do in our roles as parents.

Being a parent is like being a leader. In a company or organization, if you are only a leader you won't generate much profit from your employees. That's not how it works. Being a good leader means being in touch with the people we lead.

Parenting is the same. We have to open the lines of communication with our children so we can find better ways to be leaders.

Remember that the relationship between a parent and a child is a two-way relationship. You're both giving and you're both taking. But there is only one person who is truly responsible for that contact and that is the parent. The child is not responsible for his or her own upbringing — the parent is responsible for that.

Your Competent Child is really clear about this. You have to take this leadership role and really remember that you're the one who is responsible, not the child. When the child is misbehaving, you are the one who is responsible for doing the right thing, not the child.

When you're talking with your child about something that happened, you're responsible for giving the child this opportunity to learn from what happened. Children cannot be responsible for that on their own. ■

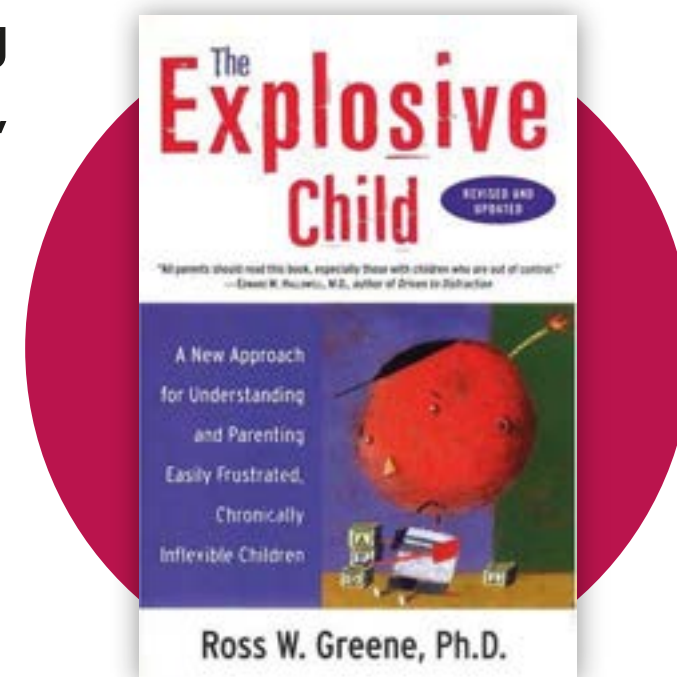
# The explosive child

## Understanding and Helping Kids with Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Challenges.

A training with Dr. Ross Greene in Norway, and online.

We are now offering live online participation via Zoom!

See our website for information about dates and prices:  
[www.famlab.no/collaborative-and-proactive-solutions/](http://www.famlab.no/collaborative-and-proactive-solutions/)



Ross W. Greene, Ph.D., is the New York Times bestselling author of the influential books *The Explosive Child*, *Lost at School*, *Lost and Found*, and *Raising Human Beings*. And is the originator of a model called Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS). Dr. Greene was on the faculty at Harvard Medical School for over 20 years and has appeared in *The Oprah Show*, *Good Morning America*, *The Morning Show*, *National Public Radio*, *Mother Jones* magazine, *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and the *Boston*

### Target group.

The CPS model, which represents a dramatic departure from conventional wisdom and practice, has been found to be highly effective in an array of settings, including:

- Families.
- Kindergardens.
- General and special education schools.
- Therapeutic group homes.
- Inpatient, residential, and juvenile detention facilities.





Interview

# Jesper Juul

People At All Levels Are Irrational Beings

**"Having the trust of their parents is a crucial aspect of the development of children's personalities, whereas the trust of executives and other leaders is an important factor in the productivity, creativity, and morale of employees.**

**We are not talking about blind faith but about a corporate culture based more on trust and encouragement than on control and formalized expectations."**



Photo by Janne Rugland



**M**r. Juul, is leadership in crisis? Recently we've been reading a lot about managers who are unable to inspire their employees and parents who are overwhelmed. What's going on?

Within less than a generation, three things have changed dramatically:

1. Since the values that kept people compliant were based mostly on the needs of industrial society and the dictates of churches — and those old, long-held values do not exist anymore — the uncertainty associated with leadership is great.
2. Children grow up with a global perspective and with the knowledge that almost any future they choose is possible for them.
3. Democracy has finally reached companies as well as families. As a result, recognition of the individual human being has as well. This requires leaders to not only take themselves seriously as individuals, but to do the same for their employees. This means they have to practice principles and values that are often inconsistent with the principles and values they were brought up with and taught to respect.

According to some studies, managers fail especially in terms of interpersonal relationships. Why?

I think it is because they feel safe with the rules of superficial social relationships and have no experience with a more personal way of relating. Maybe they also confuse the personal with the private, and find it difficult or dangerous to risk being vulnerable. Throughout our history, people with power have always tried to appear invulnerable. This, of course, effectively cut them off from others and made them lonely. Loneliness became a virtue.

*Where are the parallels to family situations?*

There are many! Today's parents also have great difficulty with, or are directly opposed to, the idea of making themselves vulnerable in front of their children. Conflict escalates because children are no longer reduced to mere role-playing, nor are they satisfied with it.

*Mr. Juul, don't you agree that we expect too much from managers? Their teams have to perform; intentions must be communicated. While managers are expected to improve the performance of their employees, they are expected to*

***"The days of almighty leaders or owners without empathy, and forever-submissive workers, are over."***

*increase their own performance as well.*

I don't know if it is too much. It is what it is. And we were all ill-prepared for this to occur. Teachers find themselves in similar situations and they burn out. So do parents.

The American comedian Groucho Marx was once asked, "How do you feel about sex, Mr. Marx?" His answer was, "I believe it has come to stay." A very wise answer, as we now know. It's the same with this situation: The days of almighty leaders or owners without empathy, and forever-submissive workers, are over in our part of the world.

*Why does the authoritarian leadership style no longer work, either for businesses or for families?*

Because the costs in the form of lost human dignity are far too high for modern man to accept. And it is actually incorrect to assert that authoritarian leadership ever made things work. It was the needs of their employees and their willingness to submit that made it work.

It worked — so to speak — only because the employees were

brought up in families with a similar kind of leadership style and did not know there could be any alternative.

For a short period of history, this regime generated great financial results for companies. But the price paid in humiliation, poor health, broken families, and unhappy women and men was far too high to be acceptable when alternatives became conceivable and viable.

*Do we still need leadership? Maybe leadership will be replaced increasingly by self-organization.*

I think we will experience that more and more, but that still requires leadership in the form of planning and control. Every organization needs leadership — i.e. leaders who are responsible for the culture, the values, and the quality of communication — and these factors already matter more to younger employees than the size of their pay cheques.

*You once spoke about the "Power of Relationship." What do you mean by that?*

In any group where some people or one person has more power

# International Basic Familylab Training in Slovenia and Croatia

## Familylab Slovenia & Familylab Croatia welcome you at The International Basic Familylab Training

The training will be held in English language (without translation).

This training gives you a deeper insight into the philosophies of Familylab. Attending it enables you to use the material as part of your own work and/or arrange your own workshops.

Participants of the training receive a certificate allowing them to work under the umbrella of Familylab Association.

### Who is it for?

For professionals working with children or/and families, i.e. educators, teachers, social and special pedagogues, psychologists, social workers, family counselors, psychotherapists and similar professional profiles.

It is also suitable and available for non-professionals and those not interested in working under Familylab but in deepening the values and developing capacities within their own families.

### Application and further information:

Ivana Gradišnik: [ivana@familylab.si](mailto:ivana@familylab.si), +386 31 649 749

### The training is lead by:

Dužanka Kosanovič, psychologist and psychotherapist (family therapy at DDIF), supervisor and coach, lecturer, national leader and manager of Familylab Croatia.

For any questions regarding the content of the training feel free to contact her at: [info@familylab.hr](mailto:info@familylab.hr)



### What does the training consist of?

During the first module the participants get well acquainted with the basic values which make up the heart of Familylab paradigm – i. e. equal dignity, integrity, personal responsibility and authenticity – and some of the basic concepts and principles at play in the adult-child relationship dynamics. The second module is dedicated to more practical activities and the basic question: how to implement the theory into practice so as to respect and promote the basic philosophy (values).

than others, the people in power are responsible for the quality of relating and communicating. This is a systemic fact. In a destructive culture with poor communication and/or an absence of personal recognition, employees can do very little to balance out the influence of bad leadership.

*You say that taking care of relationships is the key to successful leadership. This may be easier in families than in companies. Often managers barely have the time to get to know their staff. Aren't you expecting too much of them?*

I am not demanding this; I'm just pointing it out. It is, however, a common misconception that high-quality relating requires a greater expenditure of time than poor relating does.

We are not talking about establishing friendships between leaders and the people they lead but about adding as much quality as possible to the brief meetings and encounters that leaders do have with people.

Medical doctors are only now learning how much impact this has on healing for their patients, just as managers will experience the positive influence it has on the numbers and figures in their annual reports.

*To what extent do you think that being a role model is important to good leadership?*

It has been obvious for many years that the behaviour of the top people in an organization affects behaviour at the lower levels. So the behaviour of leaders determines to a large degree how employees interact with their immediate leader and how they interact with customers, for instance.

What is obvious right now is that young entrepreneurs and executives lack good role models – very much as young fathers lack good role models.

*You advise parents to have more confidence in their children and you advise executives to trust their employees more. But isn't there a much firmer basis for establishing*

**"The reality is that children need their parents' authentic closeness. They need to live with and learn from people of flesh and blood. There are still people who subscribe to a rather outdated expression about defiant children—that they are testing the limits or looking for boundaries. This always happens in relationships where the adult tries to act in ways they think parents should behave. This applies to teachers and others who are part of the child's life. It is my experience that children have a different objective—to explore whether there is a person behind the role. What they are really doing is challenging our ability and willingness to be authentic, attentive and credible."**

*— Jesper Juul, Family life: The most important values for living together and raising children*



**"It is much better for us and our children when we aim to be ourselves rather than try to "do the right thing". Parents who are authentic are better parents than those who try to be theoretical parents. Parents who make mistakes and take responsibility for their mistakes are better parents than those who try to be perfect. Parents who strive for perfection will always make their children feel like failures and children who feel like failures often end up failing."**

*— Jesper Juul, Here I am! Who are you? Resolving conflicts between adults and children*

*that trust in families than in companies?*

Yes, that is one way of putting it, and it is certainly true. But there is an essential difference. Having the trust of their parents is a crucial aspect of the development of children's personalities, whereas the trust of executives and other leaders is an important factor in the productivity, creativity, and morale of employees.

We are not talking about blind faith but about a corporate culture based more on trust and encouragement than on control and formalized expectations.

This is what so many leaders have learned over the past decade through "coaching" — which is only accessible to the top people, so far. The rest of the corporate population is dependent on their leaders to give them similar support.

*What insights may a leader, by being a parent, take with him — and vice versa?*

What we hear from, especially, young fathers and leaders today is that engaging in fatherhood beyond the role of obedient helpers provides them with interpersonal skills that they would otherwise have to achieve through seminars and

workshops. And, of course, personal experience over many years.

The possibility for fathers to spend time with their babies and toddlers is probably the best investment any organization can make in the quality of their future leadership.

*Why is it reasonable for a company to have employees with children?*

I think that all available studies show that employees living in a partnership or family score higher on qualities that organizations want: stability, responsibility, dedication, and health. This is why it would be wise for many more companies and public organizations to embrace the fact that their employees have families — instead of regarding, for instance, an emotional crisis, a sick child, or a teenager in serious trouble as competition.

The wiser choice is to accept that all of these "time-consuming" events in family life have great educational values on all levels and that the owners or boards of directors decide to provide their employees with support and inspiration instead of making them feel guilty.

*You once said that leadership requires conflict — especially at companies. But doesn't that mean*



*that employees will always come in second to their leaders? And doesn't conflict cause resentment? What is wrong with having harmonious working relationships?*

There is absolutely nothing wrong with harmonious working relationships. But the art of coexistence and collaboration is not about creating harmony. It is about knowing what to do when harmony no longer prevails.

It is also true that many conflicts between chiefs and employees are of a more political nature — which is why both parties have their organizations. However, there are many conflicts between co-workers and many conflicts between leaders and subordinates that cannot be solved by political or legal means.

Intervening in these conflicts, which should be very high on the agenda for every Human Resources department, requires empathy and interpersonal skills far beyond being nice, polite, and politically correct. These conflicts influence commitment, responsibility, creativity, and productivity — sometimes of whole departments.

And they have many secondary effects that are costly for the company as well. The less qualified

a parent or a leader is, the more destructive the conflicts will be for everybody involved.

Men and women at all levels are irrational beings. That is our quality and what ultimately distinguishes us from robots.

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*This interview was conducted by Jan C. Weilbacher and published in Human Resources Manager, June/ July 2012.*



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## Interview

# Leadership Within A Family

By Jesper Juul

**A**s a family therapist, I often meet people who are concerned about power struggles that occur within their families. Those who are able to identify what is going on see the power struggles as the cause of their conflicts and problems.

I clearly understand their thinking and frustration, and there is no doubt that power struggles play an important part in many families' challenges. This is because the negative consequences of power struggles are shared equally between those who hold the power and those who do not.

## Two kinds of power

There is no question about the reality that leadership within a family is an absolute necessity. The other side of this reality is the fact that

leadership, by nature, also involves a certain amount of power. Therefore, we must look at and understand the concept of power through the lens of history. In this context, there are two kinds of power.

### 1. A person's power over his or her own life

Having power over one's own life is, in fact, essential to any human being's quality of life. If we constantly feel powerless or isolated from the decisions and circumstances that determine the direction our lives take, life is painful. Consequently, we are quickly reduced to being "victims."

Being a victim is one of the most dangerous threats there is to a person's health and wellbeing. Obviously, all people have different family backgrounds and therefore

react differently if they have been (or are being) victimized. If victimization has occurred during childhood, that pain is carried into adulthood.

Some people have been victimized to such an extent that they will not put up with anything or anybody anymore. Others respond by becoming insecure. Then there are those who have been so badly hurt that they respond to just about everything with a clear "No!" They are almost unable to say "Yes!" to anything — especially, and most unfortunately, themselves.

### 2. Power over others

Holding power over others people's lives is always highly destructive. But the damage is a two-way street. Within the family, the consequences are severe. Obviously, those who no longer have control over their own lives suffer.

But those who do hold power suffer equally. Their lives are severely deprived and less fulfilling than they would be otherwise. This is predominantly because power usually isolates. Their family members will no longer interact with them on a

genuine and honest human level — they don't trust them with personal information, feelings, or emotions.

This dynamic is not exclusive to families. Think of people who operate in the political sphere and experience the worst of the destructive nature of power. They age very quickly and lose contact with their basic human emotions.

### Two realities

When family relationships are out of balance, two realities begin to take shape simultaneously. The first reality relates to the roles and the rules of power struggles. No one steps outside of the roles that have been defined for them or by them. There is no room for flexibility.

The second reality is one of exclusion. Those with less power will automatically hide their feelings, emotions, opinions, and personal experiences from those with more power.

Nevertheless, it is possible to work on establishing some level of equal dignity between family members who are living with a power struggle situation.

**"Being a victim is one of the most dangerous threats there is to a person's health and wellbeing."**

The only hope for progress is being open and direct and using as much interpersonal communication as possible. This can soften the edges somewhat. (Of course, there will always be some negative outcomes for children, simply because of the differences between being a child and being an adult.)

Beyond that, everyone just has to accept living with the negative consequences caused by power struggles.

## How did we get here?

Up until the early 1970s, no one really questioned the father's leadership role in the family. Surely much was said behind closed doors, but those opinions were not a major component of the public debate. This was clearly because the debate was dominated by men.

There were a few matriarchal societies, but most families were male-dominated. That was the norm. There is an unfortunate tendency to confuse "the norm" with "natural." It is always risky to try to speak on behalf of nature and claim to know what is "natural."

**"When parents give in, let go, and hand that responsibility over to the children, the children take over."**

However, it is safe to say that family leadership based on gender is both unfortunate and unhealthy. As mentioned, this is equally true for those who hold the power and those who do not.

There are many reasons why male-dominated family leadership — and male-dominated leadership in society in general — has lasted for so long. For centuries, men and women had clearly defined roles. And each maintained a certain amount of respect for the other's duties and responsibilities.

The recent dissolution of traditional gender roles has resulted in some confusion — even chaos. We have not yet fully integrated socially accepted and more flexible roles into our lives. Nevertheless, things are changing. And changing fast. This evolution certainly cannot be halted or, for that matter, reversed.

The "good old days" are over. Men and women must find their footing as roles and power structures change. When one looks at how things have been managed and structured, these changes cannot come soon enough.



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Contact us for inscription.

My name is Gerda Resl Grassmayr and I am hosting Training programs for familylab international in Latinamerica in Spanish language.

Contact us for more information:  
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Globally and locally, the consequences of the male-dominated family structure are not something to be proud of. Our societies have proven to be destructive and harmful to quality of life for individuals and for society as a whole.

Throughout history, some women were able to gain influence on their own and within their families, but these women were unique. What they achieved was important, but it was always in the context of a revolution of some kind. Ultimately, they did not make much of a dent in the economic, social, and political superiority and power of men.

### **Leadership is necessary**

Today, there is a range of different types of family structures. But who the family members are or how the family is together — that isn't what really matters. What matters is the atmosphere. What we do or don't do — that isn't very important. What makes a difference is how and why we do it.

For hundreds of years, women worked at home and thus had the overall responsibility for the atmosphere there. Men were the providers and had responsibility for decisions regarding finances, housing,

family friends, and so on. The fulfilment of both roles is essential within any family.

However, as family structures change, families must find new ways to allocate those responsibilities. The reality, though, is that we have very little experience in genuinely sharing any roles. No matter where we look, responsibilities are allocated and compartmentalized. Therefore, it is not surprising that one person assumes a greater leadership role more often than not.

It is paramount within any family that there is active, deliberate, and well-considered leadership. This is particularly important for the well-being and healthy development of children under 16 years of age. They need someone to lead. And they need that person to be an adult, as they do not yet have the experiences or values to be able to establish a safe and productive home atmosphere.

When parents give in, let go, and hand that responsibility over to the children, the children take over. But they are not equipped to lead.

That does not mean children should not have any input. On the contrary, children can derive an important sense of belonging and feeling valued through contributing their ideas.

### **Different leadership styles**

At this point it is worth noting that the authoritarian leadership (tough, dictatorial, inflexible) of the past was probably better than if there had been no leadership at all. At least children had some guidance.

In today's world, families function in as many different ways as there are families. Our values, norms, ideals, and so on are different. And that is as it should be. But, in order to look at the issue of family leadership, we need to ignore those differences, as they are not very relevant to the topic of quality of leadership.

### **Diversity is necessary**

"United we stand!" "It is important that we agree on how to bring up our children!" "We must sing from the same song sheet!" It is often said that parents must agree on just about everything. It is worth our while to look at some of the nuances of this notion.

There are many good reasons why an adult forms a relationship with a person who is essentially different. This difference can be the relationship's greatest source of conflict. But, at the same time, it can also be its greatest resource.

The two adults bring different values, norms, and personal experiences to their new family. At first, this might seem fine. But when conflicts and challenges arise, these differences often become more defined.

We automatically and subconsciously fall back on our personal values, norms, and experiences. We have lived with these for so long that we do not question them. We rarely take time to seriously reflect on them or discuss them with our partner. Had we done that, we may have discarded or modified many of them.

The obvious and unfortunate consequence of parental unity is that one person has to give in or give up, which is not good for either person. Unity, which originates in obedience, provides short-term comfort. But it is a time bomb waiting to go off.

Naturally, there are things that parents must agree on. But these things may be fewer than we think.

A good exercise is for both parents to make a list of the things they believe require agreement. Looking at the two lists of priorities together is interesting — it quickly becomes clear how different the lists are. It also highlights some of the challenges

that might arise from the differences. Ideally, sharing the lists will lead to discussion about how to deal with differences without entering into useless power struggles.

### **A family is a community**

Ideally, the entire family should be involved in discussing whatever issues arise and eventually come to a consensus. The children ought to be included in this. But, at the end of the day, the adults hold the responsibility.

Dialogue and negotiation drive this process. Unfortunately, sometimes the excuse is "We don't have enough time!" This is never actually true. More often than not, we actually do have the time it takes to do this, especially when we know how to spend this time most effectively. And it's worth it, because then we don't have to worry about the inevitable conflict and never-ending arguments.

How much time these negotiations take varies from family to family. Perhaps family members do not have strong opinions one way or the other. Or they might have fixed opinions about everything. Either way, discussions will drag out.

In some families, people are very specific and able to communicate clearly what they want and what they

do not want. In that case, negotiations can be over and done with fairly quickly.

It is important to remember that there is a distinct difference between content and process — between what we do and how we do it. Process is the most important element.

This is because the core purpose of a family is community. If the community is neglected because of "time" or other outside factors, then the core and the reason for the family's existence is undermined. How decisions are made is more important than what decisions are made. This is what community is all about.

### **Dialogue requires one thing...**

There is one essential element a community needs in order to function and that is dialogue. Simply put, while one person speaks another must listen. And the other way around.

Everyone must put their opinions and wishes on the table, and this is not always easy. It can be challenging, because so many of us learned at an early age that we should be quiet. "Children should be seen, not heard" has been the mantra for years. Many people are not used to speaking up



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Beziehung, Prozess und Dialog sind die Grundpfeiler zeitgemäßer Familientherapie und Pädagogik. Jesper Juul und Walter Kempler haben diese Haltung in Dänemark entwickelt und in Ausbildungen am früheren Kempler Institut of Scandinavia weitergegeben.

familylab.ch führt diese Ausbildung seit 2019 in Kooperation mit dem Deutsch-Dänischen Institut für Familientherapie und Beratung in der Schweiz durch.

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Tel: 078 788 38 79, cmaerki@familylab.ch

or negotiating. Therefore, we have to learn the art of conversation.

Conversation is not that difficult, actually. We just need to add one essential ingredient: interest. That means interest in the other's point of view — whatever that might be!

Some might argue that respect for the other person's point of view is more important than interest – or at least as important. However, respect doesn't really work as a starting point. Respect is like tolerance: It is easier to maintain when the other person doesn't get too close!

Respect for the other person's views comes as a result of successful dialogues and an ever-increasing number of practical experiences that show the other person's way of thinking can be constructive and meaningful.

Respect is not the same thing as interest. Respect is about the other person's right to their own opinion.

Dialogue within a family is hugely different from political dialogue, as it needs to be supported by openness and transparency in relation to goals and intentions. These need to be shared and clearly expressed rather than being between the lines or assumed as common knowledge.

In addition, everyone needs to speak for themselves, to express their personal viewpoint. Only when it is known what each individual does or does not want is it possible to work out what is best for the whole family.

The next challenge follows as a matter of course, because a family is not static. A family constantly evolves and changes, which is why it is important to check in with one another on a regular basis without making assumptions and without taking anything for granted. If opinions have changed, negotiations need to begin again.

### Let's talk about negotiation

In families, it may take a lifetime to overcome the different views on some issues. With other issues, family members may need to work and experiment for a number of years.

For example, one partner may want a socially active and outgoing life, while the other can live happily without that. Being socially active might make one partner feel uplifted and inspired and the other feel sad and out of place.

This is a serious situation for both and cannot be easily resolved through common courtesy or simple compromises. And it's not a viable

solution for the partner who doesn't like these situations to never go along at all or to force themselves to go along every second time.

Issues like this require negotiation. As always within the family, the aim is for everybody to get as much as possible of what they need and as little as possible of what makes them unhappy.

Negotiation requires two things:

- to express oneself personally and in detail.
- to act as well as to experiment.

The partner who likes to go out needs to ask questions such as "What do I gain from social interaction and being with friends?", "How does it enrich my life?", "Is it tradition, obligation, or meaningful interaction?"

The partner who feels uncomfortable going out has to ask "Why am I not interested?", "What is it that makes me feel uncomfortable?", "What are my previous experiences?"

Both have to search for a solution to the existential position: "I love you and will give you whatever you ask for. However, I cannot give

you this without violating my own integrity."

After that, a number of possibilities need to be tried until a solution is found – or both acknowledge that there is no way forward. One necessary aspect of this is discussing the possibilities – what they can do to achieve common goals.

It is important that this is not about who is right and who is wrong, because that will put the power struggles back on the table.

These negotiations might be over within the hour, within the evening, or maybe within the week. It might even take years before a satisfactory solution is found.

Sometimes the issue is time-sensitive – for example, one partner prefers to terminate a pregnancy and the other does not. In a situation like that, a rule of thumb is that the one closest to the issue makes the decision. The other needs to be loyal and support the decision without letting go of their opinion.

In such cases, negotiations can only be concluded after the action has taken place.

**"Conversation is not that difficult, actually. We just need to add one essential ingredient: interest."**



However, this does not mean that they can be abandoned. The conversation is still important for the relationship and the future of the relationship.

Many people are frustrated by the reality that negotiations might take a long time. Dedicating the time to negotiate runs contrary to the way much of society operates.

Within traditional power structures, decisions are made quickly and are often based on principles. By contrast,

negotiations that take time seem slow, ineffective, and silly – and imply that we cannot make up our minds and are unable to make decisions.

Nevertheless, negotiation requires careful consideration. It might be tempting for one person to “cut through” and rely on the old-fashioned masculine way of doing things. When that happens, power struggles are inevitable.

*An extract from Jesper Juul's “Die kompetente Familie” (Köser-Verlag, 2007);  
Editing and translation: Hayes van der Meer, Familylab Australia*

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# Power

By Jesper Juul

**I**n a family, the adults have the power – socially, economically, physically and emotionally. Culturally, parents relate very differently to this fact. Most people in Northern Europe would rather underplay this power than overplay it. Other places, adults – especially fathers – outright enjoy demonstrating their power publicly.

What is most crucial for children's well-being and development is the way parents choose to use their psychological and physical power. In essence, this book has to do with which guidelines are most appropriate in my experience.

Regardless of children's genetic heredity and possible illnesses, handicaps or syndromes, it is first and foremost the parents' administration of this power that determines whether children get the possibility of completely utilizing their personal and

social potential. It is, in many ways, a terrifying power to have and it luckily also makes more parents feel humble rather than powerful.

The only thing we parents definitely have in common is that we aren't always easy for our children to live with. They get a lot from us, and they also lose some of themselves along the way. They develop qualities, talents, and behaviours in our presence that they might not have been able to develop in another family. There is no reason to feel either guilty or proud about that.

## Powerlessness

One of the most destructive forms of power is powerlessness. It is that which most often leads to abuse of power and violations of children's personal integrity. And if it doesn't do that, it leads to resignation, passivity and loss of contact, and then we call it neglect.

It is neither unusual nor dangerous to feel powerless now and then, but if one notices the feeling growing and appropriating greater and greater portions of the time spent with the children, one needs help. Reciprocal pain is the motive, and the parents' personal responsibility and integrity are the road to change.

## New form of neglect

As mentioned previously, a relatively new form of neglect can be found that takes place when parents for different reasons won't use their personal authority and power in relation to children, but rather turn them both over to the children.

It is a defensive strategy by nature, which in the long run creates precisely the individual and family problems one had hoped to avoid. It is often practiced by very sensitive, involved and loving parents who only seldom would cause their children harm if they just dared to assume the power and authority.

## Children don't need to understand "why"

Children can't always understand why it is the parents who should decide this or that, and they don't have to. If the parents can administer their power just somewhat in line with this book's values, children learn to be secure with the parent's position of power, and that is much more important than being able to understand it or to be in agreement about the details.

As parents we often make decisions that we actually can't give a sensible explanation for until days, months

or years later, or else we end up regretting them, and both things are all right. Leadership is a continuous, mutual learning process together with those who are to be led, regardless of whether it is a single child or a company with many employees.

It has to do with becoming conscious of one's values and goals and exercising one's leadership in agreement with both. Problem solving is a part of leadership, but if it takes up too much room there's a reason to go back and revive the values.

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*An extract from Jesper Juul's "Family Life – the most important values for living together and raising children" (Author House, 2012)*

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# Aggression: An Important Part Of Family Life

By Jesper Juul

**T**here is no doubt that we are all born with different temperaments. Some of us are philosophical and reticent, some are exuberant and enterprising, whilst others are aggressive — the “warriors” I call them. The “warriors” seem to look at every challenge or obstacle as something that must be fought with all their might.

Some children cry on the inside when they become frustrated, when things do not go their way, or when they cannot have something they want. The “warriors” shout and throw it away or kick it. They will often deal with things in this manner well into adulthood, and it is not a good idea to try to change them.

We do not know much about why they feel this way, but we do know that they often go through some very painful personal struggles. It takes a lot of energy to be with them, and

their relationships often become complicated.

## Where does aggression come from?

Aggression — such as irritation, anger, rage and hatred — stems from a range of different sources. Anxiety is one of these. Fear of authority, fear of loss, and fear of dying are others. Guilt often leads to aggressive behaviour. When we can no longer cope with feelings of guilt and self-criticism, we begin to criticise others and blame them.

Our need to feel valued by the people we love and care about is a deeply rooted human need. The experience of feeling valued is at the very core of our sense of self.

However, from time to time it is inevitable that communication between family members is challenging.

Our expressions might be unclear or confusing to others and we feel misunderstood. We all come from such different approaches that it might be difficult for us to find common ground.

Or perhaps we are not mentally or emotionally present and we feel abandoned or rejected as a result. In fact, there are countless things that stand in the way of good communication. This can make us feel very lonely indeed.

When we do not experience the feeling of being valued by each other or by our parents, it is almost like having a rug pulled out from underneath us — although that feeling may last for a short time only.

Our first natural reaction is aggression. We become annoyed, irritated, angry, or furious.

## Expressions of aggression

We express these feelings in many different ways. Traditionally, it was not considered appropriate for women to become angry in the same loud and expressive manner that men do. Women will often cry instead.

For generations, children were not allowed to say “Ouch!” when parents offended them. Instead, they developed psychosomatic symptoms

such as headaches, fevers, stomach aches, and chronic fatigue, to name the most common.

Men are often silent and seek refuge behind a newspaper, TV, a fishing rod, or something in the tool shed.

These are, in fact, just different culturally acceptable ways of being aggressive. The same applies to those who consistently turn aggression inwards. This might manifest as self-blame, depression, guilt, or something similar.

When a member of a family suddenly becomes aggressive, they are really trying to say, “I do not feel I am as valued by you as I would like to be. I feel that you think I am always wrong or that I am a bother to you!”

This is why it is so important to welcome aggression into the family. Aggression is not the enemy of love or care. It is, in fact, another one of love’s many expressions. If aggression is ignored or repressed, it grows. And the person will eventually become either entirely volcanic or just icy.

The reality is, of course, that this does not make sense! Why are we aggressive, critical, and accusatory when we do not feel valued by others? It would make more sense to become sad because it really is a sad experience.



Adults often become cautious and quietly irritated. If this is the case, they will usually end up arguing about “nothing”. When that happens, it is time to get together and take stock of the relationship, each other, and yourselves.

### **The historical roles of men and women in the family**

The fact is that, when we do not feel valued by those closest to us, it is usually because we are not actually as valuable as we think or hope we are. Let us look at a typical example:

For centuries, a man’s most important value to the family was his role as provider or breadwinner. Work was rarely associated with pleasure or interest. This has slowly changed in recent generations. Nevertheless, for the most part, a man with a family is driven primarily by this ancient duty to support the family and improve the family’s conditions.

Although more and more women have entered the work force, they are still often the ones who prioritize both time spent at home and the closeness of the family.

These differing priorities between men and women bring on conflicts. He works hard to meet the needs of the family and she thinks that he devalues her and the children.

Very few men are sufficiently self-aware or have the communication skills to say, “Look, I am actually at work for the sake of the family!” She is the one who spends the most time in the home and works to create a cosy atmosphere at home. Often she finds that he does not appreciate her efforts.

Essentially, both parties expend a lot of energy trying to be valuable to the other but neither feels they are succeeding.

### **Do all family members feel valued?**

Every now and then, it is important to assess whether or not our individual need to be valued is being met. Aggressive expressions are often an indicator that it is time to discuss the issue.

As parents, we often feel the connection between value and aggression most clearly expressed in relation to children. There is hardly another relationship where adults get such an instant sense of inadequacy as they do with their children. When this happens, many of us scold, punish, or even hit the children. This aggression stems from feelings of powerlessness, loss, and anxiety.

Some parents physically hit their children while others “hit with the

tongue”, or scold. From the children’s perspective, it makes no great difference how they are hit. They quickly lose their sense of feeling valued by their parents.

Their reaction is very predictable: They respond with aggression! Then they will either answer back or hit back. Or they will internalize it all, become sad, and feel guilty.

### **It’s all in the hands of the parents, not the children.**

Parental aggression is always the responsibility of the parents. It is never the children’s fault.

With the understanding that aggression is an important part of family life, we must be careful not to let

it get out of hand and become a vicious cycle where aggression only leads to more aggression. As adults, we can talk to each other and resolve issues.

Children and young people need our empathy and our willingness to understand what is going on inside them. Their love for us as parents is never what is at stake. Rather, it is their feeling of self-worth. ■

**“There is a difference between being different and disagreeing.”**

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*Read more about children and aggression in Jesper Juul’s groundbreaking book, available at:*

German: [https://shop.famlab.de/Aggression\\_Jesper\\_Juul](https://shop.famlab.de/Aggression_Jesper_Juul)

Slovenian: <https://familylab.si/agresivnost-nov-in-nevaren-tabu/>

Spanish: [https://www.herdereditorial.com/agresion\\_1](https://www.herdereditorial.com/agresion_1)

Bosnian: <https://www.knjiga.ba/agresija-zbog-cega-je-neophodjna-nasoj-djeci-i-nama-v5910.html>

Polish: <https://dziecisawazne.pl/agresja-nowe-tabu-dlaczego-jest-potrzebna-nam-i-naszym-dzieciom/>

Italian: <https://www.amazon.it/Bambini-Affrontare-prepotenza-isolamento-costruttivo/dp/880709066X>

Croatian: <https://www.harfa.hr/agresivnost-nov-i-opasan-tabu/>

# FLA International Projects

As part of our mission, Familylab Association and membership countries develop and support a variety of projects. Here is a sampling of those projects.

## From Obedience to Responsibility

**Training for Professionals in Relational Competence in Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia**

This is an 18-day training in development of relational competence for professional staff in schools and kindergartens.

Familylab Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia, with the support of the Familylab Association, has designed a training programme aimed at providing professional support, inspiration, and training to kindergarten staff, school teachers, and other teachers. The goal is to inspire and empower educators in the development of their relational competence – a crucial element in establishing quality relationships with children, adolescents, parents, and colleagues – and to connect the participating educators from the three countries so they can share and learn from their shared experiences.

The training consists of six three-day modules that take place in each

of the participating countries over the period of one year. The overall results and outcomes have been shown to be so moving and motivating that FLA decided to subsidize a new training cycle for 2019.

*More on the project:*

<http://www.familylab.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Od-poslu%C5%A1nosti-do-odgovornosti-Edukacija-2020.pdf>

## Translation of Jesper Juul's Book Into Arabic and Somali

Jesper Juul's book *Here I am! Who are you?* has now been translated into Arabic and Somali. This complements a family integration project in which Familylab Sweden and the Swedish Red Cross have partnered to train integrator parental guides for newly arrived immigrant families. One group of parental guides has already been trained and a second group has begun their training. These parental guides help new arrivals find their way as parents in their new culture and adjust

to a different society with unfamiliar laws and regulations. Each of the guides is either an Arabic or Somali native speaker, so their understanding of what the newly arrived parents are experiencing is as good as it gets. Adapting to living in a different country is often a huge process of change for newly arrived families – for the family as a whole and for the individuals within the family. Jesper Juul's books are a great source of support for the personal development of parents who, though they are the same people with the same children, are now living with their families in a whole new context. If you are interested in integration projects for your country, based on Familylab values and Jesper Juul's books, you can get more information by contacting the Familylab representative in your country or emailing [admin@family-lab.se](mailto:admin@family-lab.se).

*More about Jesper Juul's books:* <http://www.family-lab.se/lasa/>

## The Power of Relationship Preschool Program in Serbia

**Developing relational competence in pedagogical relations**

Familylab Serbia has recognized the increasing need of educators and the professionals they work with to be able to systematically describe and share the processes in interpersonal relationships through which they work with children, parents, and colleagues. Therefore,

Familylab Serbia has designed a programme to support the development of relational competencies for educators and other professionals who work in preschool facilities.

The programme objectives are:

1. Supporting professional development through acquiring knowledge and developing competencies that are crucial in building relationships in their professional settings
2. Strengthening participants' capacity to reflect professional experience through supervision

The programme was set up as a series of four monthly modules of three hours per module. The participants were introduced to the basic concepts of relational competence through lectures, dialogue, and workshops. The modules were followed up with a two-hour supervision designed to support participants in integrating and applying what they had learned.

The programme was launched in the fall/winter of 2017–2018 in three cities in Serbia – chosen for their tradition of fostering the values of multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity – with the participation of three preschools: "Maštolenđ" (Novi Sad), "Včielka" (Bački Petrovac), and "Labud Pejović" (Bečej).

# The Member Countries of Familylab Association



**Hayes van der Meer**  
Australia and New Zealand  
[info@familylab.com.au](mailto:info@familylab.com.au)  
<http://www.familylab.com.au/>



**Dušanka Kosanović**  
Croatia  
[info@familylab.hr](mailto:info@familylab.hr)  
<http://www.familylab.hr/>



**Katharina Weiner**  
Austria  
[katharina.weiner@familylab.at](mailto:katharina.weiner@familylab.at)  
<http://www.familylab.at/>



**Jeanne Erichsen**  
Denmark - Familylab Association  
[jeanne.erichsen@gmail.com](mailto:jeanne.erichsen@gmail.com)  
<http://www.familylab-dk.dk/>



**Inge Vandegehuchte**  
Belgium  
[inge.vandegehuchte@gmail.com](mailto:inge.vandegehuchte@gmail.com)  
<http://www.familylab.be/>



**David Dutarte**  
France  
[daviddutarte@gmail.com](mailto:daviddutarte@gmail.com)  
<http://www.familylab.fr/>



**Boris Kolev**  
Bulgaria  
[boris.kolev@abv.bg](mailto:boris.kolev@abv.bg)  
<http://familylab.bg/>



**Mathias Voelchert**  
Germany  
[info@familylab.de](mailto:info@familylab.de)  
<http://familylab.de/>



**Mylène Vezina**  
Canada  
[contact@familylab.ca](mailto:contact@familylab.ca)  
<http://www.familylab.ca/>



**Lisa Canaccini**  
Italy  
[info@familylab-italy.it](mailto:info@familylab-italy.it)  
<http://www.familylab-italy.it/>



**Gerda Resl Grassmayr**  
Latin America  
[contact@familylab-americalatina.org](mailto:contact@familylab-americalatina.org)



**Ivana Gradišnik**  
Slovenia  
[info@familylab.si](mailto:info@familylab.si)  
<https://familylab.si/>



**Velga Rakovica**  
Latvia  
[velga.rakovica@familylab.lv](mailto:velga.rakovica@familylab.lv)  
<http://www.familylab.lv/>



**Juan Ignacio Vieira**  
Spain  
[info@familylab.es](mailto:info@familylab.es)  
<http://www.familylab.es/>



**Jacqueline Di Ronco**  
Luxembourg  
[info@familylab.lu](mailto:info@familylab.lu)  
<http://familylab.lu/>



**Ivana Muškinja**  
Serbia  
[info@familylab.rs](mailto:info@familylab.rs)  
<http://familylab.rs/>



**Angela Peeters**  
Netherlands  
[info@family-lab.nl](mailto:info@family-lab.nl)  
<http://www.family-lab.nl/>



**Åsa Schill**  
Sweden  
[admin@family-lab.se](mailto:admin@family-lab.se)  
<http://www.family-lab.se/>



**Hans Holter Solhjell**  
Norway  
[post@famlab.no](mailto:post@famlab.no)  
<https://famlab.no/>



**Caroline Märki - von Zeerleder**  
Switzerland  
[cmaerki@familylab.ch](mailto:cmaerki@familylab.ch)  
<http://www.familylab.ch/>



**Tamara Kasprzyk**  
Poland  
[info@family-lab.pl](mailto:info@family-lab.pl)  
<http://www.family-lab.pl/>



**Yilmaz Atmaca**  
Turkey  
[mail@ylmz.eu](mailto:mail@ylmz.eu)  
<https://www.familylab.com.tr/>

Your country not yet listed?

Learn to know how you can join us as new country leader and become part of our team:

<http://familylabassociation.com/new-countries-become-a-license/>





# The Mission And People Of FLA

**Familylab Association** is a charitable organization that supports its members (countries where local Familylabs operate) as well as future member countries worldwide in their work for families, schools, and enterprises as well as their development and organization. It aims to promote and



to spread values such as equal dignity, authenticity, integrity, and personal responsibility but also to further values such as social respect, security and stability within families, schools, enterprises, and society.

**Our vision is two-fold and ambitious**

At Familylab, professionals and parents work together to figure out how to transform emotional love and commitment into loving behaviour.

Through seminars, workshops, symposiums, websites, books, articles, and films for parents as well as professional educators we aim to improve the psychosocial health and wellbeing of today's and tomorrow's parents and children – i.e. the rich variety of families concerned with creating healthy relationships without violence and abuse of neither adults nor children and youth.

- Through public education, dialogue, formulation of values, and information about relevant scientific findings, we want to influence not only the way men and women think about and construct families but also the values and behaviour of professionals within nurseries, kindergartens, and schools in order to create optimal environments for mutual social, emotional, creative, and academic learning.

- Our vision is families, institutions, and societies with much less violence, abuse, addiction, and neglect and inspiring and mobilizing all the existing good will, love, and commitment within families, organizations, and society at large.

Familylab is therefore a constantly evolving organization, always focused on the relationships between people.

We believe there are better ways to raise and educate children than using authoritarian force or democratic tricks. Instead, we embrace relationships based on equal dignity, authenticity, integrity, and self-responsibility.

# Join Us!

## Attend our International Basic Familylab Training!

This training provides you with deeper insight into the Familylab philosophies. After attending this training, you will be able to use the materials as part of your own work and/or in arranging your own workshops.

Participants of this training receive a certificate allowing them to work under the Familylab Association umbrella.

The Basic Familylab Training is aimed at professionals who work with children and/or families, i.e. educators, teachers, social pedagogues and special needs educators, psychologists, social workers, family counsellors, psychotherapists, etc. It is also suitable and available for non-professionals and those who are not contemplating working under the Familylab umbrella.

**Jesper Juul's personal address:**



From the very beginning of Familylab, we discussed how our seminar-leader training should be structured. Should it be more like traditional education including tests/final exams etc? Or should it be the way we ended up doing it: a massive, high-quality input loaded with existential inspiration and based on our trust that experienced and well-educated people will digest and transform what we have to offer in ways that will make them better teachers, group leaders, and counsellors for parents and families. After 12 years, our experience matches our expectations. Professionals and parents might wish for models and methods. But they become much more able to improve how they relate to others when they acquire the courage to mobilize their potential into authentic presence and leadership. Many of your predecessors have chosen to continue working within the Familylab universe. Others have chosen to enrich their personal and professional lives under other umbrellas. Both are fine with us. It is more important for us to move you than to create a movement.

I am confident that your participation will enrich your life!

Best wishes,  
Jesper Juul

familylab  
association.com

