

Lupton's Laugh & Learn Issue for October 4, 2008

Thought for Today

Your attitude is an expression of your values, beliefs and expectations.--Brian Tracey

The Learn – story with vocabulary words

The Legend of the Lawn

When Christine was three, she wanted a **sandbox** in the **backyard**. "There goes the lawn," Dad said. "We'll have the neighbor's **kids** here all the time, stomping and running and throwing sand. It'll kill the grass for sure."

Christine's mother said, "It'll come back."

At age five, Christine wanted a swing set, complete with a high slide and bars to climb on. As Dad bolted it together, he moaned, "Our backyard will look like a school playground. When it rains it'll look more like a pigpen than a lawn. This will kill the grass for sure."

And Mother said, "It'll come back."

Three years later, Dad was setting up a swimming pool and complaining. "I imagine kids splashing water and chasing and sliding across the lawn. Our yard will look like **home plate** after a rainstorm. It'll kill the grass."

Christine's mother smiled. "It'll come back."

At twelve, Christine invited the Girl **Scout troop** over for a campout. As the tents went up and the **tug-of-war** rope was stretched, Dad sighed, "Why do I bother with **fertilizers** and **aerators**? I might as well put the mower in storage. The scouts will kill the grass."

Mom winked. "It'll come back."

Christine and several high-school **sophomore** soccer teammates used the backyard as a practice field. Brown **divots** appeared like the **pox** . . . except for the goal area, which was a giant fifteen-foot divot. Dad shook his head in **resignation**. "I don't ask for much, only a lawn the neighbors won't **mock**."

Mother consoled him. "It'll come back, dear."

He finally had the lawn he wanted: grass like the **greens at Augusta**, Georgia, edged in weedless flower beds. Dad stood in the backyard nervous, uneasy, not enjoying a bit of it. With a lump in his throat, he asked Mother, "She will come back, won't she?"

Told and retold, the legend of the lawn helps us recognize the compromise in valuing possessions over family. Dad wanted a good lawn, but his daughter was always more important...the way it should be.

[From the book "**People of Promise**" by Dan Lupton]

Sandbox: a play area with sand for small children to enjoy

Backyard: garden area behind a house

Kids: slang for children

home plate: In base ball it is the place where the batter stands to hit a ball. home plate has no grass.

Girl Scout troop: a group of Young girls who wear uniforms and go camping

tug-of-war: A contest with people at each end of a long rope. Those on each end try to pull the others toward them.

Fertilizers: Feed...nutrients...nitrogen...for grass, flowers or farm crops

Aerators: a tool to poke small holes in the lawn for air and water to enter

Sophomore: American youth go to high school for four years. Year one-Freshman; Year two- sophomore; Year three-junior; Year four-senior.

Divots: holes in the lawn, usually 5 to 25 centimeters across.

Pox: An Idiom. The disease smallpox often leaves scars. So a lawn with many small holes can look like a lawn after smallpox. But you must use your imagination.

Resignation: Giving in; giving up, quitting

Mock: laugh at with scorn. Laugh at not because it is funny, but laugh because it is stupid

greens at Augusta: Augusta is a famous and expensive golf course with perfect grass

The Links

<http://cz.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-sQZwgipyE> Girl cuts grass but mower has mind of its own

Idiom: to be in the doghouse.

You are "**in the doghouse**" when you have done something which has made someone angry. Example: "You kids will be **in the doghouse** with your mother after that mess you made in her garden!" A dog who has misbehaved may be put on a leash and forced to stay **in the doghouse**. It is common joke that a wife puts a husband in the doghouse for doing or saying stupid things. Here is a funny example.



<http://www.funnieststuff.net/viewmovie.php?id=1035>

The Laugh

While trying to explain to our six-year-old daughter how much technology had changed, my husband pointed to our new personal computer and told her that when he was in college, a computer with the same amount of power would have been the size of a house.

Wide-eyed, our daughter asked, "How big was the mouse?"





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