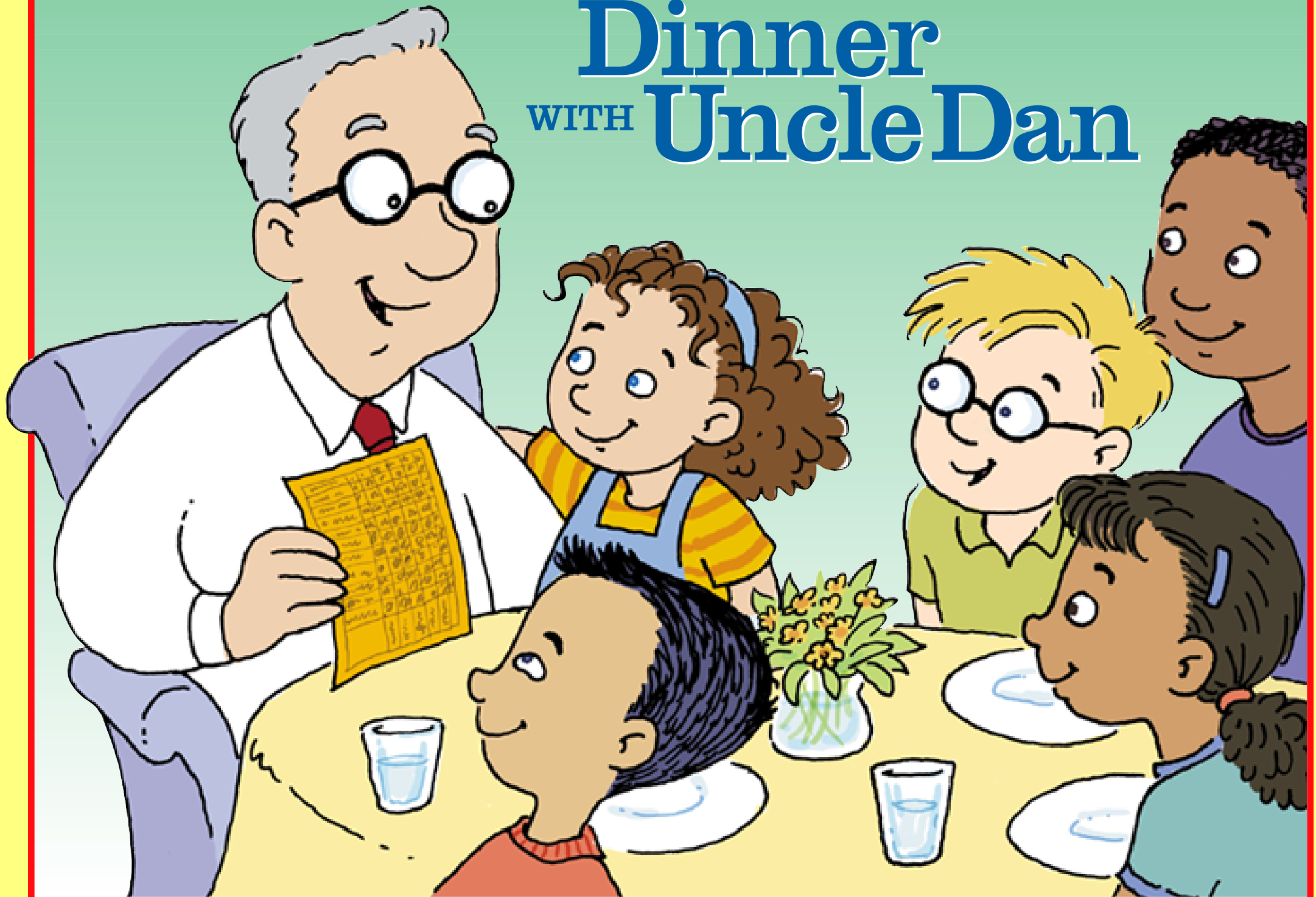


Dinner WITH Uncle Dan



Uncle Dan's Report CardSM

D E D I C A T E D T O

Daniel L. Brenner

"Uncle Dan"

For planting the seeds,
nurturing this growth,
and continuing to watch
them bear fruit.



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My name is Barbara, and this is a story about my Uncle Dan and his Report Card.

The story begins in a special place — the dinner table of my grandmother’s home. You see, when I was a little girl, that dinner table was the place where our whole family — my grandmother, parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins—gathered on holidays to share a big, delicious meal and lively conversation.

When the meal was over, our family didn’t leave the table until my Uncle Dan had made a speech...

even if everyone had finished eating! We didn’t mind. We loved listening to Uncle Dan. His voice was soothing, and his kind words made us all feel good.

Lots of people liked to listen to Uncle Dan. He was an important man in our town because he helped lots of people. Even when I was a little girl, I knew that Uncle Dan was also a hero in our family by the way everyone respected him. My mom said that Uncle Dan was our family patriarch. She explained that a patriarch is a leader of a family. I thought that Uncle Dan was the most wonderful person in the whole world!



Uncle Dan with his grand nephew Justin, and grand niece Amy.

I want you to know more about Uncle Dan's speeches.

They were a really big deal. He would clear his throat before he spoke. When he did, everyone got real quiet. Then, he would take a drink of water, tap his mouth with his handkerchief, and start to talk. The subjects he talked about were always the three things that were most important to him: Family, citizenship, and education.

He always began each speech by saying that he was so thankful for his family and he wanted each of us to never take our family for granted. That means that we shouldn't ever forget to take care of each other—be helpful, listen, and respect each other.

Uncle Dan always said that doing good deeds is the most important thing you can do in order to be a good citizen. A good citizen is kind to others and has good manners, just like Uncle Dan. Every time I heard him say these things, I hoped that some day, I would grow up to be just like Uncle Dan.

Uncle Dan told us that our education would help us become whatever we wanted to be. He said that an education is something that no one can ever take away from us. He would ask us what books we were reading and what subjects we were studying in school. And he would always ask to see our Report Cards.

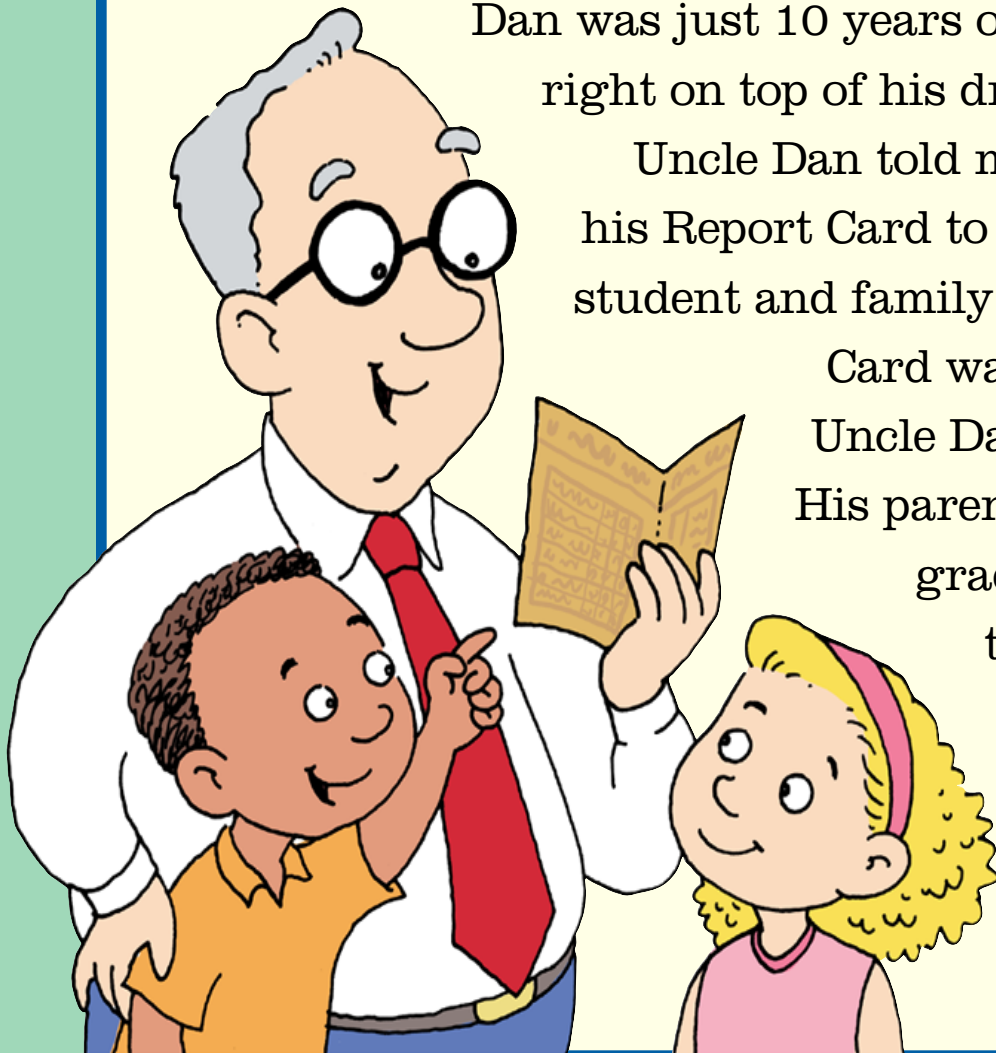
One night at the dinner table, I got up enough courage to ask Uncle Dan about his Report Cards. He said that when he was a little boy, Report Cards looked different from the way they look today.

I wanted to see one, so he went into the other room and returned with a yellowed piece of paper. It was one of his Report Cards... from 1914... when Uncle Dan was just 10 years old and in the fifth grade! He had kept it handy, right on top of his dresser drawer, all these years!

Uncle Dan told my cousins and me that his parents had used his Report Card to teach him how to become a good citizen, student and family member. It soon became clear how his Report

Card was so different from mine: The right side of Uncle Dan's Report Card was called a "Home Report." His parents marked this side of the Report Card by

grading him on subjects they taught him at home, the same subjects he talked about during every speech, such as: Manners, Habits of Kindness, and Helping Mother and Helping Father. It was amazing to me that a School Report Card would have

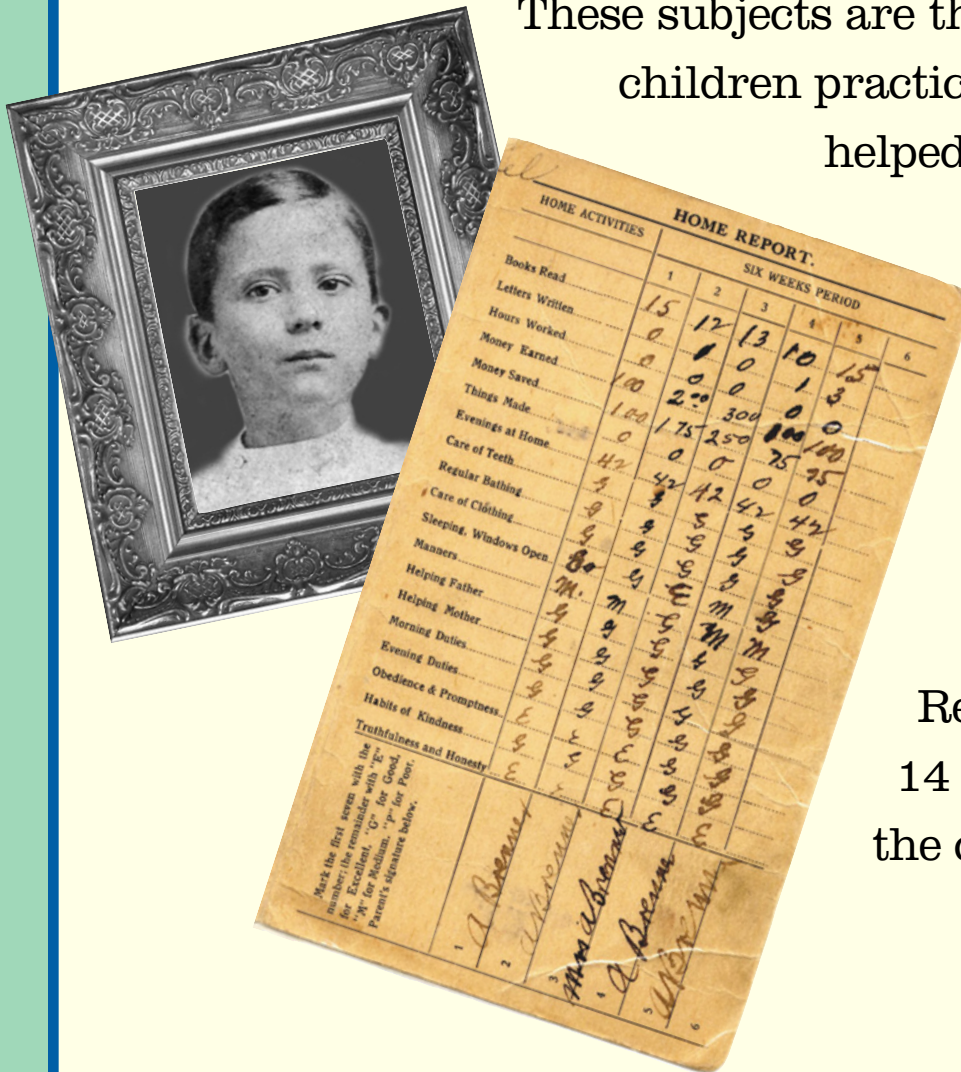


When I became a mother, I understood how important it was for parents to teach their children the same subjects that were on Uncle Dan's Report Card and have a Home Report, just as Uncle Dan's Report Card did.

These subjects are the very same ones that I helped my own children practice each day at home, just as my Uncle Dan had helped me do when I was young. It was fun and made my children and me feel so good inside!

So... I have an idea! Let's pretend that all of you are my cousins and my Uncle Dan is your Uncle Dan! We'll play like we just had dinner, and Uncle Dan is ready to give his speech.

Shhhhh. Let's listen as Uncle Dan shares his Report Card. Listen closely as he talks about the 14 subjects on his Report Card. He always asks the children questions, so be ready!



“Do Morning and Evening Chores”, said Uncle Dan...

Chores are important jobs that need to be done around the house and the yard. There are so many of them that when every family member helps do them, even the children, everything gets done quicker. My Morning Chore was to put the milk bottles outside for the milkman.

My Evening Chore was to help clear the dinner table. Chores make us very important people, because they are jobs that help our whole family.

What morning and evening chores do you do?



“Bathe and brush teeth regularly,” said Uncle Dan...

When I was a boy, my mother would buy toothpaste called Dr. Sheffield's Creme Dentifrice. *Try to say that!*

It's easier to say Colgate or Crest isn't it?

Let's all show how to brush our own teeth!

When I was a boy, we took a bath with Ivory Soap. Everyone liked Ivory Soap because it could float. *Have you ever seen a bar of soap that can float?*

“Follow directions and be prompt,” said Uncle Dan...

It is very important to follow directions, so you will learn important rules and how to do new things at school and at home. *Who can tell us what directions an adult gave you to follow today?*

Why was it important to follow those directions?

One of the most important directions to follow is to arrive to places BEFORE we're supposed to. That's called that being prompt. Being prompt gives us time to get our minds ready for what we're about to do.

Always be prompt when going to school, so you're ready to do your best.

If your school starts at 8:30, what time should you get there?



“Take books, lunch and notes to and from school,” said Uncle Dan...

When you go to school, it is important to take your books and papers so that you will be able to do your lessons. Before I went to bed, I would gather my books and papers so I wouldn't have to look for them in the morning when I was sleepy.

And when you leave school to go home, it is just as important to make sure you take home your books and any papers, that the teacher has given you. That's called taking personal responsibility for your belongings.

When I was a boy, I put my books and papers in a book bag that my mother made out of an old pillowcase.

What do you use to carry your important belongings to and from school? How do you remember to do so?



“Be truthful and honest,” said Uncle Dan...

Once I went to the candy store to buy some taffy. *Do you know what taffy is?* It’s a kind of candy that stretches and sticks to your teeth.

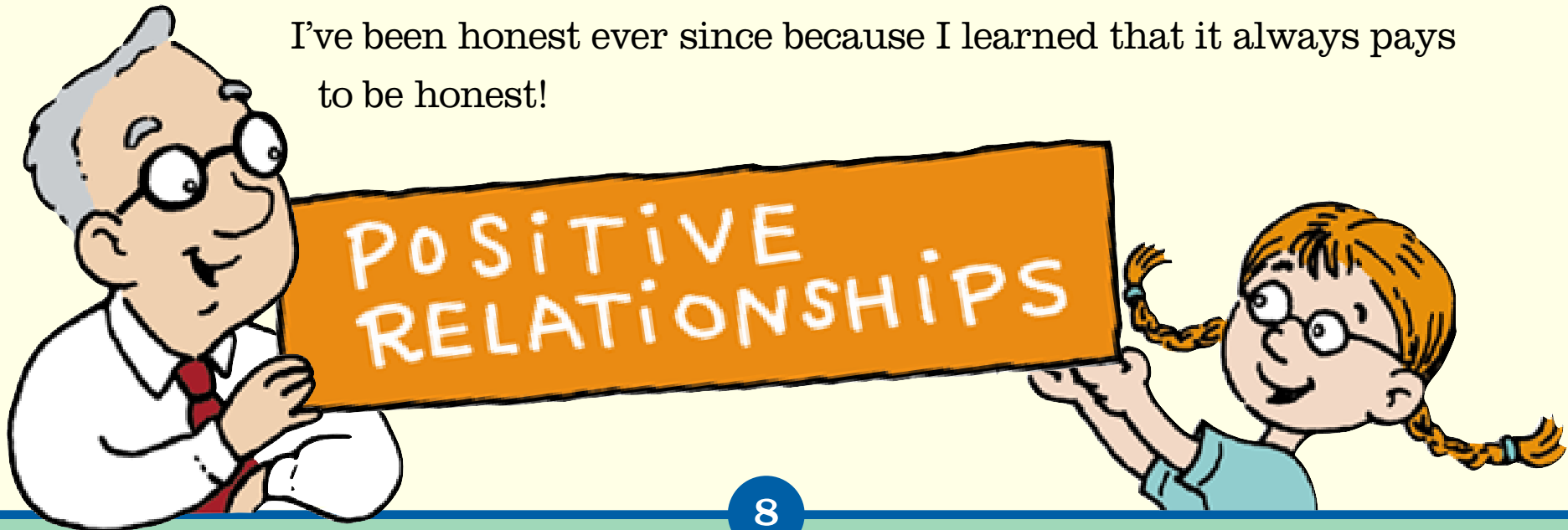
When I was a boy, taffy cost just a nickel. *See how a nickel looked when I was a boy? How is it different from nickels today?*

One day, I did not have a nickel, so I gave the clerk a quarter. He gave me back my change, two dimes and a nickel. That was too much change and meant that I got the taffy free!

Who can tell me what would have been the truthful, honest thing for me to do when I received too much change?

You know what happened? I gave him back a nickel. He gave me another piece of candy and said, Son, because you were honest, you deserve another piece of taffy.

I’ve been honest ever since because I learned that it always pays to be honest!



“Do acts of kindness,” said Uncle Dan.

Kindness is a very powerful thing. One day, on my way to school, I fell down and cut my knee. It hurt to walk to school, but I did. I felt embarrassed and did not want anyone to notice that I was crying. A girl noticed that I was hurt and asked me if she could help me. She told the teacher that I needed the nurse. Her words of kindness made me feel better fast.

Now turn to your neighbor and say something kind to him or her. See how it makes that person feel good? And see how it makes you feel good, too? I told you that kindness is powerful!

“Use good manners,” said Uncle Dan.

Uh-oh, I have to sneeze...Ah, ah, ah, ah...chooooooo!

When I sneeze, I always take a handkerchief out of my pocket and sneeze into it. I never cough or sneeze without covering my mouth with my handkerchief.

Covering our mouths when we sneeze or cough is an example of using good manners.

What are some other examples of good manners?



Here are other examples of good manners that I use now:

- Thanking someone when he or she gives you a compliment or a gift.
- Waiting to eat until everyone at the table has been served.
- Holding the door open for the person behind you.

Now, all of you pretend to sneeze and see if you can cover your mouth with a handkerchief. If you don't have one, you can use a tissue.

“Respect yourself and others,” said Uncle Dan...

Thank you all for not talking while I'm talking! You are giving me respect, and it makes me feel so good.

A good time to show respect is when you meet new people. Let's pretend that your neighbor is a new person. Ready? Look into her eyes, so that she knows that you respect her. Okay. Is everyone looking into his neighbor's eyes? Yes? Now shake your neighbor's hand, tell him your name, and say, 'How do you do?' Take turns introducing yourself. Remember: Don't talk when the other person is talking to you and do look him in the eyes.

Who can tell us how you show respect at home?



“Express gratitude,” said Uncle Dan...

When people do something nice for us, it is important to thank them. This is called expressing gratitude. You can express gratitude by telling people that you like what they do. Or you can write a letter or give them a special card. ***How many of you have given someone a card, on Mother’s Day or Valentine’s Day?***

When you express gratitude, the person receiving the gratitude feels happy, and it makes you happy, too.

Let’s try expressing gratitude now. Remember the words of kindness that your neighbor said to you a few minutes ago? Turn to her now and express your gratitude for being kind to you.



“Read at home,” said Uncle Dan...

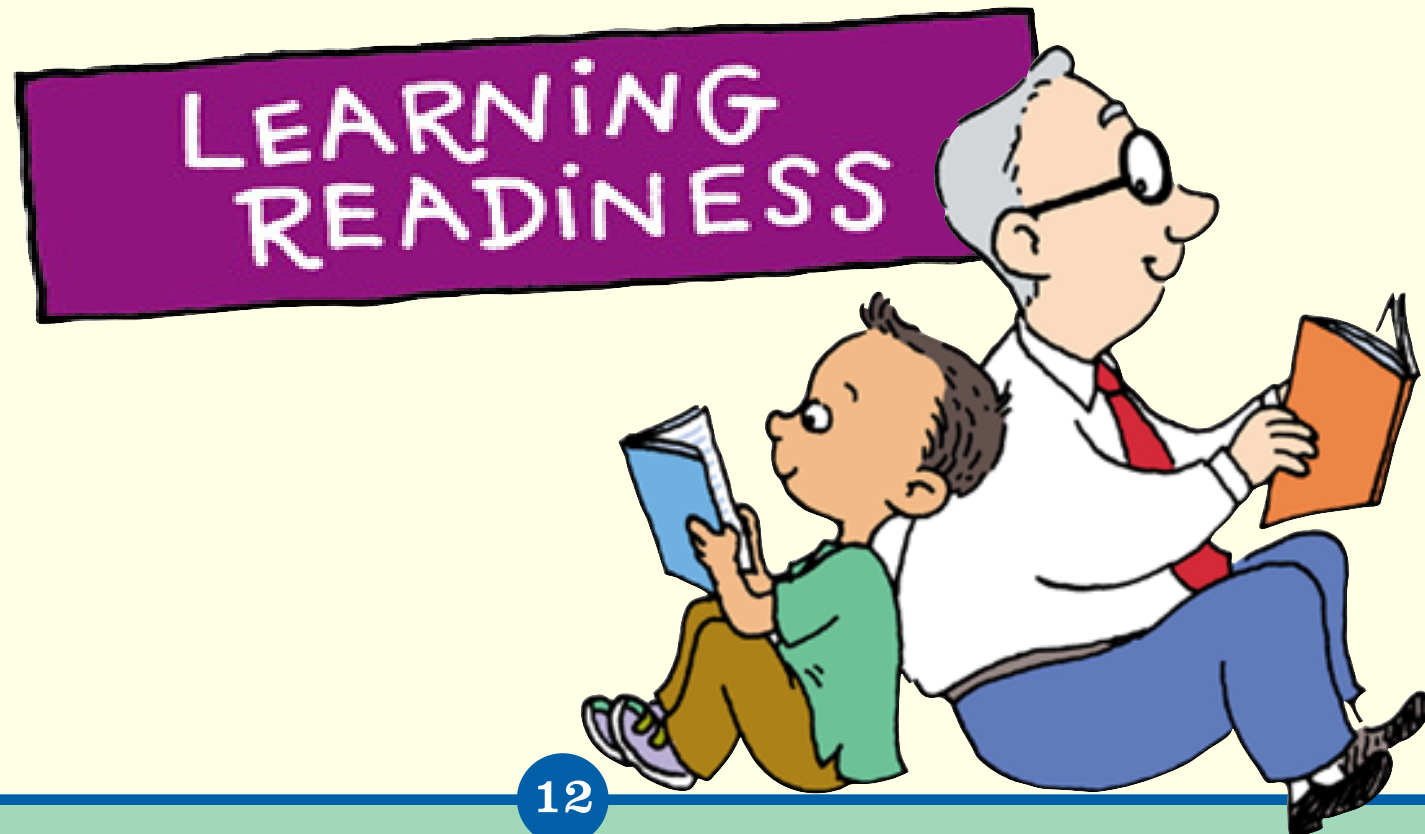
Best of all, reading is fun! I learned about faraway places that I wanted to visit and about important people who I wanted to meet by reading about them when I was a child. Sometimes, I pretended that I was my favorite character in the books I loved, such as The Hardy Boys series of mysteries.

Guess how many books my Report Card says I read with my parents every day?

I read two books a day!

How many books do you read at home every day with an adult?

What are your favorite books and your favorite characters in them?



“Manage screen time,” said Uncle Dan...

Screen time is the time you spend watching TV, playing a hand-held game or using the computer. I never watched TV when I was your age.

Who can tell me why?

My parents did not have a TV because it wasn't invented yet! No one had a television. Everyone had a radio. We would listen to radio shows together, such as the Jack Benny Hour. I wanted to listen to the Charlie McCarthy Show, but it came on the radio after my bedtime. When I got older, could stay up later, and had my homework done, my mother would let me listen to the Charlie McCarthy Show.

If I we had a TV, video games and a computer when I was in Kindergarten, I would still have to follow the rules my parents set about how much TV I could watch and what video games I could play.

What are the rules about screen time in your house?



“Eat a healthy dinner with the family,” said Uncle Dan...

Our family – my aunts, uncles and cousins – ate together once a week around the dinner table. We enjoyed talking about what happened during the week.

We had healthy meals. It is so important to eat healthy meals. My mother wanted me to eat healthy food, so I could grow up strong. We had all colors of foods on our plates – yellow and green vegetables, white milk, meat and brown bread.

*Who can tell us the colors of the foods of their favorite, healthy meal?
Guess what my favorite dessert was? Peach Pie!*



“Get at least 11 hours of sleep each day,” said Uncle Dan...

When I was in Kindergarten, I went to bed at eight o’clock at night and got up at seven o’clock in the morning.

How many hours of sleep did I get? Who can tell us how many hours of sleep she got last night?

Let’s all pretend to go to sleep and count together to eleven. At your age, you need eleven hours of sleep to not be sleepy or grumpy for school the next day.

Your body needs that time to rest, and to get ready to think and move the next day!



“Get at least one hour of exercise each day,” said Uncle Dan...

When I was your age, we played all kinds of games every day. Have you ever played the games that I played – croquet, jacks, marbles, hide-and-seek and hopscotch?

Can you guess my favorite exercise?

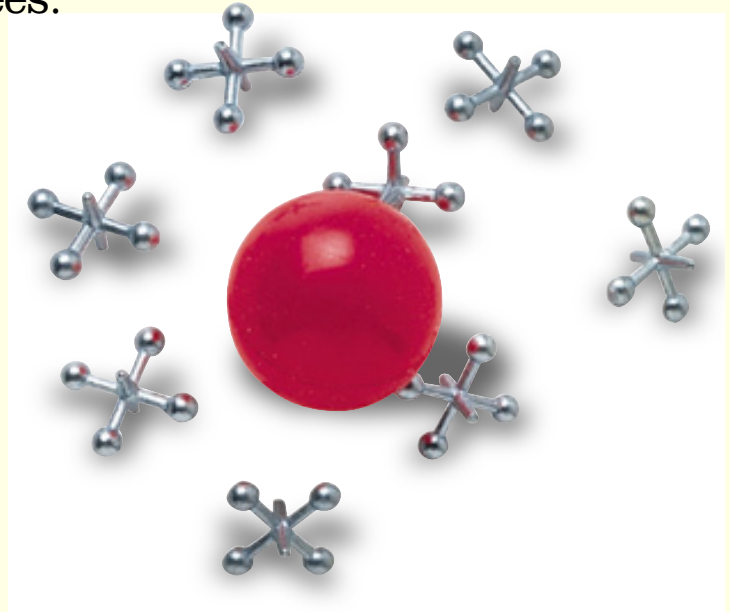
Stretching!

I can still touch my toes without bending my knees.

Can you?

Moving your body helps to strengthen your heart and your brain. It's also good to give your body a chance to release tension and relax. It's funny that the more you move your body, the more you're able to move your body... because your muscles and bones are healthier.

Everything on Uncle Dan's Report Card becomes easier to do and makes you a healthier person when you practice each activity each day.

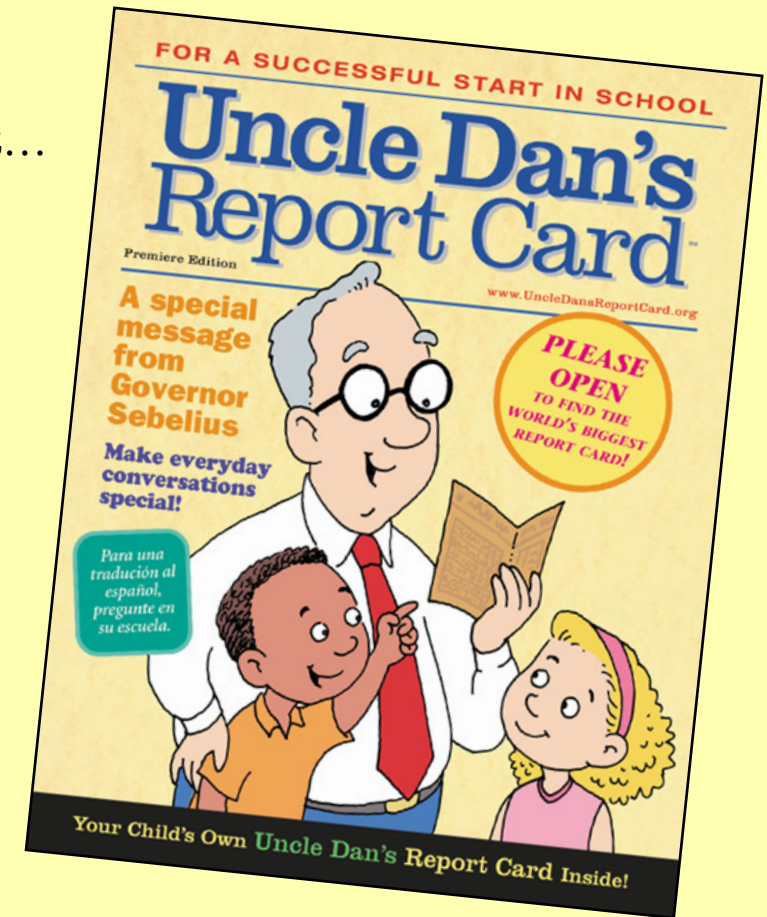


WOW! Now you know how good it felt to listen to the wise, gentle words of Uncle Dan's speeches. His Report Card helped me—and now you — learn these 14 subjects that are important to every child's education. These lessons cannot be learned in just one day. They take practice and more practice until they become something you do without even thinking about it... just as Uncle Dan did!

You are the only *you* who will ever be—you are precious and deserve this special care! Here's another amazing fact: The better you take care of you, the better you can take care of others! That's being a good citizen, a good family member, and a good student!

Maybe some day, you'll share Uncle Dan's Report Card with your own children, just as I did with mine.

Uncle Dan would be so proud of you for listening to him today... and so am I!



The End