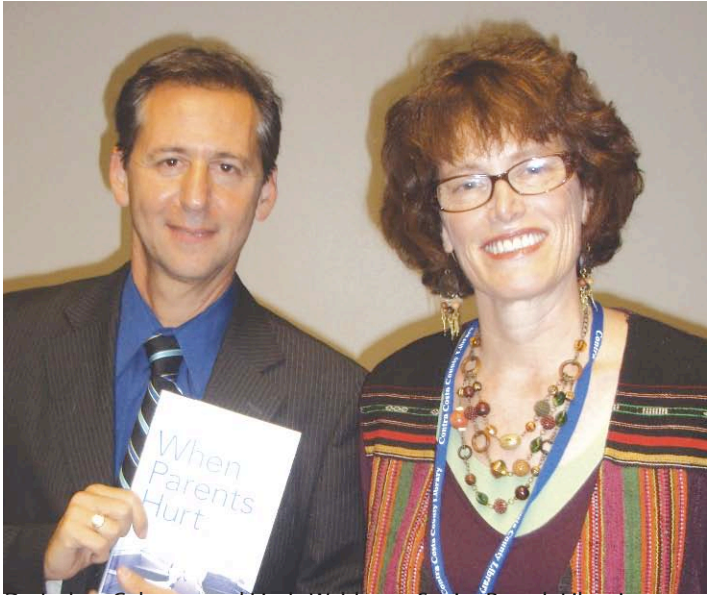


## Coping with Intergenerational Hurtful Relationships

By Linda U. Foley



Dr. Joshua Coleman and Linda Waldroup, Senior Branch Librarian, Moraga Library

Photo Linda Foley

**D**r. Joshua Coleman addressed the issue of hurtful relationships between parents and their adolescent or adult children on November 1 at the Moraga Library. The Orinda resident is an internationally renowned relationship expert who has guested on 20/20, Today Show, Good Morning America, the BBC and numerous news programs.

His latest book *When Parents Hurt: Compassionate Strategies: When You and Your Grown Child Don't Get Along*, examines how the cumulative effects of divorce, personality mismatches within the family structure, and demands of a competitive society can create distancing and chasms between parent and child.

This topic, Dr. Coleman explained, is “underground” because this subject is not readily identified or openly discussed leaving parents with a lin-

gering and festering heartache. Whereas thirty years ago, Dr. Coleman explains, parents believed that children were strong and resilient, today's omnipotent parents “over protect” the child from every possible danger. The child who once was ready to take flight in his early 20s, today tends to linger in the “nest” until his late 20s. This creates democratization within the family or a blurring of boundaries setting the stage for resistance and resentment, providing the child with the position of rejecting the parent.

Dr. Coleman spoke eloquently from his personal hurtful experience with his own daughter —after his divorce—now in a mending stage. He also presented viable excerpts from his case studies from his book. Dr. Coleman provided strategies for managing the guilt and regret that often plague parents resulting from their own parenting mistakes, mistreatment of their children or feeling responsible for their child's inability to launch a happy or successful life.

His suggestions for coping include: forgiving yourself for mistakes you made as well as forgiving your child for being disappointed by them or whatever he/she may have done to hurt you and, not using guilt in order to keep him/her closer to you.

The book is an excellent resource for stressed intergenerational relationships to begin rebuilding and healing, and how to start the dialogue.

Dr. Coleman's other books include *The Marriage Makeover*, *Imperfect Harmony*, *The Lazy Husband*, *Married with Twins*.



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