

Author Q&A

A Conversation with Author Leslie B. Kuerbitz



Q: Where did the inspiration for the Jennifer Pennifer character come from?

A: From my very curious and very imaginative daughter, Jennifer.

Q: What prompted you to write specifically about this topic?

A: I grew up in a dysfunctional family, and counseling helped me overcome my difficulties. I knew in my heart it was my responsibility to be a better parent and to love, encourage, and emotionally support the members of my family. As a counselor, I am determined to help parents and children mutually love and respect one another.

Q: What makes you so uniquely qualified to write a book like *Jennifer Pennifer*?

A: It may be due to the fact that I have worked with hundreds of people, of various ages, in many life situations for over 25 years. I have learned from each television show produced, each criminal or civil case worked on, and each counseling session in which I participated. I pray every day that I will continue to learn and grow as a counselor and as a human being!

Q: Why is *Jennifer Pennifer* different from other children's books?

A: While *The Misadventures of Jennifer Pennifer* is a cute story, it also illustrates appropriate parenting skills. It demonstrates how to allow children to be creative and teach them to ask for help in difficult situations (without fear of retribution or harsh judgment from a parent). The book offers parenting tips, as well rules of appropriate behavior for children, and provides resources for families.

Q: As a licensed professional counselor, how do you see the book helping families in their day-to-day lives?

A: This book asks parents to allow for the natural creativity and curiosity in their children. It also shows children how to turn to their parents for assistance when needed, without fear.

Q: What is your favorite part of the book?

A: My favorite part of the story is at the end, when Mommy and Jennifer Pennifer are smiling and hugging each other. Jennifer Pennifer still has her curls (if a little

shorter), because Mommy has come to the rescue and everyone is happy! My favorite picture in the book is Jennifer Pennifer painting. I remember when my own Jennifer used to finger-paint with her curls flying furiously as she created her “masterpieces.”

Q: How does the illustrated Jennifer compare with the real Jennifer?

A: Actually, very much the same! At age “5 and ½ years old,” the real Jennifer had beautiful curly brown hair, bright blue eyes and long eyelashes. She still has bright blue eyes and long eyelashes, but she prefers to wear her hair straight. She was always creative and loved to paint and to help me in the kitchen, creating salads and making cookies. She also loved to read with me, or Daddy, especially in the evenings before she went to bed.

Q: Has the real Jennifer ever gotten anything else stuck in her hair? What is the real Jennifer doing now?

A: Yes, chewing gum! All the time! We used the peanut butter technique or scissors, if necessary. The real Jennifer is a medical doctor who lives in Atlanta, Georgia, where she is a third-year resident in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Q: What will be the next adventure (or misadventure) for Jennifer Pennifer?

A: There were so many creative moments in my own Jennifer’s life from which to choose. However, I am considering a “misadventure” that is topical for today’s society and covers important safety issues for both parents and their children.

Find out more about Jennifer’s misadventure at www.jenniferpennifer.com or blog with author Kuerbitz at www.jenniferpennifer.com/blog.

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