

"The Road Less Traveled"

When people embark down the parenting road, they often have ideas of what to expect. For example when Mary and I brought our son, Brennan, home from the hospital, I strategically placed a short gate in the hallway to our bedrooms. My thought was that, not only would it keep our dog out, but if Mary needed anything; she would ask and I would come with whatever she wanted. This delusion lasted but an hour and ended when Mary crossed the gate in tears because Brennan would not stop crying. She said she needed some time alone and took our dog for a walk, leaving Brennan and I to fend for ourselves.

Another memorable parenting moment is when my eldest daughter, Alena, acquired the word "no." At first, Mary and I thought it was cute that Alena was flexing her independent muscle; however, if you've met Alena, you know that she doesn't mince words, so my wife and I had to work hard with our little princess to get her to do what she was told, even if Alena did not want to. It was this memory that popped in my head after I finished the book "No" by Tracey Corderoy.

In Corderoy's tale, readers meet Otto, a young rhino, who is adored by everyone he meets. People gush over the youngster and comments like "How cute!" and "Such a Sweet Child!" fill the air. Things in the Rhino household are good until the day when Otto discovers the word "No."

Otto fancies this two-letter word and uses it often. When it's time to leave the beach, Otto says, "no"; when it's time to take his evening bath, Otto answers, "no"; and when Father instructs him to prepare for bed, Otto replies, "no."

Though Otto's parents, school mates, and teacher are not pleased with his newly acquired word, Otto relishes the results it has. He does not have to share, eat new foods, or put on his coat when venturing outdoors. But soon Otto discovers that using the word "no" can have negative results like when his teacher, Miss Ibis, asks the class if they would like a surprise, Otto defiantly answers, "no" and misses out on a cupcake snack, and when his peers ask Otto if he wants to be a part of their parade, Otto states, "no," and is left playing alone.

Otto soon comes to the realization that the word "no" is not all that wonderful. When his father notices that Otto is feeling blue and offers him a hug, Otto chooses to use a word that has a positive effect, rather than an adverse one.

So if you are just beginning down the parenting road, be sure to stop by the Columbus Public Library and checkout the selection of quality books that deal with the tough issues like the one found in "No" by Tracey Corderoy. I guarantee that even those who have a well-worn path down the avenue of life will find a book to which they can relate.