

Of Davy Crockett and The Alamo

Growing up, Davy Crockett was my hero. So imagine my enthusiasm that the 2009 ATTACH conference resides in San Antonio, home to the Alamo. In fact, if you attend, the Alamo is but a short walk from the heart of downtown.

Anyway, as I was saying... There was Disney's Davy Crockett—Fess Parker, along with Hollywood's Davy Crockett—the immortal John Wayne. For the 'Alley Rats' of my old neighborhood, Davy Crockett was larger than life. We used to continually reenact the siege at the Alamo, each taking turns at 'being' Davy Crockett. Hero fantasy-play at its very best. It didn't get much better than this.

And people wonder why I don't get out much.

Anyway, not until I became older and started reading books on U.S. history (e.g., *Three Roads to the Alamo* by William Davis, and *The Gates of the Alamo* by Stephen Harrigan) was there the realization that Davy Crockett never intended to fight and die at the Alamo. Having just lost his reelection bid for U.S. Representative from Tennessee, Crockett set off for Texas in search of a new life. Circumstances landed him in San Antonio where, before he knew it, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna's troops had the town surrounded. Help for the Alamo was supposed to have come from James Fannin's volunteers, 400 strong. These men were however killed en route to San Antonio near the village of Goliad, dashing the hopes of Crockett et al.

“Ya know, if I was just ‘David’ from Tennessee, I'd probably slip over the walls some night and take my chances. But this Davy Crockett feller, well, everybody's watchin' him...”

And so it is with many adoptive parents. Feeling trapped and scrutinized, they bite the bullet, hunker down, and keep fighting the good fight—often unaware that their children frequently suffer from developmental anomalies resonating from right-sided brain structures with strange sounding names such as the orbitofrontal cortex , amygdala, and cingulate. These loving and longsuffering parents can—by themselves—provide healing to their children no better than Crockett and his small coterie could defeat a Mexican army of 4000.

Plus, there is the 'judgement factor'. I wish I had an 1836 buffalo nickel for every set of parents who came in loaded down with the emotional burden of being blamed by friends, family, and society for how their children are, and how they're managed/disciplined (“You're just too harsh with Jimmy!”/ ”You're way too lenient with Jimmy!”). If so, I could buy a muzzle-loader for every person in the Texas Hill Country. And how many times has there been the clueless mental health practitioner who, out of abject ignorance, blames the parents' marriage for what ails an adoptive child?

Hmm... Common threads shared by Crockett and all-too-many adoptive parents?

- **The desire to start a new life**
- **No intention of getting into a fight**
- **False guilt and shame**
- **Wary of unmerited criticism and scorn by others**
- **A need for reinforcements**

Unlike Davy Crockett, there is no need for any adoptive parent to be martyred. The mission of ATTACH is to help suffering adoptive families heal.

Like Davy Crockett, adoptive parents wonder whether reinforcements will arrive.

Oh, and I really hope to see you in San Antonio this year. I'll be the one in the coonskin cap.