

**F1:** Would you like some more dessert?

**F2:** No, thanks, Linda. Everything was \_\_\_\_\_, but I couldn't eat another \_\_\_\_\_! Thanks so much.

**F1:** So, Jeanne, how are your \_\_\_\_\_ doing?

**F2:** Well, that depends on which one . . .

**F1:** Well, how about the \_\_\_\_\_? That's Brian, right? How \_\_\_\_\_ is he now?

**F2:** He's fifteen. Brian's fine. Brian's always fine. He's doing great at \_\_\_\_\_. I'm sure he'll \_\_\_\_\_ into a great \_\_\_\_\_ in a couple of years. He's a great \_\_\_\_\_—\_\_\_\_\_ hard, he plays by the rules, and he's \_\_\_\_\_ at almost everything he does. The only thing that sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ me about Brian is that he can be a little too \_\_\_\_\_.

**F1:** Self-critical? How so?

**F2:** Well, Brian can be pretty \_\_\_\_\_ on himself: no matter how well he \_\_\_\_\_ at something, he's not \_\_\_\_\_. He always \_\_\_\_\_ he could do better.

**F1:** That's so interesting. Our first, Eric, is like that, too.

**F2:** Really?

**F1:** You know, I once \_\_\_\_\_ this article in one of those popular psychology magazines. It \_\_\_\_\_ that first children are often self-critical because parents \_\_\_\_\_ them to \_\_\_\_\_ more than they do with their other children. I don't mean to \_\_\_\_\_ you did that, and I don't think we did that with Eric, but it's interesting because it's so \_\_\_\_\_. I just wonder why.

**F2:** Well, I do think there's some \_\_\_\_\_ to that in our case. Harvey and I were \_\_\_\_\_ in everything Brian did—music lessons, karate lessons, Chinese class on Saturday—we \_\_\_\_\_ him to all his classes. We \_\_\_\_\_ him up after they were over. We always \_\_\_\_\_ him a lot of questions about how he was \_\_\_\_\_. He probably \_\_\_\_\_ our message to him was that he had to be good at everything. But we were just \_\_\_\_\_. We didn't actually push him to be good at everything, but he may have thought we \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of him. Kids internalize those messages.

**F1:** I imagine that's pretty \_\_\_\_\_. It's no one's fault.

**F2:** And one more thing—if you \_\_\_\_\_ into that—you know—"nurture theory."

**F1:** Yeah?

**F2:** Brian's sister Annie wasn't \_\_\_\_\_ 'til Brian was eight. He really had more contact with us and other \_\_\_\_\_ than he did with someone closer to his \_\_\_\_\_. I'm sure all that contact with us probably had a huge \_\_\_\_\_. And, interestingly, Brian has always been \_\_\_\_\_ with adults.

**F1:** From what you're saying, it sounds like Brian is the classic first child. They say that first children often feel more comfortable with people older than themselves. They seem to have a short \_\_\_\_\_ and grow up fast.