## Maybe I should get my affairs in order... just in case

A 99 per cent chance. That's what the doctor told me my chances were for waking up from my operation.

Huh?

That can't be right. Only 99 per cent? That means one in 100 don't wake up from the = anesthetic?

He continued to talk, but I wasn't listening. was mulling over the one in 100 chance I wouldn't wake up. Finally I told myself he must have meant like 99.999 per cent chance I'd wake up, and I felt better.

Then he said it again — 99 per cent. Plain as day.

What happened was I finally went to the doctor after 12 years of blissful healthiness. Then I found out that maybe I wasn't quite as

healthy as I thought. Not terribly unhealthy, though, we'll just run some tests.

One of them was a heart stress test. You keep walking on this treadmill with things hooked up to you until you get your heart rate up. I was getting close to the heart rate, but my knee was starting to hurt.

Stop at any time they said. But, I wouldn't. was no quitter and my ego told me I couldn't give up until I reached the correct rate.

I did it, but I haven't been able to walk properly since. Oops. Eventually I went for an MRI and found out I had torn the meniscus in my knee.

I have difficulty walking and the pain is excruciating at times. Hence the operation.

I've never been put under before. I had

On the with MURRAY TOWNSEND

plenty of stitches when I was younger and playing hockey, a couple broken arms (at the same time) when I was a kid, but nothing major.

Just 99 per cent? I had better get my affairs

For me that means my funeral CD. I've been working on it for years here and there, but now I figure 1 had better finalize it.

The thing is I want people to laugh at my funeral. I originally wanted popcorn and balloon animals, but I think I can forget the balloon animals. Triangle sandwiches are a must. I've never figured out why, but for some reason they taste better.

Now back to the CD. I don't want to reveal the songs, because I don't want to ruin the fun for people who go to my funeral.

So, the operation is in early January. That means there's a one per cent chance this is my last column.

I'm hoping this won't be the one time I beat the big odds.



## When to step in? It all depends on the situation

Question:

Should tell their children who to play with and who not to play with?

Answer:

Parents are a child's first and most influential teacher, playing

an important role in nurturing their child's abilities to form and build positive peer relationships.

Parenting

same page

with SUE BRATHWAITE

on the

Around the time that children start school, friends begin to take on an increasing level of importance. Temperament has a bearing on whom a child tends to gravitate toward and how, as do life experiences, particularly within the family structure. These serve as a foundation upon which other relationships are built and main-

So, we strive to build a positive relationship with our child. We nurture elements of good character and selfesteem, teaching what it looks like to be and have a friend. Play gives the opportunity to practice. Imaginary play, which allows children assume different roles, and children's books about friendship are a great way to explore this subject.

A child's age and developmental level will have a significant bearing on his or her ability to effectively deal with social situations.

It helps to get to know your child's friends and their families so you can effectively gauge your child's social capabilities and monitor interactions. Stepping in becomes necessary if things appear to be more than a child can handle, there's an imbalance of power, or if the relationship is jeopardizing a parent's relationship with their child.

Instead of maintaining rigid control over a child's every social interaction parents provide support and guidance, giving children the chance to develop social skills. After all, our ultimate objective is to have children make sound choices all on their own.

Sue Brathwaite is parent resource co-ordinator and parenting educator with the Ontario Early Years Centre, North Halton (www.mcrc.on.ca). The centre provides support and resources to assist parents and caregivers in their roles. It also provides early learning experiences for children up to six years of age.