

A Father of Invention

DAD'S MULTIPURPOSE VEST AIDS IN CARING FOR BABIES

BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN

THERE ARE so many new baby products that were invented for or designed by women. I've certainly interviewed many female inventors over the years.

My wish was to give equal time to dad inventors. Wish granted! Here's a new product that was recently featured on Joy Mangano's "America's Big Deal" national TV show.

Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): According to your website daddy-caddy.com, Daddy-Caddy was originally conceived in 1998 with the birth of your first child. How has the development of this product evolved, and why did it take so long to develop?

Dr. Curtis Breville (CB): I absolutely conceived of the idea when my oldest, Abigail, was born in 1998. I just didn't act on it.

In fall 2003, when learning my second, Olivia, was on her way, I began to design something I thought was simple and functional. My wife's grandmother is a retired seamstress and helped me with creating a pattern. After a handful of prototypes, I sent them to a garment manufacturer in southern Missouri and had 700 made.

It was sweatshirt material, one sided, with five pockets. I had grey, brick red, and black.

The current version is more plush, reversible, has over twice as many features, and is more attractive. I put a shoulder loop on it for less bulkiness in the pockets (for a burp cloth or towel) and added elastic and a strap to keep it close to the wearer's body when they lean over (Version 1 swung out and twisted).

EGT: What is your background?

CB: I was raised in a household with a physically challenged father (paraplegic due to a virus that caused brain damage in the area that controls the movement of the legs). Taking care of my dad was just part of life; I was always trying to think of ways to make it easier for him to be more independent and less reliant on others to live.

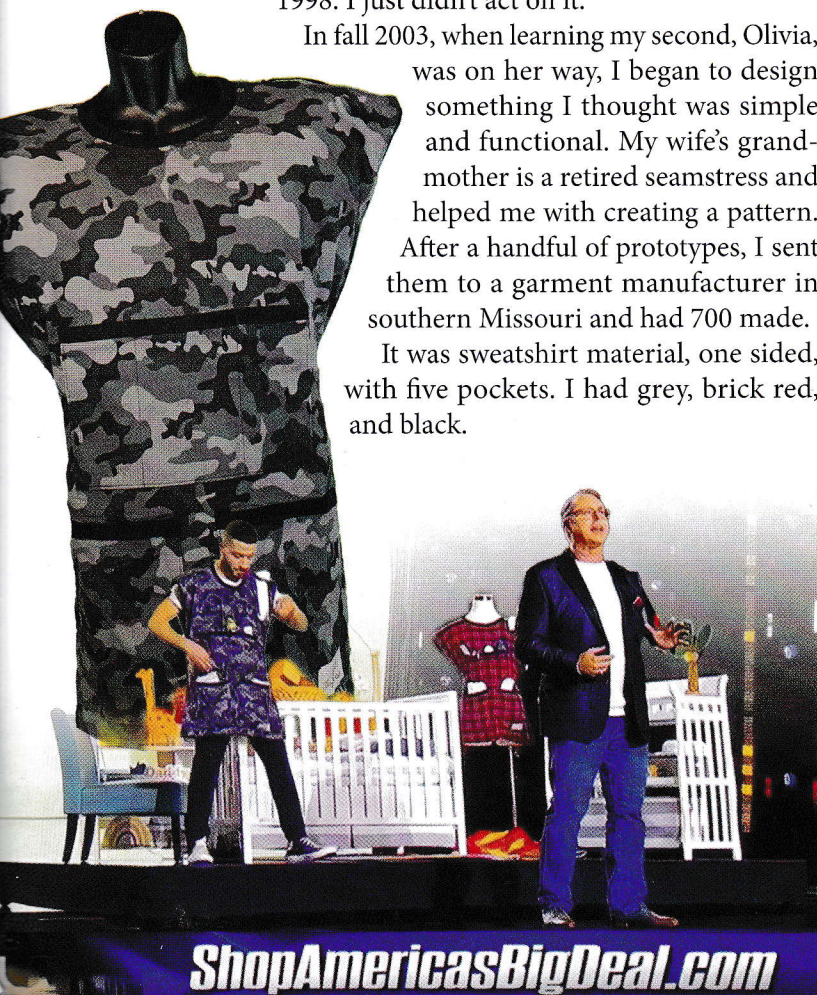
I was the black sheep of my siblings when it came to school and grades. I was an embarrassment to the family. I learn by doing, not just sitting and listening.

My first passion was psychology. I really wanted to do something where my knowledge and words could positively affect people's lives. I got talked out of that because the idea of me getting a Ph.D. was so foreign to my family's expectations of me.

I took the route of being in IT, got accepted to college and graduated with my undergrad in only 2.5 years, entering the business and IT world as my career.

Despite that, I needed fulfillment for my soul. I actively got involved in organizations to reach people: civil rights, domestic violence, animal rights, children's hospital, leadership development for kids, and helping people with special challenges to be identified for their gifts that often come from our body's adaptation (like people who are missing an arm generally have greater dexterity in their one hand than most people have with two). I started two women's leadership speaker panels to bring female role models to students to inspire them.

The Daddy-Caddy keeps a number of baby items "close to the vest" and protects the wearer from anything that comes out of a baby's nose, mouth, or anywhere else.



"I was the black sheep of my siblings when it came to school and grades. I was an embarrassment to the family. I learn by doing, not just sitting and listening."

—DR. CURTIS BREVILLE



Wanting to have every advantage available to me to help improve my chances of success in my endeavors, I was accepted in 2012 into a Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership program and spent the next 6.5 years taking classes and residencies before successfully defending my dissertation in July 2018.

I love developing a culture of celebration, positive communication, acceptance, equality and equity. I am the first in my family to have a doctorate, and I'm also a member of Mensa. I feel like I put that black sheep label to bed.

EGT: What are the unique features of the Daddy-Caddy? Anyone can use it, right?

CB: It holds everything the wearer could need to care for a baby. It's super comfortable for both the wearer and the baby to be held against. It keeps everything in hands' reach and protects the wearer from anything that comes out of their baby's nose, mouth, or anywhere else.

Who else could benefit? Moms can, absolutely! Grandparents, aunts, uncles, godparents, nannies, babysitters ... it makes caring for a baby a little easier for anybody.

EGT: What is the product made of?

CB: Daddy-Caddy is made from top-quality fleece for the solid side and uber-soft flannel on the other side.

EGT: Please share your experience in obtaining your patent or trademark.

CB: A challenge! I previously spent 1.5 years using a trademark company that didn't help one bit, other than secure my effort to go after it—as it is currently "Trademark Pending."

EGT: How did you qualify for "America's Big Deal," and how did it work out for you?

CB: Every person I have been in contact with has been tremendously positive and supportive. They know their jobs well, and I'm just amazed by each.

A dear friend from the Kansas City area was cleaning her closet and saw one of Joy's products she bought and wanted to know what Joy was up to. She found the application for the show and emailed me a link to it.

I followed the instructions, submitted everything asked, and a few days later received a phone call for an audition.

EGT: Are you selling anywhere else, or do you have an exclusive with Joy Mangano?

CB: I sell on my website. There is no exclusive with anybody, but the purchase price is best when buying from the show's site when they are available.

EGT: Have you invented anything else?

CB: Not to this extent of creating a business around it and having it manufactured, marketed, and sold. I designed something made to allow physically challenged people to enjoy being on a golf course. I still think of that and hope to make something of it someday.

EGT: Are you manufacturing overseas?

CB: I was, and the international logistics have been a nightmare for meeting hard deadlines. I've since found a new domestic option.

EGT: Because it is a product that comes in contact with children younger than 12, has it been third-party tested to CPSIA (Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act) standards?

CB: The materials I choose have been certified

safe and are the same material as many baby products. When I can guarantee CPSIA standards, I do.

EGT: What have you learned about product development?

CB: It's not rocket science, but it includes a learning curve. Logistics is a major factor that needs to be understood to turn something from a single or handful of items to fulfilling national demands. I am far from having this mastered but get more proficient every day.

EGT: Do you have any new products in development

CB: Yes. A specific product for moms to wear that supports breastfeeding is in the works.

EGT: Any advice for novice inventors?

CB: Find and foster strong relationships. Surround yourself with people who have experience and believe in yourself or your product. Be prepared for change and roll with it.

Understand that most people don't have your same vision, and that is OK. Read and soak in as much advice from those who have launched products before. Document EVERYTHING. Time flies, and remembering exactly when and why you did something two, three or four years ago just isn't feasible.

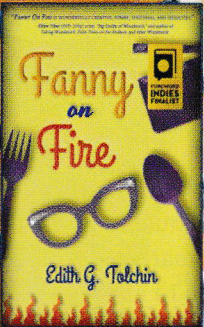
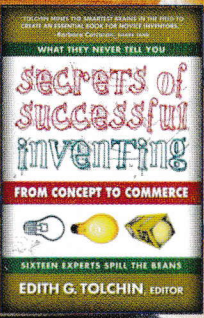
Things will cost more than you think. Plan ahead, and secure resources just in case a new opportunity requires some upfront costs, or a change causes a redo that requires financial backing.

Spammers guaranteeing you everything ("We'll sell out your product in 24 hours") will find you and haunt your inbox. Get recommendations from successful inventors. 📧

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Edith G Tolchin has written for *Inventors Digest* since 2000. She is an editor (opinionatededitor.com/testimonials), writer (edietolchin.com), and has specialized in China manufacturing since 1990 (egtglobaltrading.com).



The Opinionated Editor

Edith G. Tolchin

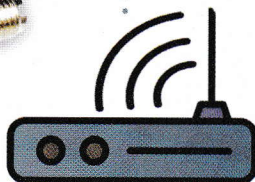
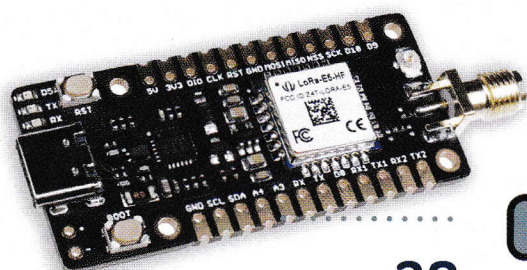
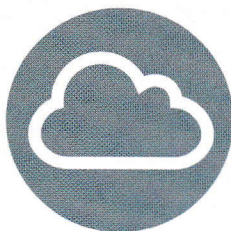
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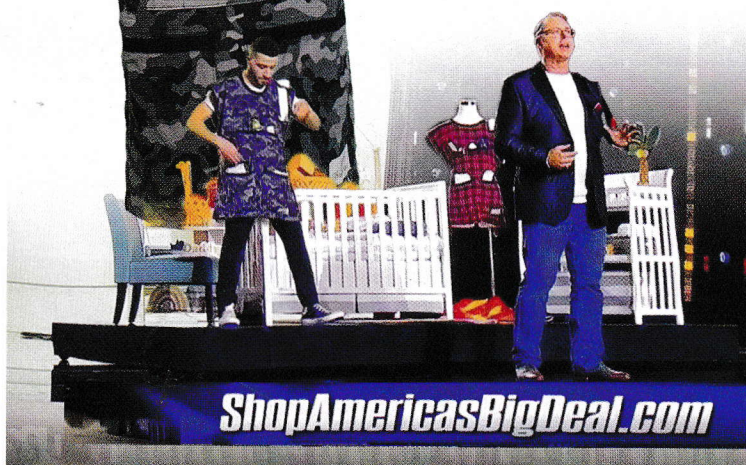
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