

How to parent effectively.

If you are to ask me this question, I honestly have to say that that manual has not been written yet. So, why then the question? Having been in education for the last 35 years and having the pleasure, privilege and experience of help raising two of my own children, does give me some insight into the intricacies of raising our teenagers.

Every family and the dynamics within these families are unique. Although there are so many "experts" around these days to prescribe to parents how to do things, it is still the responsibility of parents to "get their hands dirty". There is no substitute for the stability that a father and a mother bring in the family life. But, reality is that this family set-up does not always exist in today's modern home. The absence of one or sometimes both the parents, is evident.

There is no doubt that families provide the roots to stability and security. The genetically and environmental influences on the development of our children are extremely important. For this article I would like to concentrate on the factors that the environment, that you as parents create, have on your child.

The following tips are just that. I have found these points work for me in my relationships not only with my own children, but with my pupils as well:

- ❖ One of the greatest gifts a parent can give a child is a healthy self-esteem. Your tongue is the deadliest weapon. Be careful what and when you say things to your children. Be compassionate and praise accomplishments, doesn't matter how small.
- ❖ Try to find things to compliment your child on...focus on what they do right. Positive statements will encourage children to display good behaviour.
- ❖ Having said that; all of this must happen within clear boundaries. Discipline is an ingredient for a happy and successful family life. Jointly establishing house rules will clarify what is expected of them.
- ❖ In the current economic climate it is essential for both parents to earn a living. Time is of the essence; work/play/work/play.....WHAT ABOUT FAMILY TIME?????Do the little things with your child like having breakfast, watching a sport match ect. Not all the money that we earn ,can "buy back time lost with our children."Do not feel guilty because you have to work, feel guilty if you don't schedule time with your child.

- ❖ "DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO." How many parents are guilty of this? The example that we set will be mimicked by our children. Model the traits you want to cultivate in your kids.
- ❖ Society has lost the ability to communicate verbally with one another. Sending your child an e-mail if he/she lives under your own roof, is hardly a manner in which we should communicate with our children. Allow them to share their ideas and feelings, after all they are human beings although a bit smaller and not as mature.
- ❖ How many of us model our parenting style on the way "our parents used to do things." That style might not work anymore. Be prepared to change your style as your children get older. What works now will not work tomorrow.
- ❖ Always show your child that your love is unconditional. Do everything in a firm but loving and kind manner. Your child needs to know that your love is always there, NO MATTER WHAT!
- ❖ Remember, you are not perfect. Recognise your abilities and strengths and work on your weaknesses. Speak to other parents and form a relationship with your child's teacher/s. After all, they spend the large part of the day with them. A healthy and collaborative union is essential to ensure that your child gets the best possible nurturing and education.
- ❖ In my opinion, the most important ally that you have is God. Get on your knees and pray for your child!!(Effective Parenting)

God bless you all.

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