



The Champion

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SEVEN KEYS FOR RAISING EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY KIDS

Paula Whitaker, M.Ed., MA, P.C., LPCI
Administrative Director and Founder

- 1. CULTIVATE AN ENCOURAGING ENVIRONMENT.** An encouraging environment is one in which our kids know they are of value and worth to God and to us. It is one in which we spend more time building and encouraging them than we do scolding and correcting them. It is one in which we honor them by speaking respectfully to them. An encouraging environment is one where our emphasis is on catching them doing "good" rather than catching them doing "bad". We invest more energy in praising them for being responsible than in criticizing and castigating them for falling short of our expectations.
- 2. BE OPEN ABOUT YOUR OWN MISTAKES AND WEAKNESSES.** Our children need to learn that one of the best questions to ask after making a mistake is, "What can I learn from this?" One of the best ways to accomplish this is to model it. Forget the "we don't have any emotional problems in this family" rule. An example is depression. Talk about what happened to you, what depression is, what can cause it, what some of the symptoms are and how you are starting to not only work through it but also actually learn from it. **Read Romans 8:28.**
- 3. BE AVAILABLE.** Of all the seven it is clearly the most important and the simplest, but the most difficult. It is important because to a great degree the other six steps depend on this one. It is the most simple because it doesn't involve any reading or special training. There are two ways we can be available for our children. First, we can set aside special times for them. Second, we can learn how to "make" time when needed. **Read Luke 5:17-20.**
- 4. LOOK, LISTEN AND THEN TALK.** When most people think about communication, they tend to emphasize the verbal aspect. Many are surprised to learn that the actual words we use only account for 7 percent of a message. Tone of voice contributes 38 percent and other nonverbal factors account for at least 55 percent. Learn to read their nonverbal communication. Remember that they are reading yours!
- 5. WHEN YOU DO TALK, ASK QUESTIONS.** There are two kinds of questions: closed questions and open questions. A closed question is one that can be answered in one word such as, "Did you have a nice day today?" An open-ended question is one that requires more than a one-word response such as, "What was your favorite part of the day today?" It is usually better to ask several open-ended questions than several closed questions. When asking a question, be sure to give your child enough time to respond. If you ask a question and push for a response too quickly, it can put pressure on your child and send the wrong message.
- 6. GIVE CHILDREN PERMISSION TO EXPRESS THEIR EMOTIONS.** Through lack of education or through misinformation, many of us, have been educated not knowing when we are feeling something or what we are feeling. When we were depressed, we were told it was only discouragement. When we were sad, we were told to cheer up. When we were angry, we were told to keep our cool. When we felt pain, we

were told to be brave and smile. Children must not only be allowed, but also rather *enthusiastically encouraged* to experience happiness and sadness, hope and fear, joy and depression, jealousy and compassion. Encourage them to share whatever they are feeling, positive or negative, pleasant or painful. If it is hard for them to open up, you can "prime the pump" by sharing some of your own feelings.

- 7. UNDERSTAND THAT THE QUALITIES NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS AND THOSE FOR PARENTING ARE NOT THE SAME.** Some of the qualities needed to succeed in a chosen career such as a constant striving for perfection, mobility, a goal-oriented attitude toward the project at hand, efficiency, a belief that succeeding must always be the top priority, etc. will **not** make you a good parent. Instead, the qualities needed to meet the needs of a growing child are a tolerance for repeated errors, stability, an emphasis on process, surprises, and change as the child matures, a tolerance for chaos, and an understanding that failure promotes growth.

An absolutely essential ingredient for cultivating kids who love Jesus is choosing to become parents who make time to provide a climate in which Christ-like characteristics can grow.

Excerpted from *Raising Kids to Love Jesus* by H. Norman Wright and Gary J. Oliver

FREE WORKSHOP

PARENTING & DISCIPLINING

Thursday, November 13th

6 – 7 pm

Call 281-357-4111

A Report Card for Parents

1. Do I praise my child at least once a day?
2. Do I treat my child as a worthwhile member of our family?
3. Am I available when my child wishes to talk to me?
4. Do I include my child in family plans and decisions?
5. Do I treat my child the way I treat my friends?
6. Do I treat my child equally?
7. Do I set a good example for my child?
8. Do I take an interest in my child's education and attend PTA meetings?
9. Do I occasionally give my child a hug or friendly pat on the back?
10. Do I encourage attendance at weekly religious services?
11. Do I send my child off to school each day with kind words of encouragement?
12. Does my child see me pray?
13. Does my child hear me apologize when I am wrong?
14. Does my child see me reading the Bible?

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Verse of the Month

Tips for Raising Kids Today

By Lill Priest, MA, LPCI

Raising kids today seems to be a lot more complicated and dangerous than it was back in the fifties; in the days of Ricky Cunningham and Beaver Cleaver. Some basic guidelines for parents these days are essential to ease our minds. The basic foundation for parenting is to teach kids “right” from “wrong” in order to produce productive citizens. Always do this with lots of love – hugs and kisses – and remember with God in control, you can relax and have some fun along the way.

First of all, remember to use moderation in discipline. Being too strict and too permissive both have their own dangers. Too strict will not enable your child to think for himself or set his own standards. Too permissive will keep her self-centered and selfish.

Second, be empathetic. Try to enter your child’s world. Listen carefully and acknowledge his/her emotional state. Children learn early whether or not what they think and feel is important. Reflect back to the child the emotions you see displayed by saying, “you look sad (or whatever) today. Do you want to tell me about it?”

Thirdly, adjust to your child’s temperament. Proverbs tells us to raise up a child in the way he should go. This is a command to parents to take the time to understand their children-their wants, needs, talents, etc.-and not force them to fit into the parents’ mold or agenda.

Parents definitely face challenges raising kids these days. But, with lots of love and prayer we still have the hope for a bright future.

Letting Go of the Need to Control

Esther Bird MA, LPC, LMFT, LCDC

Letting go of the need to control people in relationships is a skill, and a key to happiness and freedom. Here are some choices you can make every day to improve the quality of your relationships with others and yourself.

- Choice 1: Accept people as they are. Let go of your need to fix them.
- Choice 2: Let go your “shoulds” for people and yourself.
- Choice 3: Let go the “victim” role you play in relationships.
- Choice 4: See other people as having wounds not faults.
- Choice 5: Realize that the only “failed relationship is one you didn’t learn from.
- Choice 6: Choose to see only the love, the light in people.
- One more hint: Try to see everyone you meet as a teacher who has been sent to give you just what you need to grow.