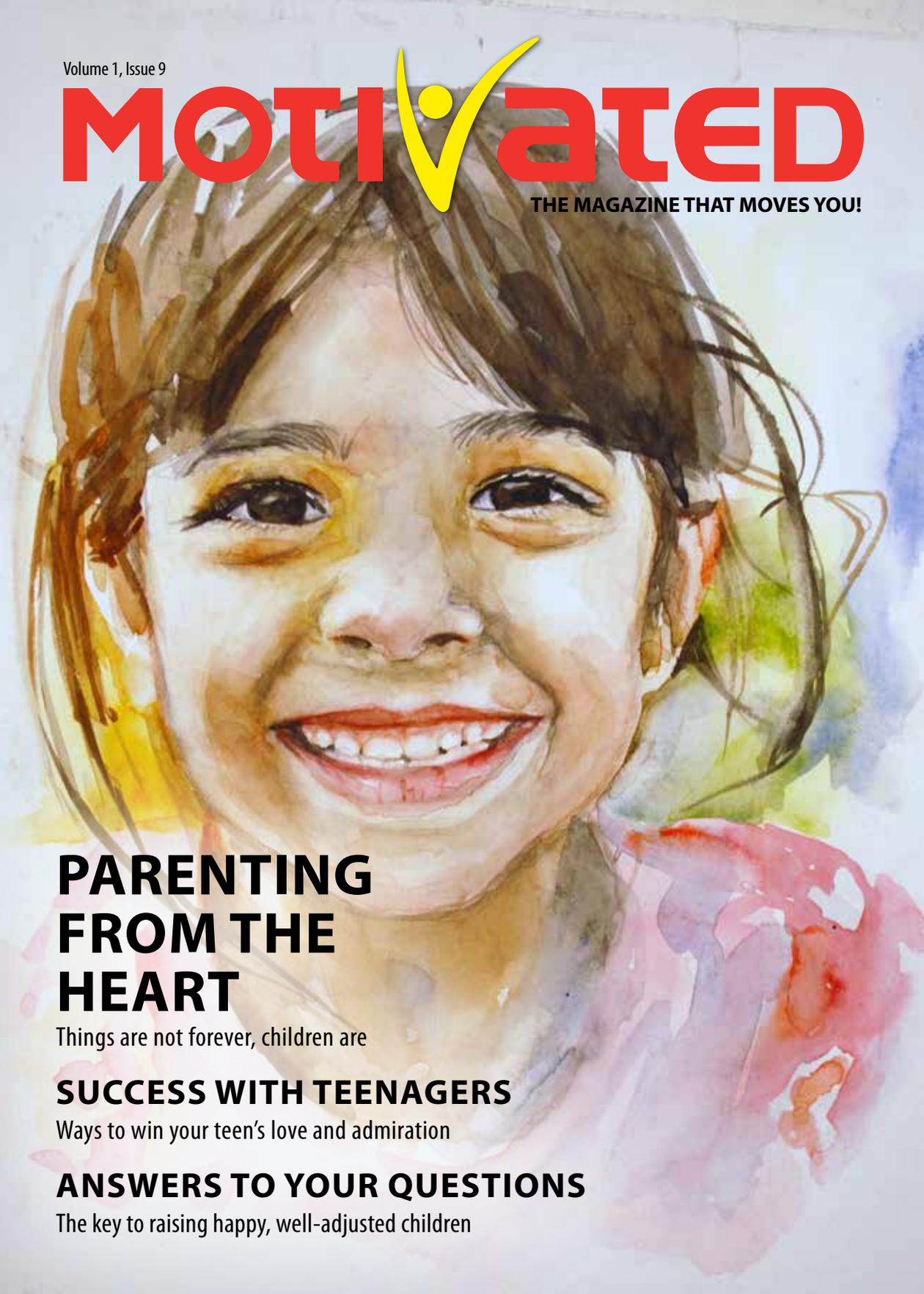


Volume 1, Issue 9

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

A watercolor-style portrait of a young girl with brown hair, smiling broadly. The background is a soft, abstract wash of colors including yellow, green, blue, and pink.

PARENTING FROM THE HEART

Things are not forever, children are

SUCCESS WITH TEENAGERS

Ways to win your teen's love and admiration

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

The key to raising happy, well-adjusted children

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FROM THE EDITOR

In today's world, parents face many complicated challenges when it comes to raising and training their children. In one way, this is nothing new. There have always been challenges and obstacles to overcome. But in other ways, our age can hardly be compared to former ones, because the 21st century has many challenges peculiar to itself.

Starting at a very young age our children are exposed to many influences that come at them from every direction. They are exposed to a world of knowledge through modern technology, some of which is good, and some of which does not meet the beliefs and ethics parents want to instill in their children. This makes it more important than ever that our children feel loved and secure in our care, that they are taught good, Godly values, and that they have a solid foundation to build their future on, regardless of how the world around them changes.

One way to achieve this is by establishing an open line of communication with our little ones at a very young age, and throughout their teen years. Answering their many questions, and filling their inquisitive minds with good, positive input, will prepare them for the future and help them make wise and educated choices as they grow older.

As the wise old proverb says, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

This issue of *Motivated* is dedicated to those who have one of the most important jobs in the world—raising and training children, our hope of the future.

We hope that you will find these true stories, tips, and articles informative, helpful, and inspiring.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

Parenting from the Heart

—by Ruth Cortijos



We parents want our children to be liked and get along well with other children. I certainly did when my first child, Dana, was beginning to play with other kids. I tried to teach her how to interact lovingly, and she did well in most aspects—making friends, not fighting, being considerate and helpful, and even letting me play with the other children. Teaching her to share her toys was the biggest challenge.

To give her more opportunities to learn this, we started inviting other children her age over to play. That small step was the key to helping Dana discover that it's fun to share with others—a lesson I needed to brush up on myself, as it turned out.

One evening Dana had invited a friend, Sarah, to play with her. Sarah was one of her more frequent playmates, and their favorite thing to play with was the brightly illustrated deck of cards from a children's card game. Although the girls were too young to follow all the rules and play the game as intended, they liked looking at the pictures and finding the ones that matched.

That evening, after Sarah left, Dana came to me and said, "Mommy, I'd like to give these to Sarah. They're her favorites." She held up three or four cards from the game.

I tried to explain that I didn't want her to give them away because then our set wouldn't be complete, but Dana persisted. "But I really want her to have them!"

Again I tried to explain. "Dana, these cards belong to our card game. If you give them to Sarah, we won't have them anymore and the set will be missing pieces."

"That's okay, Mommy, because I have the other cards."

I thought perhaps she didn't understand that when she gave something away, it was gone for good, so I tried again to dissuade her. "If you give those to Sarah, you can't go and ask for them back tomorrow. Once you give them to her, they'll be hers."

A look of concern came over Dana's face. For a moment I was happy that she seemed to understand. Then she smiled and said, "Well, that's okay, I want her to have them anyway."

What could I say to that? I sat quietly for a moment and thought. Then it came to me: I had been trying for so long to teach her to share, and now that she had learned that important lesson, I was trying to stop her. What was I doing? I was just about to make a very big mistake! What did it matter that our card game would be incomplete? It could be replaced, if need be. What mattered was that my daughter was learning the joy of giving, that she was thinking about others instead of herself, that she was trying to make her friend happy. Isn't that what life is all about?

My daughter taught me a lesson that day, and it's one that I still get tested on. I now have three children, and fairly often one of them will come to me with a toy or stuffed animal in their hands and say they want to give it to one of their friends. My first thought is often how I can talk them out of it, but when I stop to think about it, I always come to the same realization: Things are not forever, but children are!

The values I instill in my children today will be part of who they are tomorrow. ❤️



WHAT LOVE CAN DO!

A TRUE STORY

Excerpted and adapted from *How to Get Along With Almost Anyone*, by H. Norman Wright.

It's easy for us to love and get along with the attractive, intelligent, neat, and articulate people around us. But many of the people God calls us to love do not fit into those acceptable classifications. This story beautifully illustrates what can happen when we reach out to love the unlovely.

Tariq certainly qualified as one of the least attractive of all the children in the class. Disinterested in school; musty, wrinkled clothes; hair never combed. One of those kids in school with a deadpan face, expressionless—with a sort of glassy, unfocused stare. When Mrs. Farah spoke to Tariq he always answered in monosyllables. Unattractive, unmotivated, and distant, he was just plain hard to like. Even though his teacher said she loved all in her class the same, deep down inside she wasn't being completely truthful.

Whenever she marked Tariq's papers, she unfeelingly put the Xs next to the wrong answers and the Fs at the top of the papers. She should have known better; she had Tariq's records and she

knew more about him than she wanted to admit. The records read:

1st Grade: Tariq shows promise with his work and attitude, but poor home situation.

2nd Grade: Tariq could do better. Mother is seriously ill. He receives little help at home.

3rd Grade: Tariq is a good boy, but too serious. He is a slow learner. His mother died this year.

4th Grade: Tariq is very slow, but well-behaved. His father is too busy to show much interest.

The holidays came around and the boys and girls in Mrs. Farah's class brought her presents. They piled their gifts on her desk and crowded around to watch her open them. Among them was one from Tariq. She was surprised that he had brought her a gift, but he had. His was wrapped in brown paper and held together with Scotch tape. On the paper were written simple words, "For Mrs. Farah from Tariq." When she opened his present, out fell a gaudy rhinestone bracelet, with half the stones missing,

and a half-used bottle of inexpensive perfume.

The other boys and girls began to giggle and smirk over Tariq's gifts, but Mrs. Farah at least had enough sense to silence them by immediately putting on the bracelet and putting some of the perfume on her wrist. Holding her wrist up for the other children to smell, she said, "Doesn't it smell lovely?" And the children, taking their cue from the teacher, readily agreed.

At the end of the day, when school was over and the other children had left, Tariq lingered behind. He slowly came over to her desk and said softly, "Mrs. Farah ... Mrs. Farah, you smell just like my mother ... and her bracelet looks real pretty on you, too. I'm glad you liked my presents." When Tariq left, Mrs. Farah, with tears in her eyes, asked God to forgive her.

The next day when the children came to school, they were welcomed by a new teacher. Mrs. Farah had become a different person. She was now a person committed to loving her children and doing things for them that she hoped would live on after her. She helped all the children, but particularly the slow ones, and especially Tariq. By the end of the school year, Tariq showed dramatic improvement. He had caught up with most of the students and was even ahead of some.

She didn't hear from Tariq for a long time. Then one day, she received a note that read:

Dear Mrs. Farah:

I wanted you to be the first to know. I will be graduating second in my class.

Love, Tariq

Four years later, another note came:

Dear Mrs. Farah:

They just told me I will be graduating first in my class. I wanted you to be the first to know. The university has not been easy, but I liked it.

Love, Tariq

And four years later:

Dear Mrs. Farah:

As of today, I am Tariq Hani, MD. How about that? I wanted you to be the first to know. I am getting married next month, the 27th to be exact. I want you to come and sit where my mother would sit if she were alive. You are the only family I have now. Dad died last year.

Love, Tariq

Mrs. Farah went to that wedding and sat where Tariq's mother would have sat. She deserved to sit there; she had done something for Tariq that he could never forget.

The Tariqs in our life need love, too. They need to feel our support, acceptance, and caring. They need to feel special. Who knows what great things our love and care will release in their lives? ❤️



NO CRYING OVER SPILT MILK

—A wise mother's reaction

I recently read a story about a famous scientist who had made several very important medical discoveries. He was asked by a newspaper reporter why he thought he was so much more creative than the average person.

He responded that, in his opinion, it all came from an experience with his mother that occurred when he was about two years old. He had been trying to take a bottle of milk from the fridge when he lost his grip on the slippery bottle and it fell, spilling its contents all over the kitchen floor—an absolute sea of milk!

When his mother came into the kitchen, instead of scolding him, she said, “What a great and wonderful mess you have made! I have rarely seen such a huge puddle of milk. Well, since the damage has already been done, would you like to get down and play in the milk for a few minutes before we clean it up?”

Indeed, he did. After a few minutes, his mother said, “Whenever you make a mess like this, eventually you have to clean it

up. So, how would you like to do that? We could use a sponge, a towel, or a mop. Which do you prefer?” He chose the sponge and together they cleaned up the spilt milk.

His mother then said, “What we have here is a failed experiment in how to effectively carry a big bottle of milk with two tiny hands. Let’s go and fill a bottle with water and see if we can discover a way to carry it without dropping it.” The little boy learned that if he held the bottle at the top near the lip with both hands, he could carry it without dropping it. What a wonderful lesson!

He then remarked that it was at that moment that he knew he didn’t need to be afraid to make mistakes. He learned from his mother that mistakes were just opportunities for learning something new. Even if an experiment “doesn’t work,” we usually learn something valuable from it. Would that all of us parents reacted as wisely and kindly as this mother did. ❤️

HONESTY PAYS

—A father's lesson

A father once shared that he hadn’t realized how unfair he’d been with his son until he learned an important lesson.

His son received a very low grade in math. In spite of scolding and extra study, it seemed the boy simply could not bring up his grade. One day he said to his father, “I guess when you went to school you got all A’s in math.”

“What makes you say that?” the father asked.

“Well,” said the son, “I don’t mean to be disrespectful, but I assumed this because you always scold me when I don’t

do well.”

The father realized that the way he had corrected his son was a misrepresentation of the truth.

“No, the fact is that I had a really hard time with math,” the father replied. “Especially algebra.”

From that moment on the boy did better, freed from the impression that he was inferior, and a failure. Seeing that his dad had the same problem, but succeeded, gave him hope. ❤️

Answers to

Your Questions



Q:

I love my children and want to be a good parent, but I feel very incapable. Is there a secret to raising happy, well-adjusted children?

A: As parents, we certainly can relate to the feelings expressed in this question. Raising children is not an easy task. It takes a lot out of us to raise well-adjusted children. While there is no magic formula or “secret” to raising well-adjusted children, there is a key: love! It would be impossible to cover the topic of parental love thoroughly in this short column, but here is a brief list of some of the most important ways that parents can show their children love—and they’re all within easy reach.

- **Instill Godly values.** When children receive love, and learn to have faith and conviction, it will not only help them make it through childhood, but they will become happy, productive, confident adults with a clear sense of direction and purpose in life.
- **Give them training**—and a clear standard of right and wrong. Children are happiest and feel most secure and confident when they know what’s expected of them. We should set clear boundaries and guidelines as to what our children are allowed to do, and set reasonable consequences for crossing the bounds, or not following the guidelines.
- **Give them time.** As much as our children may need and appreciate the material things we provide, they’d rather have us.
- **Promote honest, open communication.** We should try to give our children our undivided attention when they’re trying to communicate, and try to be a good listener. We should show sincere interest in what they have to say and try to see things from their point of view.
- **Teach them by example.** We don’t have to be perfect, but we should try to be someone our children can look up to and trust. We should try to be what we want our children to be. The best guide is the one who shows the way!
- **Give praise and encouragement.** All children thrive on praise. It’s more important to praise children for good behavior than it is to scold them for bad behavior. Always try to accentuate the positive.
- **Have faith in them for what they can become.** We should see their potential and encourage them to live up to it.
- **Express love.** Children need reassurance. Let’s put our love into words and actions.” ❤️

SUCCESS WITH TEENAGERS

There's no question about it. Raising teenagers is one of life's special challenges. The teen years are difficult, and no matter what part of the world we live in or what cultural background we have, most teens will "share" those difficulties with those living around them.

Their sometimes crusty, disrespectful, or rebellious exteriors can be intimidating and may leave some parents wondering where they went wrong. This is when some parents, not knowing how to try to help their teens, are at a loss and end up not giving their teens what they need. There can be a genuine misconception or misreading of the young teen, because all the while, inside, he or she could very well be desperate for direction, encouragement, love, support, understanding, and guidance. Teens have an intense need to feel secure and loved unconditionally. They need to know someone notices their problems and is concerned enough to help them at any cost.

It's not an easy ride by any means, but whenever we aren't sure what to say or how to react when our teen is having a problem, we can send up a silent prayer for wisdom, asking God to give us understanding and the needed solutions.

The parents who hang on, who keep loving and reaching out to their teens, even when it's difficult, will most likely see them through to victory.

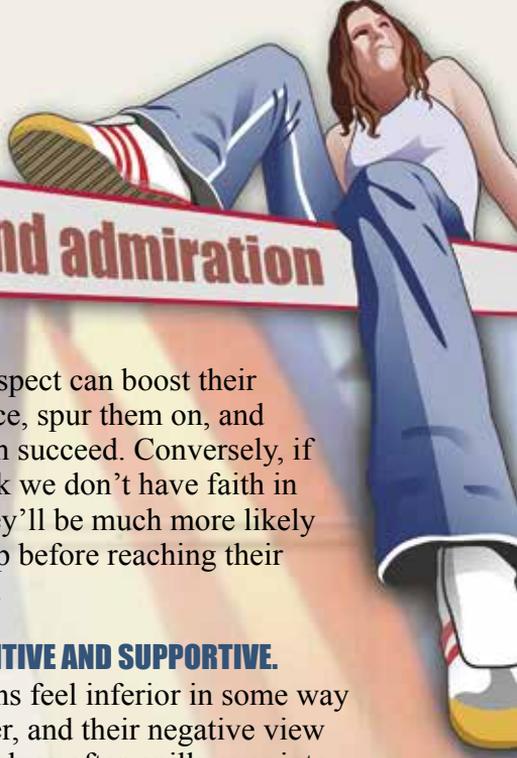
Here are some suggested ways to improve our relationship with our teens:

1. TEACH TEENS FAITH. The teen years are turbulent times. It's like being lost at sea in a small boat during a storm. Let's be a lighthouse, pointing our teens to faith in God. We can't be with them every second or rescue them from everything, but we can point them to the One who can and will always help and protect them.

2. HAVE CONVICTION. If we're not careful, parental, emotional attachments, and the instinctive desire to protect our child, can cause us to give in, go easy, pull back, or run to the rescue at the wrong time. We may even feel their anger, frustration, and rebellion as our own. That's when it's important to remember that our teen is learning to exercise good judgment, and that whether or not they act like it, they will take their cues from us. If we don't have the conviction to do what is right, despite some unpleasant consequences, chances are they won't either. Sometimes "tough love" is the best love. Teens are very idealistic and will respect us more when we stand up for our convictions, even when it's hard on them or they don't agree, than if we're too lenient.

3. ACCEPT YOUR CHANGING ROLE. The transition from childhood to young adulthood is so gradual that many parents don't see the need to stop treating their teens like children until it's long overdue. Teens are in the process of discovering their personalities, abilities, and goals, and becoming more self-sufficient is part of that process. Teens want to be treated as emerging adults and respected for the individuals that they are. In their quest for self-reliance, teens may conflict with their parents at certain times. If we can learn to treat our teens as friends when appropriate, they'll be much more open and honest about things that matter to them.

Ways to win your teen's love and admiration



4. PUT YOURSELF IN YOUR TEEN'S PLACE.

Feelings of insecurity are normal during the teen years. Teens are no longer children, but neither are they fully adults. Their bodies are going through huge changes, and their emotions are running wild. They are learning to handle more responsibilities and they face decisions and pressures they've never faced before. Remembering these things should help us to not take their emotional and verbal outbursts personally. If we sincerely try to empathize, we'll gain a better understanding of them and their problems, and they will feel they have a friend in us.

5. KEEP CALM. We should not allow ourselves to be offended by some of the unusual things they say or do. Sometimes teens say and do odd things just to see what kind of reaction they'll get. Sometimes they're trying to express what's going on inside, but don't know how or don't understand themselves. Other times they're simply being self-centered, as teens tend to be. Our getting upset will only make matters worse. If our teens know we won't overreact and will try to understand and sympathize when they vent themselves, they will feel more open around us.

6. RESPECT TEENS. Respect is a sign of faith. When teens are having a hard time having faith in themselves,

a little respect can boost their confidence, spur them on, and help them succeed. Conversely, if they think we don't have faith in them, they'll be much more likely to give up before reaching their potential.

7. BE POSITIVE AND SUPPORTIVE.

Most teens feel inferior in some way or another, and their negative view of themselves often spills over into their actions. We should try to remain consistently positive and supportive in our reactions. We can't gloss over serious problems or wrongdoing, of course, but we can put a positive spin on some situations by talking mostly in terms of solutions and the lessons behind them. Dwelling on the positive is a sign of unconditional love, which counteracts low self-esteem. We should praise our teens every chance we get.

8. GIVE TEENS RESPONSIBILITY.

Teens need guidelines, but they also want to feel trusted. When we trust our teen with adult responsibilities, he or she will try harder to act more maturely. A wise person once said, "Treat people as though they were what they ought to be, and you help them become what they are capable of being." Our teens will make mistakes, as everyone does, but when they see that doesn't diminish our love and faith in them, they will keep trying and eventually succeed.

9. EARN TEENS' CONFIDENCE BY BEING CONFIDENTIAL. Teenagers are sensitive about the things they are going through. No one likes to be the subject of gossip or careless conversation—especially teens. When teens confide in us, they like to know that what they say will be kept as confidential as possible. It may seem like a small matter to us, but it may be a very big matter to them.

10. LISTEN. Every teen needs a confidant—a true friend they know they can trust with their innermost secrets. Teens have so many things going on inside that it can be quite confusing, yet often they're afraid to talk about it for fear of being misunderstood, ridiculed, or considered naive. When a teen is feeling vulnerable—which is most of the time—he or she is likely to take things said in jest personally and consider it ridicule rather than innocent fun. We should take time to hear them out. They need to feel that someone understands. A common mistake parents make is not listening long enough and therefore jumping to the wrong conclusions. Rather than “showing them the light,” we should gently guide them to come to the right conclusions themselves as they articulate how they feel.

11. SPEND TIME TOGETHER. Many parents spend a lot less time with their teens than they did when their children were younger. That seems natural since teens need less supervision than children and

teens want to assert their independence, but it's often a mistake. Teens need lots of support, guidance, and fresh challenges. They need someone to coach, mentor, and teach them, and no one is in a better position to meet that need than their parents. No other investment will form stronger bonds between parent and teen or pay higher dividends.

12. HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR. There's a time to be serious and focus on long-term goals, but there's also a time to lighten up. Teens admire adults who know how to have fun and enjoy life. Of course, we need to make sure our humor is in good taste and not at someone else's expense, because teens emulate adults whom they admire.

13. EXPRESS LOVE. Teens may not like to be hugged and embraced the way they did when they were younger, but we never outgrow our need to feel loved. We should try not to let a day go by without us putting our love for our teen into words and backing up those words with actions.

14. FORGIVE AND FORGET. Our teens will make mistakes for which they will need to apologize and receive forgiveness. Like the rest of us, teens often feel they can't admit their mistakes or wrongdoing because they fear that they will be labeled by their mistakes. They need to be convinced of our love and readiness to forgive, forget, and start anew. ♥

**TEENS NEED DIRECTION, ENCOURAGEMENT, LOVE, SUPPORT,
UNDERSTANDING, AND GUIDANCE.**

ACHIEVERS

AP— If you want to raise smart, achieving, and well-rounded youngsters, relax! No need to enroll junior in a prestigious prep school at birth. High achievers can emerge from any family, anywhere. They come from supportive families, loving families, encouraging families, but not pushy families.

When a study was done of a group of high-achieving, straight-A type of students, it was noticed that they often came from the same sort of average background.

Most of these achievers, the study found, attended their neighborhood public schools. Their parents clearly loved learning themselves, and their homes were filled with books, often on loan from local libraries. The parents tried to treat all their children equally and provide them with the same opportunities.

They remember their parents fondly and say they weren't pressured to study. But training—not punishment—was deemed essential. And they say their parents didn't try to vicariously experience success or project their own ambitions through them.

The AHAs (academic high achievers) recalled that their families did things together, whether going for a walk, visiting relatives, or doing things in the house, the study says. They also repeatedly cited the importance of faith in their lives. They were socially active, not friendless, uninteresting bookworms. Their good grades relied less on high IQs than on consistent, disciplined work and study habits. They weren't over programmed with lessons, and their learning was

broadened by the traditions of their extended families.

Achievers seem to be happy and well adjusted, maintaining a nice balance in their intellectual, professional, social, and personal lives. When they entered the working world, they enjoyed what they were doing, but they weren't obsessed with success. They were not all that wealthy, the study concluded. Money is not the do-all and end-all of their lives.

Become involved in your children's schooling, this study suggests. Teachers are likely to welcome the interest. You are the first teacher. Know what your children are studying. Know what's going on in the classroom. Work with the teacher.

The study suggests that some parents over-program their children with outside lessons, activities, and pre-kindergarten classes, and that this just creates a pressurized, regimented existence for them. There's also often too much noise from television, stereos, and other gadgets. Make sure you have quiet, unstructured time at home, so learning and creativity can develop.

And with the right atmosphere at home, most kids can make it! ♥



Children

The Hope of the Future

Every child born into the world is an ever-fresh and radiant possibility.

The world looks to children for hope, joy, and happiness. They're like little messengers straight from heaven.

Children are today's investment and tomorrow's dividend.

Taking care of children is probably the most important job there is, molding their little lives and teaching them everyday.

Training a child is like painting a masterpiece.

Learning in childhood lasts as long as a carving in stone.

Childhood is like a mirror that reflects in later life the images presented to it.

What is learned in the cradle lasts to the tomb.

As the twig is bent, so the tree grows; the present is built on the foundations of the past.

The babies of yesterday are the children and stars of today.

Children need strength to lean on, a shoulder to cry on, and an example to learn from.

Raise your children for their time. They've been created for a different time than yours.

Capture the youth and you've conquered the future.

The world of tomorrow is what the parents of today make it.

