

Volume 2, Issue 12

# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

A young girl with her arms raised in a field of yellow flowers, wearing a light blue floral patterned shirt. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with many yellow flowers.

## A Parent's Best Investment

How to Have a Happier Home

Parenting from the Heart

Pancakes and pudding

3

## **Influence**

4

## **How to Have a Happier Home**

Mealtimes will never be the same

5

## **Start the Day off Right**

6

## **Parenting from the Heart**

Pancakes and pudding

7

## **Tips on Parenting**

8

## **A Parent's Best Investment**

Presents or presence?

9

## **Children Learn What They Live**

10

## **The Problem with Modern Entertainment**

What is molding our children's values?

11

## **Proactive Parenting**

How to get the most from TV

12

## **Notable Quotes**

There's nothing like family

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When my children had their first babies, it reconfirmed something I'd known for years: Parenthood brings out the best in people. New parents feel the impact immediately, both emotionally and physically—the love bond that happens at first sight and grows stronger by the day; and the interrupted sleep and other schedule and priority adjustments. But there are also subtler changes that others are usually the first to notice—that special glow reserved for new parents, and the maturity that comes from stretching and sacrificing to meet their baby's needs, for example.

There was a time when I was sure that bringing home a new baby would be my proudest moment, and it was each time. Now I would say that comes in a close second to becoming a grandparent, because each time that happens (I have ten grandchildren) I am doubly proud—proud of my new grandchild, and proud of their parents.

So now that you know I'm a grandmother, you may wonder what grandmotherly advice I might have for young parents. Well, besides the usual "big three"—love your children unconditionally, tell them often that you love them, and make quality time with them your top priority—I think one of the best things parents can do is to accept their children for who they are.

Most parents want the best for their children. Of course, it is good to try to help them reach their full potential, but there is often a fine line between that and expecting too much. Nobody is perfect, so we should learn to celebrate the successes and not worry about the rest. If we strive for love and trust rather than perfection, we will form lifelong bonds that will keep us together through anything.

Happy parenting!—And for those doubly blessed, happy grandparenting!

Christina Lane  
For *Motivated*

# *Influence* By A.A.

What many people fail to realize is that the world of tomorrow is what the adults of today make it, according to what they choose to give or not give the next generation. — David Fontaine

I was a scrawny, asthmatic eight-year-old living in Asia with my family in the early 1980s when an old family friend visited and informed me with a smile that she had taken care of me when I was a baby. I felt a special link with her. As she reminisced with my parents, I knelt behind her and silently braided her honey-colored hair. It was my first attempt at braiding, and it turned out quite loose and unsymmetrical. But when I finished and I asked her how she liked it, she felt the back of her head and said, “It’s lovely! And it’s much more comfortable in this heat. Thank you for doing that for me.”

An eight-year-old who thought she wasn’t very good at many things gained a sense of worth and learned the reward of helping others in little ways.

A year or two later, also in Asia, we went for an all-day outing up a local “mountain” with a thousand stone steps. My asthma forced me to rest often, but it was worth the effort. When we reached the top, we explored a fascinating old museum that had once been a magnificent palace and observed the lifestyle of bygone royalty in the carefully preserved, fully furnished rooms and

lush, immaculately kept gardens.

The next day our teacher asked us to write an essay about our excursion. I became completely absorbed in painstakingly documenting every event of the day—the hike up the mountain, the monkeys we met on the way and how they took peanuts from our hands and ate them, the massive statue of a fierce warrior at the entrance of the palace, and every detail of the palace itself.

I was pleased with my essay and so was my teacher, but she gently explained that it’s usually better not to begin every sentence with “then.” She suggested some alternatives, and I liked the way they sounded.

Such constructive criticism and collaboration were new concepts to me, but the encouragement and help I received that day steered me toward a fulfilling career in writing and editing.

Whether we are a parent, teacher, caregiver, or “bystander,” we should never underestimate the influence we have on the children who share our world. Sometimes all it takes is an approving smile or an encouraging word to change a young life, and the love we give will come back to us. ■

# How to Have a Happier Home



## Mealtimes will never be the same

By Virginia L. Marquis, adapted

What is the greatest weakness in most families? According to Dr. James H. Bossard, a former professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania who spent 40 years probing what he called “neglected areas of family life,” it is the way parents talk in front of their children.

After studying extensive recordings of table talk, he wrote, “I had no idea I would discover a real pattern in the [mealtime] conversation of families. I just wanted to learn what families talked about, but to my amazement, I have found that family after family had definite, consistent conversational habits, and that the critical pattern was the most prevalent.

“These families rarely had a good word to say about anyone. They

carped continuously about friends, relatives, neighbors—almost every aspect of their lives, from the lines of people in the supermarket to the stupidity of their bosses.

“This constant negative family atmosphere had a disastrous effect on the children, because a high percentage of these families’ children were antisocial and unpopular. Moreover, this pattern of hostility many times turned to quarreling amongst them. Without fail, their meals were a round of insults and bickering. The children absorbed that pattern, and it caused the children trouble.

“Long ago,” Dr. Bossard continued, “a great teacher pointed out that what comes out of the mouth is a great deal more important than that which goes into it.” He also said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”

If our innermost self is superficial,

egotistical, and mean, all those qualities are going to permeate our words as they flow from our lips. But words flowing from a heart filled with love will have a magnetic quality that will draw others to us. When the heart is filled with divine love, we don't need to try to put compassion or tenderness into our conversation. All our words will have a savor and a power that comes from an inner depth.

So the root of the problem isn't actually the tongue, but the heart. Words convey what's in the heart and our heart's character. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings

forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things."

There is no way under the sun to change the quality of our words except to change the spirit from which those words flow. There has to be a change of heart.

When we fill our hearts with goodness, kindness, and gentleness, we will soon find our words to be conductors of love and consideration rather than criticism, making us a greater influence for good in the lives of those nearest and dearest to us. ■

# Start the day off right



The surest way to help our loved ones get off to a great start each day is by starting the day with love. Easier said than done, we might say, when we're just waking up ourselves! But if we give it a try, we'll be pleasantly surprised. Here is how...

- Don't just eat breakfast together in silence, staring at a plate, the newspaper, or the back of the cereal box. Engage in positive conversation together. Be grateful for the wonderful things that are going to happen that day.
- Read and reflect on something positive, and you and your loved ones will be ready for any challenge the day may bring your way.
- Those few minutes together in the morning are also a great time to give encouragement. Tell her how nice she looks. Tell him you're sure he's going to do great in school. Give a parting hug that conveys, "I can't wait to be with you again!"

When we start the day with love, love will carry us through the day. ■



# Pancakes and pudding

By Misty Kay

**MY NINE- AND TEN-YEAR-OLDS** came whining to me again. “Mommy, Chalsey’s taking all the LEGO blocks!” “Davin always gets the best pieces!”

Kristy, my five-year-old was crying. “It’s not fair. I want to build an airplane, but they don’t want to.”

This had been going on all afternoon. It was one thing after another. No matter how many toys they had, they couldn’t have fun. Something was missing. I needed an illustration that would help us get a grip on the problem.

“Who likes plain, dry pancakes?” I asked. The kids froze and looked surprised at my sudden change of subject. “Who likes plain pancakes with nothing on them—just dry, get-stuck-in-your-throat pancakes?”

“Not me!” they all cried in unison.

“I see. So when you asked me to make pancakes yesterday, you didn’t want plain pancakes. You wanted pancakes and pudding.” It had been a special Father’s Day breakfast of hot pancakes, smothered in creamy white chocolate pudding. It was a melt-in-your-mouth treat.

“And when you say you want to play with toys, you don’t mean you want to play with plain toys, any more than you wanted plain pancakes. It was the pudding that made it special. Your friendship is like the pudding. Without the friendship, the game is no fun. Even if you got every LEGO piece you wanted, your playtime would still be dry.—No fun. What makes it special is when you all play the game together. That’s when you really have a good time. You need ‘pancakes and pudding.’”

The children understood the illustration perfectly and decided to play a game together. It worked like magic. We were stuck in the house for the next few days due to rainy weather, but no one seemed to mind. The children played with every game and toy in the house. Any time tempers flared, I’d tell the kids, “The pancakes need some more pudding.”

As I thought more about it later, I realized that lesson wasn’t only for my children. I sometimes work so hard to accomplish the goals I set for myself, and view everything else as a distraction.

“I need to do this! I have to get that done!” I want plain, uninterrupted work time, and then I wonder why my work feels so dry and un-enjoyable.

How often we all try to eat our pancakes dry. We put such an importance on things we need to do that we forget that pancakes aren’t

enjoyable without a topping. We can't let our work or play crowd out the friendships that make our lives complete.

So if we find that our day is crowded with worries, stress, and work upon work, if we feel we've lost that spark, if we're feeling a little dry, perhaps all we need is a heaping scoop of sweet, fresh "pudding" to make our day complete. ■

# TIPS ON PARENTING

By David Fontaine, adapted

## **YOUNG CHILDREN DON'T UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING**

that's going on, but they trust that we understand, that what we say goes, and what we say is true; they believe in us. That's why it's so important to handle their hearts with utmost care.

**WHEN YOUNG CHILDREN ARE IN A CONTRARY MOOD**, it is not the time to ask them anything. They'll say no to everything!

**RULES ARE NEEDED**, but we should not make more than we have to. The fewer fixed rules that merit a consequence, the better.

**EACH CHILD HAS A UNIQUE PERSONALITY** and we need to relate to each on his or her own maturity level and according to his or her individual characteristics and personality.

**WE HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT RULES MUST BE OBEYED** without fail, without exception, and what rules

can sometimes be relaxed. It takes wisdom to know the difference, so as much as possible we should make such decisions carefully, and not impulsively.

## **IT TAKES INSIGHT TO KNOW**

**WHEN** to try to persuade teenage children to do what we know from experience will turn out best, and when to agree to let them do things their way. Sometimes the encouragement they receive from being trusted with a decision, or seeing that we're willing to take their desires and opinions into consideration, will more than make up for what they might gain by doing it our way—and of course experience is sometimes the best teacher.

**IF WE ALLOW CHILDREN TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS**, when appropriate, when they are small, they will be in a better position to know how to make good choices when they get older and the stakes are higher. ■



# A Parent's Best Investment

## Presents or presence?

**Y**our children will never forget the special times they spend with you. Aren't those some of the memories you treasure most from your own childhood—when your parents showed their love in the form of time and attention?

Children thrive on personal attention, and if they don't get it, just like the rest of us, they feel bad, unimportant, or even rejected. We don't always have to spend a great deal of time with children to make them know we love and appreciate them, but we do have to spend some—and the quality of that time is just as important as the quantity.

Time spent with our children is not only the greatest gift we can give them, it's also the greatest investment we can make in them. Nothing else will make a more lasting difference in their lives. As someone once wisely said, "Your children need your presence more than your presents." We should play with our children, read with them, hold them, encourage them, and enjoy them. Go for walks or just sit around together and talk. Ask questions and listen to their answers—really listen.

If we're like most parents, we have more demands on our time than we can possibly meet, and time with our children gets crowded out when emergencies come up. We rationalize that there's always tomorrow for them, but our children need us today.

We should determine how much time we need to spend with each of our children each day or each week, and schedule it, and consider it a top priority, an appointment that must be kept. If a genuine emergency happens, we may need to reschedule our time with our children, but we should not cancel it. If we find that we frequently have to postpone our time with our children, we should take some time to rethink our priorities and plan, and come up with another plan that will work.

When older children are having problems, they need



even more of our time and we need to be even more attentive. We should not be too quick to offer solutions or advice, and try not to sermonize. We should hear them out completely before we say anything, and help them reach their own right conclusions, if possible.

Many parents of grown children will tell you that their greatest regret is that they didn't spend more time with their children when they were small. We'll

have to sacrifice other things to do it, and in the beginning we may feel it isn't the best use of our time, but as we keep it up we won't be sorry.

Being there for our children makes a great difference in their lives, even when we don't think we are doing a lot for them or accomplishing much.

Every minute we give our children is an investment in the future. The rewards will last for eternity. ■

## Children Learn What They Live

By Dorothy Law Nolte

If children live with criticism,  
They learn to condemn.  
If children live with hostility,  
They learn to fight.  
If children live with ridicule,  
They learn to be shy.  
If children live with shame,  
They learn to feel guilty.  
If children live with encouragement,  
They learn confidence.  
If children live with tolerance,  
They learn to be patient,  
If children live with praise,  
They learn to appreciate.  
If children live with acceptance,  
They learn to love.  
If children live with approval,  
They learn to like themselves.  
If children live with honesty,  
They learn truthfulness.  
If children live with security,  
They learn to have faith in themselves and others.  
If children live with friendliness,  
They learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

# The Problem with Modern Entertainment

What is molding our children's values?

By David Fontaine, adapted

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW AUDIENCES THESE DAYS LAUGH THE MOST when actors make cutting remarks and try to embarrass or hurt each other? That's supposed to be funny. Not too many years ago, audiences would be stunned and offended at that sort of thing. Now they just roar with laughter.

You can hardly find a movie or TV show about a family with children where the kids aren't fussing and fighting like mad. The parents do it too. Husbands and wives are constantly arguing and putting each other down in front of their children. Because this has become the norm among families in the media, the children watching naturally assume that it's normal and acceptable for their families to behave that way, too.

Children imitate what they see and hear, and they seem to have a tendency

to copy the negative. Young children, especially, can't always tell the difference between good or bad, and it's even harder when those guilty of some of the worst behavior are made to look so enviable, so "good" in other ways—good looking, affluent, popular, smarter than the adults, and free to do as they please.

Children are in the process of forming the values that they will carry with them through life, and it's our responsibility to guide that process. We might fail at that job if we let our children watch what they want without any parental guidance or explanation as to what is acceptable civil behavior and what isn't—and that also goes for shows that are supposedly geared to children, even the ones that are meant to be educational.

Just because a movie or TV show is rated for children doesn't necessarily mean that it's good for them. Parents should take personal responsibility for that decision. We have a responsibility to steer children away from the negative, by not exposing them to it in the first place, or if they do end up watching a program with negative content, by explaining why it's bad and not to be imitated.

Of course, not all media entertainment is bad, but as parents, we should take a long, hard look at what is out there and decide what we want our children to watch and listen to today, so what they mimic is what we would like them to be tomorrow. ■



# Proactive Parenting

## How to get the most from TV

- Monitor children's TV watching as much as possible.
- Preview or read reviews on a movie or TV show before showing it to children. Be selective.
- Strive to make watching TV shows, documentaries, or movies both fun and a learning experience by watching and discussing them together. It will help children develop the right perspectives.
- Talk with children about what they do with their friends for entertainment, not in a way that suggests they're not trusted, but to help them build and be true to their values.
- Balance TV with fun activities other than TV viewing, such as playing games together, outdoor play and sports, outings, etc.

## Let Me Be a Child

Let me know when I make you proud. And help me to have pride in my own accomplishments. Let me earn your trust. Then trust me. I won't let you down.

Let me try my wings. If I fail, let me know it's okay, and encourage me to try again.

Let me know you love me—with a hug, or a pat on the back. Or, when I need it, with a firm but gentle “no.”

Let me be. Let me change. Let me grow. Let me tell you when I'm feeling bad... or angry... even at you. Let me know that even on my worst days, you still like me.

Let me dream. Share my joy when my dreams come true. Share my tears when they don't.

Let me feel secure in my home. Help me realize that love is always there ... that I can depend on you no matter what. Let me run ... let me laugh ... let me play.

And most of all, let me be a child! —Anonymous ■





# There's nothing like family

Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.

—Jane Howard

Family life is a bit like a runny peach pie— not perfect but who's complaining?

—Robert Brault

In time of test, family is best. —Burmese Proverb

The only rock I know that stays steady, the only institution I know that works is the family. —Less Lacocca

The family is one of nature's masterpieces. —George Santayana

We cannot destroy kindred (family): our chains stretch a little sometimes, but they never break. —Marquise de Sévigné

Other things may change us, but we start and end with the family.

—Anthony Brandt

I don't care how poor a man is; if he has family, he's rich.

—Dan Wilcox and Thad Mumford

The family is a haven in a heartless world.

—Attributed to Christopher Lasch

When you look at your life, the greatest happinesses are family happinesses.

—Joyce Brothers

In family life, love is the oil that eases friction, the cement that binds closer together, and the music that brings harmony. —Eva Burrows

The love of a family is life's greatest blessing. —Author Unknown

