

THE ART OF PARENTING TEENS... AND OTHER MIRACLES

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What I want to introduce here is a discussion about *The Art of Parenting Teens* and with a little bit of tongue in cheek you notice that it says *And Other Miracles*, because you either married your biggest test in your life or you gave birth to it! This lady over here goes, "I've got them both!" Well, that's as true as it can be. I think if you were to say what is your greatest challenge? What is your greatest sorrow? You'd say it's my children. What is your greatest happiness? It's my children. You see they can be the source of great joy for us and the source of great sorrow at the same time.

Now we're going to be talking about a philosophy that I would like to share with you that I believe is successful; that helps us as parents not become manipulated by our teens nor do we need to become enablers of them, helping them to become their worst selves; on the other hand we really do want to be in a position where we want to love them and encourage them to be their best selves.

What that means is basically this: **I'm going to help you as a teenager, I'm going to love you independent of everything that you do; I'm still going to love you. But I'm not going to enable you to become your worst self. I'm going to love you to your highest and best self. I will not help you one inch to hell – not one inch. If you go there you're going on a solo journey, but it doesn't mean that I'm not going to love you.**

Let me tell you a true story. I talked to this mother and father; they were just fit to be tied. They had a young person who had been for six semesters enrolled at the University of Utah and hadn't attended one class; just partied the entire six semesters! I mean sleep in in the morning and just get up and go and do different things – snowboarding and drinking and wild life, whatever – and managed to dodge the bullet for six semesters. And the father said, "Well, how are you doing in your grades and how about your major?" And pretty soon the net got tighter and tighter and she couldn't escape. Eventually, he made some phone calls and found out that she hadn't attended one class! He was just furious about this and what he said to me was: "I'm so frustrated: I just want to strangle her!" And I said: "I can understand that, because you feel cheated, you feel betrayed, there's no credibility here." I said: "Now you want to love her to highest and best self." And he said: "No, I don't want to love her at all!" I said: "I know you feel that way, but that's just not the reality." Anyway, when I got to talk to this young lady she said: "Well, I'm sorry. Okay, now I want to go to school." And I said: "Well, you know, you've got a little problem here and it's called CREDIBILITY. Nobody's going to believe you."

See credibility's about you are where you say you're going to be, doing what you say you're going to be doing. We're going to be talking about the difference between having an "I love you program" and an "I trust you program". Isn't possible to have teenagers and be able to say I love you, but I don't trust you. My son who got three speeding tickets in one month, said to me: "Dad, can I borrow your car?" And of course I said: "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, aah... No!" "Well Dad, don't you love me?"

“Yeah, yeah, but I don’t trust you!” “Well, I thought that goes together, see if you love me, you just give me all this freedom.”

This is Bonnie... Have we ever been unhappy with each other, have we ever had challenges? We’ve had eight children. Does that tell you anything right there? If you have eight children you’d better have eight parenting plans because one size does not fit all! And know there are challenges, but I just appreciate the fact that through all of that it’s good if you can have someone who can help you. And you know what, some of us don’t have that kind of help; some of us have to do this alone and that makes it especially hard. I’m just grateful that I’ve had the privilege of being with her for about 40 years, so that’s really great.

Let’s take a look at this whole art of parenting for a moment and I’d like you to think of it as a set of skills. And if said to you to that after this meeting today we’re all going to go bowling. Well, some of you would get up there and look great, but the rest of us would be throwing lots of gutter balls. And especially the men would say, we’re going to substitute finesse with power. We don’t care if it destroys four or five other alleys, just more power. A 5 pound hammer won’t do; a 20 pound will, that’ll do it.

The art of parenting is the art of letting go, not the art of hanging on. Some people think that parenting is a skill about controlling your children. You’ve got to hover around them; you’ve got to control them! “Now where are you going; how long are you going to be; when are you going to do that?” Now I believe we need to know; we want to encourage, but there’s a fundamental philosophy here that is essential to take a look at as a parent. You are a guardian. There’s going to come a time when you’re obviously going to be transferring that responsibility to their shoulders; and you want to do that. It’s not a matter of containing them until they’re 18, 19 or 20 and then... letting them go. **The art of parenting is the art or skill to gradually transfer responsibility as they demonstrate responsibility**, which is an oxymoron anyway, but the idea is that we’re going to transfer responsibility to them as they demonstrate responsible behaviour.

It begins by even saying something as simple as this: “I need to learn to trust you. That means you’re going to be where you say you’re going to be, doing what you say you’re going to be doing, and if your plans change and I know they will because all of our plans change a little bit, I need you to communicate to me that those plans have changed and let’s talk about it. Now if you’ll do that you’re going to have what I call credibility. I’m going to be able to believe you.” And you can start that with children who are four, five and six years of age and you can have those kinds of conversations and then when they are in the teenage years...But you can even start cold turkey with a teenager and say something like this: “This is a test tonight. It’s a test of whether or not I can trust you – that you’re going to be where you say you’re going to be doing what you say you’re going to be doing. And you want my trust. You see trust isn’t a function of what I do. It’s a function of what you do. I can love you. that’s a function of what I can do. I can treat you with respect. I can forgive you when you make mistakes. But trust is not something I can gift to you. Trust is something you’re going to have to earn as a result of your responsible behaviour and then you have credibility. Now you can live the life where you dance one way in front of me and then behind my back you try to get away with everything you want to get away with and that that’s going to be your life. Well, obviously we’re going to have trouble whenever then you get caught. Do we have to have that kind of relationship?”

So the art of parenting is the willingness to model or to be an example of the values, that you hold near and dear. You’re going to see that there are certain limitations that we have. One of the great lessons in life is to learn what those limitations are and

then learn to love others who have those same limitations. You will, whether you want to or not, model values. My point is, if family prayer were an important value for you; if having one night a week set aside to do family things was an important value...

In fact, I want to share a very personal story with you and have you live with me through this just for a moment. I felt one time a tremendous responsibility to be a good example. I was in the position being the head of a congregation and I felt like I needed to be perfect in every way, since I was the head of this congregation! But I remember thinking, "Well now, that means my family has to look good." And therefore I went wrong, because you see when you get more concerned about looking good than being good, you're off base. And **sometimes**, if you'll pardon the expression, **we'll try to carry out the Lord's plan in the devil's way. We try to carry out a loving plan in an unhealthy way.** So I share this very personal story. I felt it was important as a value to have family prayer. And so I remember encouraging the family to get there and when you have eight children and you're trying to bring them all there, sometimes the spirit we would have in our home was worse when we'd have family prayer than when we'd missed it! Because by the time we got everybody there, everybody's upset and frustrated and angry. And there's always three or four hold-outs and you're waiting then for 10 to 15 minutes to get everybody there. "Would you please come in now?" You know, and the others are saying "Come on, come on." I think it was little David. He was about 5 years old. I was teaching at the University of Idaho at the time. It was cold; it was one February. And finally, he's down in the hallway. He wasn't coming. And the family screamed out: "David! David Eric! Come for family prayer." So finally out of frustration, I just remember marching down the hallway, picking him up, walking to the front door and saying: "Go find a family that wants you because we don't want you anymore if you're not going to come to family prayer!" I turned around to look at Bonnie's tender eyes and also those of the other seven children going... And outside there were cries of "Oh Dad, Dad." I said: "Well, I hope you've learned a lesson! We'll now have family prayer." He's about 33 years old now. He survived and so did we. But the thing that was interesting about that is I probably apologised 100,000 times to that kid. You know: "I'm so sorry son... Really, I was just so frustrated." He said: "Dad, stop. I forgive you. Stop." But isn't it true that sometimes we take all the responsibility for our children – all of it. And even if we can forgive them, we often can't forgive ourselves. And we need to do that. I think that's an emotionally healthy thing.

The ability to forgive yourself and others is the sign of an emotionally healthy person. Also an emotionally healthy person is able to make a plan to go from where they are to a better place. What can we do with the past? You can't change it. But here's what you can do with it. You can learn from it and you can forgive. Now anything else you want to do with the past other than to learn from it and forgive will take you to a familiar place called depression. And it will take you there every time. It will be a highway and a freeway that has no exits. Welcome to Depression City. Because we can't change it. But that opportunity exists for us to be able to learn from it, forgive ourselves and others and be able to move ahead and let's make a plan to go from where we are to a better place. We can't change our past, but you can model the things that are important to you now. You could begin today to make some changes. I talk to a lot of mothers and fathers who have said to me: "I don't know what to do with this." I've said: "Here's what you do. Are you really that concerned? You go to that child and you say: "You know what? I've made some mistakes with you and I'm sorry. Will you forgive me for the mistakes that I've made with you?" And you transfer that responsibility to their shoulders. Now, there may be some kids who'll go: "No, I'm never going to forgive you, not now and not ever because I want you to feel guilty because I want to manipulate you with your guilt." Those we're going to

say, that becomes their responsibility – it may have worked before, it's not going to work any more. But I tell you that most of them like my son would say "Dad, I forgive you. I forgive you." Can I tell you my great fear? My great fear is someday showing up; there's Saint Peter at the gate. I'm going to show up and he's going to go: "It's you! Go find a family that wants you! We don't want you up here!" Anybody have that type of concerns. I mean, am I the only parent who feels that way? I think you can relate to that.

I thought it was so amazing. Our first three children did everything we asked them to do. "Oh, this parenting's easy. I don't know why those other people have problems. All you've got to do is X, Y and Z and they'll all just..." Then number 4, 5 and 6 came - boy was that a revelation! They're not doing what we asked them to do and they're in your face. Holy cow! Of course, I parented the first three, Bonnie the second three... just kidding – it's a long trip home! No, just kidding! You can have a child that is oppositionally defiant to parent values. You can have children who are wonderfully compliant. Those are so great! Give me a compliant child. Isn't that great? A compliant child to parent values. Our teens fall somewhere on this continuum. Now it's not the ones that are wonderfully compliant that give us grey hair. How do we deal with the child who may be oppositionally defiant without letting them make us people we don't like to be – turning us into monsters? So we become people that we don't like and maybe we see traits in ourselves that we saw in our parents, that we said you know, "I'll never do this" and here we are following in those kinds of patterns. So we don't want to give them that kind of power and that's why I appreciate the expression that there's only two choices we can make and that's how to act and how to react. My observation is it's much easier to act like a Christian or a good Jew or a good atheist; it's easier to act that way than it is to react. Because I can take a casserole to somebody and that's an action. But a reaction kind of is that I'm the victim of the choice that they make and now I have to choose how I'm going to respond. And that's why I appreciate the idea that we can take time-outs and we can become pro-active and put a period of time between our choice and our reaction. And most of our behaviours are indeed learned behaviours. And these are things that we kind of picked up in our families that we were growing up in and we tend to perpetuate that kind of behaviours. But every person is capable of change.

If you have eight children, you'll need eight parenting plans. I can't think of anything more valid than to say that. I remember talking to one child thinking that I was bringing him the same way, thinking "Why doesn't this child respond like that one did?" And the answer's because they're unique; they're different. **Like fingerprints and snowflakes, every child is different.** So we can have principles that will govern us, but I think we need to be very, very flexible and if you're very rigid, you're going to lose an opportunity to teach and to train and to take a child from where they are to a better place. So we want to be able to have that kind of flexibility. One size does not fit all.

I probably see at least three or four troubled teens every week and I have for the past 36 years (as well as a lot of marriages that are in conflict, in stress and trouble). And **I have yet to find a teenager who lacked knowledge of parent values.** I say, "Tell me what it is your parents expect of you." They can rattle it right off. They don't lack knowledge. But you know what we do, a big mistake that we make as parents. We want to give them knowledge. We're going to henpeck them to death and give them more knowledge. "Come here; open up that mouth! Take a little more knowledge in here. Chew that up! What you need is more knowledge." They don't need more knowledge. Knowledge is not what they lack. What is it they lack? What they lack is commitment to parent values. Now, are ready for a revelation? How you teach commitment to values is different than how you teach knowledge.

Why in the world would you take something that doesn't work and just increase? For example, if your child doesn't speak French will whispering to them make any difference than yelling at them? Maybe if I just increase my volume. Or maybe if I yell and scream at them in Spanish they will understand it. The answer is, no they won't. If what they lack is knowledge, then let's give them knowledge. But my experience tells me **they don't lack knowledge of your values, they lack commitment to your values.**

Now that means that we are going to have to find a way to motivate them that keeps us in a healthy mode. And that is the danger, that we can become so frustrated that we can be moved upon by that frustration to such an extent that we become these terrible people again that we don't want to become. What are we going to do about that? Well, again, **you cannot carry out a healthy parenting plan in an unhealthy way.** "How many times do I have to tell you, you nuthead, you nuthead, what is wrong with you?" And then you say: "But I want you to know that I really do love you." What is wrong with that message?. What I am saying and how I am acting are so divergent, that it is going to create some confusion. Now does that mean I can't be human, that I can't have those times when I make some mistakes? Those should be rare and there should be few and far between and they ought to be those things that we are man enough and woman enough to come back to our children and say I was wrong in how I dealt with you. "That was a mistake and I am sorry, would you forgive me for it." How about that? "Oh no, no whatever I do is right. I will never apologise." See, you are modelling very poor values if you attain or believe that you have to attain that status of "I never make a mistake." I think it is far better to admit those mistakes. Although I don't think you have to go into detail into your own past life and those mistakes that you have made. I am saying more about in our present circumstance when we have a poor interaction and as a result of that interaction, when we are wrong that we own rather than never owning that.

So we are not going to carry out a healthy parenting plan in an unhealthy way. And right along with that comes this thought: We have to learn to separate our love from our trust. We have to have two separate plans. An "I love you" plan and "I trust you" plan. I think we ought to talk to our children about it. Say: "You know what, I have two plans. One of them is an 'I love you' plan. That is about what I am going to do because I am a good person. And then there is an 'I trust you' plan and that is something that you and I are going to have to work out. And that is going to be about your responsible behaviour and maybe my responsible behaviour." So trust is going to a function both ways. See, how about the parent who promises that if they did X, Y and Z that they would be able to go to the prom. Finally the night of the prom came and one of the assignments of this young woman was to clean up the dog excrement that was there and the dog came in five minutes before the father came home and excreted there and the father came in found that and said: "You haven't done your job, you're not going to the prom." He has no credibility with her and let me tell you something this is a great mistake we make with teens. We need to have credibility – that we mean what we say and we say what we mean. If I give everything and it is not enough, why should I give anything? Why should I give anything because it is still not going to be enough. I need to talk to for just a minute about motivation because that is the real issue here. We want to motivate, but we have got to motivate within the bounds that we have here.

So I have put these down as the five healthy limitations and opportunities for working with teens.

You can love your teen. And that goes with having an “I love you” program. You can do that. That is a healthy thing, to love your teen.

I love watching rugby or football. I probably watched an hour-and-a-half of that, just last night. I love rugby. I am an old American style football player. I was actually an All-American at one time, if you can believe that. Do you want to know how long ago that was? For those who can appreciate it, it was before LaVelle Edwards. He just retired by the way after 29 years of being a coach. That is long ago since I played football. But I loved watching that. I love the competition, I love those men. They are all bruised. There is not one that doesn't have scars all over them. Now, there is a man! But you know what, when I went away to school, my dad was very formal and here is what he said: “Have a good time at school, son!” That was it. You know what I wanted to do? I wanted to hug my dad and wanted him to hug me back. But I couldn't because I knew that he would turn purple and red and green and all the colours of the rainbow and just couldn't do it. When I was 17 I came in the back door of the kitchen and dad was kissing mom and I had never seen them kiss before, never. I had never in any way, place, shape or form. And he chased me out of that house yelling, “What are doing eavesdropping there, are some kind of pervert?” I was dumbfounded! He was yelling: “What is wrong with you?” and chased me out the back. So you've got to appreciate: “Have a good time, son.” Now I knew when I got back after that school year that my dad would say: “Welcome home, son.”

Well I was a little older and I had played some ball and I thought to myself: “You know what, I don't care. I am going to give my dad a hug.” So he goes “Welcome” and I walk right by his hand and put my arm around him and gave him a big hug. “I love you, Dad. I missed you.” And he turned purple, and red and green and all the colours of the rainbow and was embarrassed and couldn't say a thing. Later, my father was killed in a traffic accident. My mother was talking to me after his death and she said: “You know what your dad admired about you most.” I said: “I haven't got a clue, mom. I haven't got a clue.” And I thought maybe it was that I was an All-American football player. Maybe that was it. I said “Was it the football thing, mom?” and she said: “No, it wasn't that.” “I have two bachelors, two masters and a doctorate. Was it that mom?” “No.” “Well I haven't got a clue, Mom.” “It was when you put your arms around him, gave him a hug and told him you loved him. He told me that he wanted to do that, but he just couldn't.”

I hope we won't let that be the barrier between ourselves and our teenagers. As frustrating as they are to us, **it is impossible to communicate an “I love you” message if we do not say it or touch them** or in some way show them beyond the assumption that I'm protecting and providing and working hard so you can have a roof over your head.

We need to be willing to cross that barrier of communicating love and be able to do it. So yes, we can love our teens; we need to tell them that. **We can set an example of values. We can pray for the adolescent.** And I happen to be a person who really believes in prayer and I can tell you. I deal with lots of communities and lots of different groups, religious groups of all different faiths and denominations.

I remember when I was brought into this Buddhist group, it was really interesting because I didn't have the same frame of reference that they had and yet I could respect the commitments that they had and they were asking me about that and I said: “Well, what would you do with a rebellious youth?” which was a question that they asked and I said: “Do you believe in prayer?” and it was kind of yes and I said “Do you believe in chanting?” “Oh yes, oh yes.” “Then chant for your teenagers. If that's what you believe in, then you chant for them.”

We can pray. **And we can set boundaries.** How about this? Is this a boundary? “You may not leave the room. I forbid you from leaving the house.” And of course what happens – we’re eating crow! Because we can’t set a boundary on what they’re going to do, we have set boundaries on what we’re going to do.

Now I admit we can set some pretty serious boundaries. “Son, I don’t want you to leave. I don’t want you to leave so strongly that if you do choose to leave I’m going to cancel your insurance on your car. Now that’s a boundary I’m going to set on what I’m going to do. So before you decide to go marching off which you have every opportunity to do know that that’s a boundary.” Now that’s pretty severe as an example. But I want to illustrate that we don’t set boundaries on other people, we set boundaries on ourselves of what we’re going to do. Now we can try to encourage boundaries for them and standards and values and we can again set examples for them, but I’m suggesting that when it comes to setting boundaries you are ultimately setting boundaries on what you are going to do, not necessarily on what they are going to do.

And notice that these first four all depend upon me, they don’t depend upon the teenager at all. You see, these first four I have 100% control over, but this last one is **we can share or teach or preach to the level of their willingness to learn.** And if they are not willing, then we are done. So the fifth one involves a kind of willingness, but maybe the onus rests upon us to try to be creative and figure out ingenious ways in which to inspire. Let me share a little something of this example on children coming to family prayer. I said: “I am not going to force anyone to come to family prayer.” It just seemed counter-productive. Forcing them there to prayer. “You are going to pray and you are going to like it.” Which tends to instill rebellion. So I thought it was better to four or five of us there with a good attitude, than to have all of us there and with a bad attitude. So we are going to invite, we’re going to entice, we’re going to encourage. So here is what we did. I would say: “We are going to have family prayer in about 5 minutes.”

And I tried to be wise, and Bonnie could help me with this because my sense of timing was not anywhere near what her sense of timing was with kids at different places. I just think that women are tuned in to all 11 rooms of the house. Did you know that studies of left and right brain indicate that woman are better at multi-tasking, they learn foreign languages at a younger age, that they have greater communication skills. I am not making this up. This is the latest research on left and right brain. And men can focus too. The actual left and right sides of brain are different in terms of the actual size - men being a little more imbalanced. You ladies can appreciate that, but in terms of little neural connectors, connecting the left and right side of the brain. Evidence is that women have a gazillion of them, a gazillion. Men have a couple. This serves women well and of course, this gender difference is not very popular. It is not politically correct to talk those absolute differences, so there are those who want to quell this information. It makes for a wonderful nurturer to be tuned in and to have those skills. As for the husband, she gets kind of irritated with him because how many times have you women been talking to a husband who wasn’t listening? Whose neural connectors weren’t and he would just focus on wherever he was.

You know my grandfather is a Swedish Lutheran, and he is a wonderful man. When he would pray at grace was like: “God is great, God is good. God we thank thee for this food.” Does that rhyme? Does anyone think that rhymes? It didn’t rhyme, except when my grandpa prayed. Okay, here is this wonderful Scandanvian and when he prayed it sounded like this: “God is great God is good. God we thank thee

for this food.” Now that rhymes. That is the way the prayer should be said. The reason I tell you that is that here is the focus. My wife, when sometimes she is talking to me it sounds like my grandfather. And I hear these syllables but they don’t really connect anything. And she will come up and say “Honey, have you been listening?” “Well, yeah,..ah, maybe you should just paraphrase it though. It just kind of caught me up there a little. I get the big picture from up here, but...” Guys, am I the only one? Is anyone willing to confess that? This is male, this is universal male. By the way, ladies, before you get mad at us, let me just tell you, if I am your protector, provider and I am out there sword fighting and defending you, where do you want my mind to be? “I wonder if I left the iron on?” You want me focused. So don’t get mad at me when I am home and I don’t know what’s happening. A man’s idea of baby tending is well, the kids are still alive when the mother gets home. The house is a disaster, but the kids are alive. “I’ve succeeded.” Am I the only one that baby tends that way? But how do you let them just run wild? “No, honey, they’re alive, all of them. Count them, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10. Hey where did the other two come from? You mean I’ve taken care of two neighbour kids and I didn’t even know it.” Which of course does happen, right?

This last one depends on our willingness to share. This is the “I love you” program I was telling you about. My youngest is now about 22 years of age. If you were to say to me: “Dr Lund, **what is the most important thing that you did as a father?**” **Can I tell you what it was? I had a weekly sharing time, every week, during the life of all of my children. One on one, one on one, each child, every week.** And it wasn’t long, 15 or 20 minutes, but you take eight children and that’s quite a commitment. And how important was that? It was so important that no matter what would happen, the phone would ring or anything else, I would not interrupt that time with that child. And it was a sharing time. I played so many games and not only just played games with them, but talked to them. Now we have a couple of children that are called ADD children – Attention Deficit Disorder. Now it’s genetic and they didn’t get it from Bonnie.

Well, my one son, I remember he’s 12 years old and I like old classic cars. I mean I had a 1977 Mercedes that we still have. It’s got over 300,000 miles on it. So I love these old cars and my current car I really love is an 1989 classic Jaguar and it has less than 50,000 miles on it. I just drive it to work and back. Here’s my 12-year-old son and I’m going to have a positive sharing time with my ADD son. It about killed me. His name’s Joseph. I said: “Joseph, let’s go to the store. We’ll go for a treat as a part of our sharing time.” “Okay, Dad.” He gets in and the first thing he does is he puts his feet up on the dashboard. I’m thinking: “This is a positive ‘I love you’ experience?” I want to kill him! “Joseph, would you mind putting your feet down, son?” “Oh, yeah, okay, Dad.” Then he starts on the electric windows, up and down. And I’ve got a few papers on the back seat, blowing around. “Son, would you not play with..?” I got home after 20 minutes with him and I was just a wreck. Bonnie said: “How was it?” And I said: “I think he survived.”

That was a tough thing to do, but if you were to ask me in retrospect of my life that’s the most important thing I did as a father, was spend one on one time with each child every week. I don’t care how old they are, if you start with them now and I realise that that involves a commitment on your part, but I’ve got to promise you something. If you do that your children will come to you for counsel even in times of crisis in their life. Do you believe that? I remember my oldest son; he’s a wonderful young man. This is the one of the ones that’s a compliant – just does what you want. It’s kind of threatening in the world today, but he’s a Lieutenant commander in the US Navy aboard a nuclear submarine. That’s the kind of man you want to have there – somebody you can trust.

Anyway, he came to me his senior year in high school; he's an All State football player. I'd been transferred to the University of Idaho. I said: "Son, I want you to come with us." And he said: "Dad, I'm an All State football player; my team's counting on me! You know how important that is. The coach says I can live with him. And he'll put me in bed every night at 7 o'clock." But I honestly needed his influence with his younger brothers and sisters. You know what I mean? I needed him! I said to him: "Son, I know this is tough. I know this is your senior year. But I just want to ask you... I'm not going to put you on a guilt trip; that's not where I'm coming from. But I really feel like I need your strength in our family, so would you come?" Tears in this young man's eyes. He came up and he looked at me and he said: "Dad, for everything that you've done for me, there isn't anything I wouldn't do for you. Yeah, I'll go with you." That year he went up and played football for a high school in Idaho with about 2000 students. They had a pretty good football team. Several of those boys went on to play professional football. And I said to him: "Son, I just can't help but believe this. Because of your willingness to honour me as your father, I do not believe that you will be denied any opportunity that you would have otherwise received." And that year he was an All State football player, out of Idaho!

I'm not bragging about that. I am humbly grateful because of it. Bonnie one time said: "I'm going to take one child every day and try to do just one little special thing with that child to let them know that I love them." Having an 'I love you' program is absolutely essential. The 'I love you' program is not earned. It's based on you being a good person and the 'I trust you' program is a function of their responsible behaviour.

This is a revelation to most people. **Do you know that teen values are different from parent values?** Teens - here's what they want and look at the contrast. **Teens want Freedom, they want Friends, they want Fun, they want Privacy; they want Privacy really bad and they want to live in the Present. Now look at how these contrast with parent values - Responsibility, Family, Safety and Security, Open Communication and the Future.** I mean this is their value system. And they want you to be their sponsors. They're like medieval artists, they can't afford to paint unless they have someone sponsor them. We would not have some of the great artworks that we have from De Vinci or Michelangelo if it were not for the fact that the Catholic Church sponsored those great artists and maybe someday we'll be grateful for the fact that the LDS Church and other groups sponsored activities like this.

Teenagers want to be sponsored, and they want you to get out of their face, get away, don't ask anything of them whatsoever and just give them freedom. Now why don't you get it? Is that not the teenage attitude? Well, that's especially true as you move towards oppositionally defiant children. You've got compliant ones. You know, some of you were compliant. How many of you were compliant children? Come on, 'fess up. Yeah! God dealt a number on you didn't he? He gave you one that wasn't like you. "This isn't fair. I was a compliant child. And now I've got one that isn't." Yeah, right, well, hang on for Mr Toad's wild ride!

Freedom, Friends and Fun. Now typically we as parents, when we go to punish... And I want to share a thought with you about punishment. Punishment should be sufficient to send a message, but not so great that it denies hope. If I give everything and it's not enough, why should I give anything, it's still not going to be enough. So we can send a message with a consequence. But if you say to a six-year old, alright you're not riding your bike for 6 months. That's it. We've found it one too many times in the driveway. I've told you a dozen times so you're restricted now from riding your bike for six months. To a six year old or a seven-year old, that's an

eternity. It's very important to make age-appropriate decisions. When we talk about teenagers, we want to reward them in our system. 'You know what son, you've been handling those 20 acres really well, so I've decided to give you another 20.' That's your reward. If their value system is freedom, why not reward them with more freedom? If their value system is friends, even if you don't always trust their friends maybe you can invite their friends to come over where you can kind of keep an eye on them a little bit.

If fun is their value system...If privacy... maybe we talk about them earning certain privileges that would allow them to have a little more privacy - have their own phone line or something. And also, the fact that they live in the present. There's a book called *The When Script* by Eric Burt and what he says is that most adolescents do not believe that life has begun for them and it won't begin until when they graduate from school, when they get married, when they get a job and so they don't feel the responsibility for their life. You have responsibility for their life, it's not their responsibility. It's yours. Now they resent the fact that you're trying to control them, but they feel the sense of immortality and they take incredible chances with their life because they really don't feel that life has begun yet. It's going to begin - when? The art of parenting is going to be transforming when to now - letting them get a little more sense of that. But not so overwhelmingly but as I look at this I say a mistake that I may make as a parent is to try to reward my teenager in my value system and not in their value system. So if I want to motivate - see now I talk to parents who've said things like "You know there's nothing I do that can motivate my son. I've grounded him from everything and nothing seems to motivate him." Hello. Anyone home? What is there to motivate him? "Well, I've taken away all these things." These are the very things you ought to be using to motivate with in a more positive way. If we can't get a whole loaf, maybe we ought to go to a half a loaf. **Maybe we have to learn to entice, invite, inspire, encourage and reward and I have no problem with rewarding children. Zippo. Oh, that's a bribe! No, it isn't. A bribe is illegal or immoral by definition. A reward is not a bribe.**

I remember now our ADD son Joseph said: "Dad, it's not cool, I don't want to get my Eagle Scout. I know I've got all the merit badges. I know I've done the projects. I know all I have to do now is turn in the paperwork. But I'm going to be 18 here in a couple of months and you know it was cool when I was 14 or 15 but I don't want to do it anymore." So I say: "Well son, you know it's important to finish things in life. I want you to finish school and now finishing this Eagle Scout is all a part of finishing." "Thank you father for that new insight and I'll be happy to do whatever it is that you've asked me to do." No, no he wasn't like the first son - different parenting plan. Eight kids, eight parenting plans. "Joseph, there's got to be something that's important to you. What's important to you?"

"Well, a new snowboard would be important to me, Dad." How much can a bent stick cost? Well, I could probably go out into the garage and whip one of those suckers right up myself. A bent stick. Six hundred US dollars you can pay for a bent stick! I said: "You know what son, your Eagle Scout award just didn't become as important to me anymore. But I tell you what..." and I went and got two \$100 bills. He had his Eagle Scout award that week. What's the moral to the story? People are motivated by their values, not by our values. They may understand and comprehend our values, but they're not always going to be motivated and there is nothing wrong with rewarding children. Now this is my experience as a therapist. Oppositionally defiant children will not respond to punishment. You can beat them to the ground with a club (not that I am advocating that) and they will say: "I won because I never gave in." You see what I'm saying

It simply doesn't work. **The only thing I've found with oppositionally defiant children that does work is motivation, involving reward that is in their system not ours.** Let me what I also had to do with Joseph to get him through some other thingslike high school. Are you ready? "Son, we've dropped you out for a year-and-a-half. You've been home schooled now for a year-and-a-half. I want you to go back for the last semester and see if you can't graduate with your class." "Oh, Dad." I say: "Well, let's talk about it. What's really important to you?" A mountain bike. So I brought a mountain bike and took it apart in pieces. And as he completed class I gave him a wheel. I gave him the frame, I gave him the handle bars and he graduated.

Accept as your basic philosophy of parenting that you will do everything in your power to assist them to become their highest and best selves, but you will do nothing to enable them to become their worst selves. I tell my children that. "I love you. I will always love you. But I am not going to enable you. So if you try to mix up my 'I trust you' program with my 'I love you' program, it's not going to work. Nice try good guilt trip, but it doesn't work." Thank you all very much.