

GROWING UP: Words: Tanya Curtis

CHANGING PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS



Children tend to grow quickly from their cute toddler stage into young children, teens and beyond. As they develop, our way of being with them requires constant evaluating and modifying as we adapt to their altering requirements.

First and foremost, it is important from the earliest days to set a foundation in the relationship between parent and child that is based on love, truth and connecting to the whole person while meeting everyone as an absolute equal human being at all times. This foundation is paramount as it allows your child to develop a way of being with you that is not just based on rules, guidelines, expectations and 'talkings to'. These rules are certainly needed but will constitute an unstable foundation when the other essential components as mentioned above are absent.

Treating all family members as equals includes providing the same opportunity for all family members to openly discuss their own pictures and expectations about how they foresee future situations. It is important that we as parents learn

to adapt to our children's developing pictures while remembering our role is not to control them by dictating what they can and cannot do – rather, to support them to develop a level of responsibility and discernment that allows them to know that they are responsible for all their own choices and all their own outcomes.

But why? Why can't parents keep controlling their kids so their children remain the picture the parents would like them to be forever? The fact is, our children were never ours to control – no matter how short or tall they may be!

Simply put, our role as parents is to support our short people to become the most independent, responsible, connected tall people that they are capable of becoming. This means supporting our children to become teenagers and adults who feel equipped to respond to all parts of life as it is presented to them. In claiming this role, the real title of parents could be 'life teacher'. As a life teacher a parent would constantly be offering their child the next lesson in life that will support them to develop their next step of independence when they choose to.

PARENTING TIPS

1. The skill of discernment is VERY important. Teaching a child, teen and adult to discern what and who feels harmless vs. harming; safe vs. unsafe; supportive vs. unsupportive etcetera for their future is one of the most beneficial skills you can teach any person. This discernment need not be based on fear, rather teaching each person to trust their own feeling and themselves all the time.
2. When we parent through teaching natural consequences for our own choices then people will develop the skills of responsibility. When we parent based on 'because I said so' there will be minimal respect or self-responsibility learnt.
3. Parents' expectations and boundaries are best not to be based on age, gender or previous experience of another ... rather, based on what will support this individual to meet their potential?

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