

## Successful Parenting

I have read a few books to help me prepare this talk. However, though all very good in their own way, none except for Preparing for Adolescence, by James Stenson, helped adequately to provide the specific material I was looking for. So I am going to bank of my experience with many good couples that I have been fortunate to meet regularly for the last twenty years, with whose kids my kids have grown up, to give this talk.

A time will come when you have to let the kids make their own way in life, having impressed on them something which is not just words but a way of life, responsibility.

**Hopefully they will take up a path that God has marked out for them from eternity".** (Jesus Urtega, God and Children).

There are five essential elements which form the platform on which greater things are achieved:

They are

1. Faith
2. Morals
3. Character
4. Values and
5. Men and Women for others

Successful parents according to James Stenson

1. Maintain a clear ideal, a well-focused concept, of what they want their children to become. They think of their children's future character.

At the family Club we echo Stenson's punch line "What do you want your children to be when they are twenty seven. He humorously tells us that we have no idea what we want our son to be when he is twenty seven, but we have a great idea of what we want our son in law to be when he is twenty seven.

2. With this vision before them, they maintain a steady and consistent teaching of **responsibility** all the way from infancy to adolescence. Their discipline through the high school years is a continuation and refined development of everything they taught before. They shift gears, but they remain essentially on track.

**Some of our responsibilities:**

- a. To follow the rules at home, at school and in the community - after all they are there for our safety and to protect our rights and the rights of others
- b. To stand up for our rights and the rights of others as much as we can
- c. To be the best person that we can be
- d. To take care of our own bodies as best we can
- e. To respect the rights of others
- f. To look after our own belongings and respect the belongings of others
- g. To learn as well as we can
- h. To care about others who are not as strong in some ways as we are.

3. They are people who have clear moral convictions and they live by them. When they want to lecture children, they are simply verbalizing what the children can see for themselves in the way the parents live. Stenson says that kids have eyes like hawks, they notice more than we can imagine. **Never ask of your children what you do not heroically practice in your life. In fact, make a resolution to ask only ten percent from them of what you practice yourself.**
4. They are aware of the moral dangers to their children's welfare – they are not overly protective of their children and at the same time are not hostile to society. A dad told me that raising kids was like driving in a Formula1 race, you not only have to understand your car and drive it to its maximum potential, you also have to keep an eye out for the opposition. They want their children to be strong, not protected. A stormy sea makes a good captain. A mother once said that the challenging society is the opportunity where children can grow up stronger. **Long range they want their children to form their culture not be deformed by the pressure to conform.**
5. In guiding their children's life they do not permit what they disapprove of. They stand together in unity to withstand their children's emotional resistance and clash of wills. **They sense that their children must have practice in denial if they are to develop a power of self-denial.**
6. They maintain constant **communication** with their children as they have always done since their kids were toddlers.
7. These successful people have several **close friends** who support and encouragement in their parenting. Consequently, they do not feel isolated.

We have two sets of friends, one group whom I have mentioned above and the second who have brought up their children almost individually. The second group's children are so vastly different, not because they have not had a good family but because they **lacked the docility** to receive correction, and once the outside influence began to influence them, children did not have the **character to resist** it, and the **support mechanism to help**.

Today we have these families who have been "successful parents", and are available for consultation.

In the eighteenth century in America, when groups wanted to migrate, the bigger the group they got together the better chance they had of survival if they were ambushed. If they had the misfortune of being ambushed the men in particular would fight to death not only to protect their families but the whole group. Today things have changed a bit, it is more the women who put in more of an effort to save the kids. We need to do the same in today's world. A friend used to tell us to adopt each other's children, and we did just that. I have a list of about one hundred children of friends that I pray for by name weekly. **Moreover, we created a relatively safe village for the children to grow up in.**

In short, parents:

1. Have a clear vision of their children's future
2. Determine to make this ideal become a reality
3. A commitment to their children's happiness
4. A reliance on God's help in living up to this commitment's implicit responsibilities

A time will come when we walk our kids down the aisle. How good it will be if we look back in the young beaming bride or bridegroom and say "*we could not have done any more*". And it will be still greater if there are many of the parents friends looking on with pride, because they have played a huge part in that families life in helping them to bring up young, responsible and happy children.

In our twilight years, we may look back at our many achievements and take pride in it, but the one which will give us the greatest satisfaction is to see our children "*make it*" in life.

#### **Questions for discussion:**

1. What are some of the ideals and concepts we will like to see in our children when they are twenty-seven?  
What strategies would you put into place (for example, consistency, parents making decisions together) to achieve this goal.
2. Which statement is more successful?
  - a. Do as I say or
  - b. Do as I do
  - c. And why? give examples
3. What are the moral dangers do we need to be aware of in today's society?  
Have they changed since we were young?  
Give examples.
4. How can we teach our children self-denial?  
Give examples.
5. What are some of the successful strategies you have used to promote open communication?
6. How can we build and enhance this current network of friendship and support?

Reference book: Preparing for Adolescence: A Planning Guide for Parents by James B. Stenson