



The Family Friend

A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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Like Father, Like Son

By Steve Higginbotham
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While at the office this afternoon, I received a telephone call from my 10 year old son. He said in a very quiet, solemn voice, "Daddy, I was going to mow the yard and I accidentally poured the gasoline where the oil is supposed to go and now the mower won't start."

Well, my first thought was money. That mower was nearly \$200.00. So I made sure he understood just how expensive a mistake he had made and I lectured him about being so careless, then I hung up.

After hanging up the phone, I sat at my desk and rehearsed my words in my mind. They were a little harsh and weren't very understanding. Then my mind went back to my own childhood. I recalled an occasion when I poured the wrong type of gasoline in my dad's new **Lawnboy** lawnmower, ruining it. How could I be so hard on

my son when I had done the same thing?

So I left work and drove home to talk to my son. He was sitting in the chair with a sullen look, not wanting to make eye-contact. I said, "Matthew, do you want to know what happened to me when I was about your age?" He looked up at me and said, "What?" I said, "I was going to mow the lawn for grandma and granddad and I poured the wrong type of gasoline in granddad's lawnmower and ruined it." Immediately, a smile broke out across his face. Nothing more needed to be said, but I added one more comment. I said, "You know Matthew, you're a lot like your dad."

Parenting is not an easy proposition, and neither is being a child for that matter. So maybe if we're patient with each other, we'll both learn from our mistakes and grow.

P.S. - Anyone wanting to get rid of a used lawnmower?

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The Best Gift for Your Children

To begin with, let me say that even though I am a Marriage and Family Therapist, even though we have two teens and one pre-teen, even though I have helped parents struggling with their kids for almost 20 years, even though my wife is an excellent mother . . . we do not have all the answers when it comes to raising kids. We thought we did, then our kids turned into teenagers! We struggle just like all parents with kids. We pray for daily wisdom from God. We tell our kids, "Look, we are new at this parenting thing, too! We have never raised kids before. We are learning just like you are. Let's be patient with each other." My wife and I often pray, "God, please don't let us brain-damage our kids!"

Of all the advice that we have given to parents about building a healthy family, I think the best advice is when we tell parents: "*The most vital thing you can do for your kids is not: giving great advice, disciplining perfectly, being consistent one hundred percent of the time. The best thing you can do, is give your kids the consistent, solid assurance that you love*

their mom, their dad, beyond a shadow of a doubt! You should consistently send the message that 'neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present or the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us...' from one another."

Kids today live in an ever changing and insecure world. They are constantly exposed to change. They are constantly hearing that their friends' parents are splitting up. They wonder if their parents are next. They need to know that you love each other. And that means you are going to stick it out no matter what! They need your to explain that love is more than feelings. Even if you don't feel great about their mother or dad, love means "I'm gonna stick it out till I do."

As a therapist, I grow weary hearing couples say, "I just don't love my spouse anymore. I just am not happy." My professional response: "So what!" (Pardon the direct response." You probably don't feel like you're in love anymore because you are not behaving like you are in love anymore! We make friends by behaving friendly. You feel close to a friend because you both act like friends. Your friendship grows because of this behavior and because of your commitment to the friendship. The same is true in marriage. If you don't feel in love anymore, you are probably not acting like it! Behave like you are in love and

the feelings will come. Behavior does affect feelings. Thinking does affect feelings. If you are not thinking the right things (attitude, perception, patience, etc.), you will not feel the right things. Change your thinking and behavior, and you will change how you feel. Right thinking + right behavior = the right feelings.

We do not always feel good about our kids. In fact, we do not always like our kids! But, we love our kids with all our hearts and are committed to them for all eternity. Why do couples fall in love? They are exhibiting the right thinking and the right behavior (i.e., expressing love constantly, focusing on the good in each other, putting the other first, overlooking mistakes, saying "I'm sorry" even when it is not your fault, etc.) Marriages deteriorate when we forget to act and think the way we did when we were dating.

God hasn't called us to comfort and happiness; He has called us to holiness. Part of being holy is honoring our spouses and our commitment to each other for life, "for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and health, till death do us part."

Do yourself, your kids, your God, and your country a favor ...don't give up on your marriage! Think about the effects on your kids of not having both parents together. They never get over it. Neither do you. Do whatever it takes: swallowing pride, going to counseling, giving up a hobby, throwing the TV in the dumpster, whatever! Give your

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kids the best gift you can give them: the security that comes from knowing that Mom and Dad are going to be together no matter what. That is what God wants; that is what they want. Most of all pray with and for your kids everyday. God can build Christ-like character in spite of our worst mistakes!

—Mitchell Temple, M.S.,
M.S., LMFT, via ***Our Families Magazine***, Spring/Summer,
2007

TV Stats

- ◆ The average U.S. household has 2.24 TV's.
- ◆ TV is on, in an average U.S. home, 6 hrs. 47 mins. a day.
- ◆ 66% of Americans regularly watch TV while eating dinner.
- ◆ 6 million videos are rented daily in the U.S.
- ◆ 70% of daycare centers use TV during a typical day.
- ◆ The average American youth spends 900 hours in school per year and watches 1500 hours of TV per year.
- ◆ Parents spend (an average of) 3.5 minutes per week in meaningful conversation with their children.

—from <http://www.csun.edu/science/health/docs/tv&health.html> —via ***In-Depth***