

PARENTING TIPS

Developing Closeness

Parents must maintain a balance as they work with their kids. Firmness, confrontation, and correction in a child's life are tools that God uses to address heart issues. You won't get very far, however, by simply telling your children the right thing to do. Remember that a child can only take as much pressure as the relationship can withstand.

Those who apply force without relationship end up with angry and rebellious kids. Jesus was a great example of leaving behind the agenda to care for people and connect with their hearts. He rebuked Martha for her busyness and affirmed Mary for just sitting with him (Luke 10:38-42).

Many a tired parent asks, "Why do I want closeness with my child anyway?" Distance from children can even seem welcome sometimes. Some parents are frustrated with their role and eager for relief. One mom even believed distance was healthy and said, "Aren't teens suppose to hate their parents to prepare them for the upcoming separation and independence they need?"

This kind of attitude hinders a parent's effectiveness. Teenagers may reject closeness with parents sometimes, but adolescence is when they need the relationship the most. New values, decisions, and difficult choices require wisdom that the teen doesn't have yet. Young people need insight and guidance that parents can give them.

Emotionally connecting with your children isn't just so you can all feel good. Connecting with your son or daughter emotionally softens hearts and prepares the way for much of the hard work of parenting, making it more effective and even enjoyable.



This parenting tip is from the book, *Parenting is Heart Work* by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN,
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