

Wommack's
The Art of Parenting

Lessons from the Parents and Mentors
of Extraordinary Americans

Volume I: Eleven Americans

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- 5—Eat dinner together and discuss important world news events and ideas.
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Parenting Techniques

- 1—Teach genuine interest in other people.
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Parenting Techniques

- 1—Build your ideals and values into your children.
- 2—Build empathy with ordinary people.
- 3—Firmly reject racial bigotry.
- 4—Insist that your teenage children work each summer—even if they or you don’t need the money.
- 5—Teach your children about risk—how to assess and take risks intelligently.
- 6—Find ways for your children to act and speak—excellent talents for any profession.

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YVONNE THORNTON

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Parenting Techniques

- 1—Show your children how to overcome discrimination.
- 2—Set a culture of thriftiness-by-example.
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- 6—Supervise their study time closely.
- 7—Show them what will happen in life if they slacken and get lazy.
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- 9—Create a harsh scenario if girls get pregnant.
- 10—Ask them to exceed their previous best.
- 11—Repeatedly explain the consequences of wrong actions.
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Parenting Techniques

- 1—Let your child participate in a quality extracurricular organization.
- 2—Don't allow your child to remain in dangerous environments.
- 3—Let them earn their own spending money.
- 4—Encourage them to read and debate quality magazines and newspapers.

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Dedication

To Virginia—my lovely wife, inspiration, and partner in many adventures. She lights up my life.

To my wonderful parents—my father, Kenneth Lamar Wommack, and late mother, Mary Jean Hopper Wommack—who nurtured me and my siblings: Paul, Jane and Dick, from day one. Both were kind, yet strict when appropriate. Both worked hard to instill the concepts of right and wrong, of God and religion. And we benefited greatly from our parents' calm encouragement to better ourselves through education and hard work, to broaden our horizons, and to show compassion toward others.

To the inspiration for this book—Dr. Yvonne Thornton, whose book *The Ditchdigger's Daughters* should be considered a classic of great parenting. With her generosity I have quoted from her two books, the other being *Something to Prove: A Daughter's Journey to Fulfill a Father's Legacy*. However, to all readers who find this book useful, I would highly recommend reading her books.

Introduction

An easier childhood?

There is a deep-seated river that contrarily runs through most American parenting. The belief that “my children” should have it easier than we, as parents, had it—when we were growing up.

That is the worst mantra of parents! Spoiling your kids is *the worst curse* you can bestow upon your kids *and* yourself. It will come back to haunt you. Over and over and over. And then it will be too late. “Spare the rod, spoil the child.” An old adage. Well, maybe we’ve grown up a little and are now more accomplished at avoiding corporeal punishment, except in the most egregious situations. But we continue to spoil them in other ways. Excess money. Excess toys. Excess time on their hands with nothing constructive to do. Excess trivia in their lives.

Until we grasp the need to *not* coddle our children, instead to treat them “above their grade level,” we are almost certain to fail in our primary task: *Educating them and preparing them for the future.*

First of all, few parents today *really* had a very, very rough time of it growing up. You survived. Your children can too.

Second, laxity in parenting is supremely reflected in laxity in kids. The mirror reflects the parents’ example. Want flabby kids? Flabby in body and mind? Just allow them to eat Twinkies 24x7, be couch potatoes, avoid doing any homework, and curse their teachers. It will happen AUTOMATICALLY. Fat, flabby kids. Poorly educated. Graduating (maybe) with no decent job prospects. Never leaving the nest—or fleeing back to it repeatedly. IT WILL HAPPEN.

Parenting has changed?

From 19th Century midwifery and nannies, to the 21st Century “How To” books, the landscape of parenting has changed dramatically over the ages. It hasn’t been made easier. Just more complicated. We’re bombarded with suggestions. Those suggestions in part reflect today’s life-speed and communication capabilities. Which are often embraced more by our children and teenagers. But wait. Multi-tasking at the speed of light just speeds up *bad* parenting. New technology distracts parents from impressing solid education precepts. After all, parents and mentors *are* teachers. Teachers *need* to teach. Teachers *must* teach. Children, left to their own, will learn either *what they want to learn* or *what someone other than you teaches them.*

Of course, not every minute of the day is a teaching moment. Careful selection by you as parents of expanded teaching moments—and really concentrating on driving home those moments to your children—brings memorable results. And that is *exactly* the desired result.

Other parenting books explore the theoretical parenting landscape. They offer broad concepts. Vague implementation strategies. Or focus on the grinding mechanics of parenting the youngest kids. Those books have their place. *This book*, on the other hand, offers precise phrases and sensible patterns of family behavior that produced *great* Americans. They worked for those parents and mentors. *They can and will work for you too.*

Mantras are the past *and* the future

Mantras are the 16th Century *and* 21st Century way to lock *your* ideals, standards, ethics, and principles into formative minds.

Your teaching = their learning and remembering.

Mantras *by definition* demand repetition. The phrasing may stay the same or almost the same. The stories, the elaboration, the background, the colors may bob and weave—but the cores of the mantras stay fixed. *Stars to remember and guide one through life.*

Different families, different parents, different mentors—favor some precepts over others. It doesn't make one set superior. You choose your own mantras. Maybe they're here in this book. Maybe a few of yours are unique. But *the process is the same.*

Define your mantras, your adages. And bear down repetitively—over and over and over.

Parenting, mentoring, is a two-decade-long process. *Saying a truism once, twice, three times is absurdly insufficient.* Sometime kids listen. Often they don't. But saying it a hundred, two hundred times, over ten to twenty years, hammers even the most stubborn youth.

Will they remember them? Will they follow them? That depends on many factors. Are you and your spouse setting the *examples* that follow your own advice? That's probably the largest determinant. Are you smothering your children? Or giving them room to make their own mistakes and learn? Reining them back afterward for constructive advice, encouragement, and support? Preparing them to go *back* into the arena to fight another battle—*armed with your teachings?*

Now, there are certainly famous, extraordinary personalities that had no parenting. Some had very dysfunctional parenting. Lousy. Misguided. Awful. Those famous men and women made it. They achieved fame, fortune, important results themselves. So why should you care?

The answer is simple. You are a parent. *You have a responsibility* as a parent to impart *your* values and knowledge to your children. To set them on the right path of life. You can't rely on their randomly picking the correct life course. *Mantras are the way of old – and new!*

This book will present the mantras and mentoring techniques that taught *eleven extraordinary Americans*. These techniques, *these words and phrases WORK!* They can become your mantras! Used enough they will become your son's or daughter's mantras.

You can't use them once and expect them to instantly imprint on your kid's brain. Mantras must be repeated almost ad nauseam. Until your teenager, your son, your daughter hears them, sees them, thinks them—whether they are awake or asleep. *Until they NEVER FORGET THEM.*

On your side are some of the smartest, most creative, most determined, most astute parents and mentors that ever lived! They threw their whole life into educating their children. Not in classroom ABC's. Not necessarily in the classroom 3 R's: reading, writing, arithmetic. *They educated their children in HOW TO LIVE LIFE.* Some of their accomplishments include:

1. How to compete.
2. How to lead.
3. How to give back to others.
4. How to dig deeper into financial statements than anyone else.
5. How to train and work with others for common goals.
6. How to build coalitions and navigate political shoals to achieve historic legislation.

We parents may have academic degrees up the kazoo—from Bachelor’s degrees, to MBA’s, to PhD’s. But we often haven’t a clue as to:

- The excellent parenting techniques that begat many great Americans.
- The best *oral response* to our children’s actions?
- The best way to frame the goals we want them to learn?
- The best ways to prepare them for leadership, financial acumen, empathy with others?

This book *uniquely* brings together the best parenting and mentoring advice given to eleven great Americans as they were growing up. *Straight up advice. No bull.* I take a microscope to their upbringing. *The EXACT, SPECIFIC techniques and words their parents or mentors used.* To motivate them. To inspire them. Inspire them not just to succeed, *but to rise above all others.*

What parenting techniques separate *historically* great parenting and mentoring—that produces awesome offspring? *That’s what this book, for the first time, sets out to accomplish.*

Eleven great Americans. Crossing all walks of life:

- *Gender*
- *Race*
- *Religion*
- *Politics*
- *Professions*

Techniques, words, phrases, *mantras*—ringing in your children’s ears and continuing to ring in their adult minds. Until now no one has distilled these into one book—to propel our offspring to incredible success—to *rich, vivid lives that enrich us all.*

So, select the mantras *you need* from this book and make them work *for you.*

Best wishes on your parenting journey,

David R. Wommack

About the Author

David R. Wommack

I had a passionate belief that this book *needed* to be written.

My professional background is forty years in sales and marketing, accounting and finance, publishing, and art. I have a Bachelor's degree in business from Carnegie-Mellon University and a Master's degree in Business Administration from New York University.

This book is the culmination of three years of research, reading and reviewing over 500 autobiographies or biographies—using the resources of the San Diego Public Library. Many thanks for the use of its resources and librarians' assistance and patience.

In many cases, it was the *autobiographies* of these eleven extraordinary Americans that proved the most useful and instructive. It meant getting the information:

Straight from the horse's mouth.

I retired early in 2000, and now devote my time to writing and fine oil painting. My website, www.davewommack.com, showcases my paintings and photographic art—primarily expressionist portraits and figures.

KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is an African-American former professional basketball player with the National Basketball Association's Milwaukee Bucks and Los Angeles Lakers—and a coach, actor, and author.

John Wooden, Kareem's mentor, coached basketball at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Who is Kareem Abdul-Jabbar?

He played basketball. Like no other. A career with the Milwaukee Bucks and Los Angeles Lakers professional basketball teams. Spanning the years 1969–1989. Scored more points (at that time) than any other league player in history.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was born Lewis “Lew” Alcindor, Jr. on April 16, 1947. Raised in New York City. The son of Cora Lillian, a department store price checker, and Ferdinand Lewis Alcindor, Sr., a transit police officer whose hobby was playing jazz. Going back in time, his family history started in Africa as Muslim slaves, brought to Trinidad and subsequently brought to America by a French planter named Alcindor. Although reared as a Catholic, Lew converted to Islam and changed his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar after his father's research brought the family history to light.

High school. With Lew, his high school basketball team won seventy-one consecutive games.

The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). In Lew's freshman year at UCLA a prescient upset occurred on the court. The preseason number one pick nationally was the 1965–1966 UCLA Bruin team. But on November 27, 1965 the freshman team, led by Lew Alcindor, defeated the varsity team 75–60. During that game Lew scored *fifty-one points*. During his collegiate years at UCLA he played on three National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) championship teams.

He was the consummate center. Seven-feet two-inches tall, 225 pounds. The number one pick of the first round draft in 1969. After graduating from UCLA, Lew played from 1969–1974 for the Milwaukee Bucks and from 1975–1989 for the Los Angeles Lakers. Playing center position, he was regarded as one of the best players of all time. His relative lack of body bulk was made up for by his invention and ambidextrous use of the “skyhook”—a shot that was nearly impossible for a defender to block without drawing a penalty. It contributed to his becoming the eighth most accurate scorer of all time—with a .559 field goal accuracy. With his team he won six NBA championships and an equal number of regular season Most Valuable Player awards.

UCLA is widely considered the finest state-run university system in America, and consistently ranked one of the top universities in the United States. During his entire time at UCLA, there was one coach that shaped and molded Kareem's on-court playing and approach to life and competition. He was the single most influential person in Kareem's early path to stardom. That person was the legendary UCLA Bruins coach John Wooden.

Subsequent to his professional basketball career, Kareem worked as an assistant coach and head coach with various professional teams. He also acted in several minor movie roles, notably in the *Game of Death*, *Airplane*, and *Fletch* and about a dozen television series. And authored two autobiographies: *Giant Steps* and *Kareem*.

John Robert Wooden was the winningest professional U.S. basketball coach in history. And the most beloved. Not only for his coaching of the game, but equally for his coaching of how to live life.

John Wooden was born in 1910 in Hall, Indiana to Roxie Anna and Joshua High Wooden. Joshua was a tenant farmer and mailman. The Wooden farm raised corn, wheat, alfalfa, watermelons, and tomatoes. John grew up with three brothers on the farm with no electricity, no inside plumbing, and water drawn from a hand-pump. Especially in those days of almost no mechanization, FARMING was spelled HARD WORK. He learned never to shun it. Like most farm boys, John had to do every conceivable chore on the farm, including his least favorites: weeding and bugging potatoes, and worming and picking tomatoes. His favorite was milking cows. At the same time he developed empathy for the migrant laborers toiling in the fields under the hot sun of the Central California San Joaquin Valley.

John's mother, Roxie Anna, served as his touchstone. Without electricity or plumbing, she raised the family of four boys. Washing, ironing, cooking, mending, canning. All by herself. While at the same time assisting her husband with the farming. Never a complaint. Always patient and ready to tackle the hardest chores. Wooden recalls,

I learned from her what hard work really means and that it's part of life. She always knew what had to be done and she did it. (Wooden, Wooden: A Lifetime . . . 5)

In athletics John led his Martinsville, Indiana high school basketball team to three consecutive championships. At Purdue University, and later playing several years of professional ball in Indianapolis, he piled up first upon firsts. During one professional forty-six-game stretch he made 134 *consecutive* free throws.

Along the way he took many jobs to support himself: ice cream factory worker, grocery boxer, garbage collector, harvest worker in the adjacent states' wheat fields, and concrete pourer. *Whatever was necessary* to get a good education and play basketball.

In the town of Martinsville, termed by a 2002 article in the *New Yorker* magazine as one of the most racist in America, John's upbringing squelched those racist thoughts. His later coaching exhibited no such traits. He favored talent over race, faith over spite.

Wooden's refusal to submit to or participate in any form of racial prejudice is one of the hallmarks of his life and career. Since the 1930's, in his quiet, determined way, by action and example—such as walking out en masse with high school teams on restaurants that discriminated, refusing to play in tournaments that would not allow athletes of color to play, finding athletes housing in the 1950's segregated Westwood—Wooden stood his ground firmly and peacefully . . . This awareness of, sensitivity to and rebellion against racism is his most heroic but least known contribution to sport.

While coaching at Indiana State in 1946, Wooden refused to allow his team to compete in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) conference championship games. Because blacks were not permitted to play. Considering that this was his *first* college coaching job, that was courageous beyond belief. When he started coaching at UCLA, he found that the school promoted racial harmony, equality, and acceptance better than any other college at the time. It was a paradigm for the future of sports—fielding such greats as Jackie Robinson (baseball) and Ralph Bunche (football, baseball and basketball) of the 1920's. Because Wooden coached and played integrated teams as soon as he got to UCLA, the other universities in the NCAA had to do likewise—or risk, from a talent perspective, not being able to compete.

John Wooden lived his conscience. He never shirked from it. Never hedged. Wooden's "leadership against racism also welded and melded individuals into teams that fought, not just on the court, but anywhere the integrity of the team was challenged, and forged friendships that have lasted lifetimes."

Arriving at UCLA in 1948, he faced a team that was faltering and lackluster. He achieved one of the rarest turnarounds: an "instant" championship season—going from a 12–13 record the prior season to a 22–7 division championship. His entire coaching career was spent at UCLA, where he won ten NCAA championships in ten years, set a record of eighty-eight consecutive wins, thirty-eight straight NCAA tournament wins, and four perfect 30–0 seasons. *Incredible!* He never made more than \$35,000 a year, and according to the owner of the Los Angeles Lakers, turned down offers to coach the Lakers that were *ten times* his salary at UCLA.

John Wooden met his future wife, Nellie "Nell" Riley, at a carnival in 1926 when John was but age 16—eventually resulting in a beautiful fifty-eight-year union and two children. John remained devoted to Nell, even decades after her death. On the 21st of each month following her death, he visited her grave, and then wrote a love letter to her. After finishing the letter, he placed it in an envelope and added it to a stack of similar letters that accumulated over the years—on the pillow she slept on during their life together.

John Wooden's faith had a huge influence on his life. He read the Bible daily and attended the First Christian Church. Following through, John Wooden made it plain to his family, his friends and his players that:

Basketball is not the ultimate. It is of small importance in comparison to the total life we live. (Wooden, They Call Me . . . 95)

Yes, he coached, but much more than that, he taught his players how to live a worthwhile life—and backed it up by his stellar character and example.

. . . pure of heart, modest, trusting, humble, understated, serene, without pretense or hidden agenda, sincere, straightforward, intelligent, quick, confident, and filled with such a profound decency and tremendous inner strength . . . ferociously dedicated, meticulously detailed, and as principled as a saint.—Steve Jamison (Wooden, Wooden: A Lifetime . . . xxxi)

To Kareem, John Wooden's basketball required three overriding and all-encompassing tasks: "supreme conditioning, solid fundamentals, and a commitment to team play." Attend to those and the championships would inexorably follow. In team meetings and blackboard drills, he didn't place a lot of faith. Follow his basketball trinity, then do your best, and the wins will come. A very simple dictum. Kareem placed his complete faith in Wooden. It never wavered. And the results were *spectacular*.

John Wooden had faith in his players—as players and human beings. He nurtured them, fed them in both aspects. And they responded in kind. They never doubted his confidence in their talent and their personality. His impact on his players was huge. Beyond the court, beyond the school, reaching their inner strength and soul. Positive values, instilled day in and day out, never to be forgotten. As Kareem so succinctly stated, "He was the real thing. His example in my life continues to be bright and shining."

Parenting Techniques

1—Make each day your masterpiece.

John Wooden's overarching precept of basketball practice was not to focus on the usual goal: winning the particular game or championship. NO. His focus was more immediate.

Every day was important to Coach Wooden. He deplored talking about winning the next game, winning the Championship. Instead he wanted his players to try as hard as they could to make *this* practice, *this* day, their masterpiece. Ignore what is beyond your control. Ignore the distractions of the future actions of others. Ignore yesterday. It's over and done with. You can't reclaim it. You can't change it. Learn, but don't dwell on the past. Don't assume that past successes will automatically happen again. NOW is the time. NOW is ready for you. NOW is your masterpiece. Make the most of it *and* TODAY.

The door to the past has been shut and the key thrown away. You can do nothing about tomorrow. It is yet to come. However, tomorrow is in large part determined by what you do today. So make today a masterpiece. You have control over that. (Wooden, Wooden: A Lifetime . . . 11)

Becoming better, a little better each day—*that* is what life is all about. And over time you can become *a lot better*—maybe even approaching the best you can be. Lost days can't be made up. So concentrate on TODAY.

Don't think you can make up for it by working twice as hard tomorrow. If you have it within your power to work twice as hard, why aren't you doing it now? (Wooden, Wooden: A Lifetime . . . 12)

Your absolute best must be your goal, whether it is for your country, your community, your job, your family, or your marriage. Your character is formed by your striving—or lack thereof. Perfection is an impossibility. But *striving* for perfection is not. Do your best. Under the current conditions. *Now*. WHAT IS WRONG IS IF YOU FAIL TO PREPARE TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY.

Success is not fame or fortune. Success is working smart and trying as hard as you can. By doing that you honor yourself. You don't have control over many things in life. Serendipity. Luck. They exist. But your own effort is what CHARACTER is all about.

On Coach Wooden's teams the players had no control over how big or tall they were. What they *did* have control over—by practicing like demons—was their ability, their quickness, their defensive and offensive skills. *You* determine your level of effort. *You alone* determine whether you've worked your hardest to become the best.

Doesn't the Buddhist religion stress that "the journey" is the goal? So many of John Wooden's admirers found that hard to understand—that he derived his greatest satisfaction out of the preparation—the "journey"—day after day, week after week, year after year. The score of the game is very secondary. It's the *effort* you put into the preparation and the game that counts.

Make each day your masterpiece.

- ❖ Don't let yesterday take up too much of today. (Wooden, *Coach Wooden* . . . 71)
- ❖ There is no progress without change. (Wooden, *Wooden on Leadership* . . . 14)
- ❖ *Show me* what you can do, don't tell me. (Wooden, *They Call Me* . . . 123)

2—You are your children's role models.

Your faults will be magnified in your children. You and your wife set the example. *For good or bad, your children will inevitably follow your example.* Cutting corners, telling little lies, sneaking off, flirting with women, bad language, beating your wife, shoplifting? A child's mind magnifies these little things—to where "shoplifting" is OK

(you do it) and almost the OK equivalent of adults' "theft of trustee monies" or "taking bribes from vendors" (if they do it). Magnified 3X. Or magnified 10X. With all the resulting consequences.

John Wooden believed that the most powerful form of education is the role model, and modern-day fathers too often neglect it. Wrapped up in making a living, they don't spend enough time with their children—educating and reinforcing the character traits of responsible behavior. Principles, values and ideals. Children naturally gravitate to respecting their parents. And emulating those they respect – FOR BETTER OR WORSE.

Respect is something that has to come from how you treat the players, the game itself, and your preparation. It cannot be demanded from the players.

Wooden's father instilled in him what he called "two sets of threes". Easy to remember. Simple. Direct.

- ❖ Never lie
- ❖ Never cheat
- ❖ Never steal

And

- ❖ Don't whine
- ❖ Don't complain
- ❖ Don't make excuses (Wooden, *Wooden on Leadership* . . . 71)

John had these drummed into him, providing a compass for living by your own abilities, not those of others, and he echoed them into the same demands of his children and players.

Don't magnify *your faults* in your children. Magnify *your good qualities and ideals*. Be a role model for your children.

3—Be slow to criticize and quick to commend.

Don't speak ill of others.

Too many people are hyper-critical of others, yet they ignore their own faults and lack of drive. Sure, some criticism is natural, but a daily regimen corrodes the mind. Everyone else is wrong, at fault. But *I* don't look closely at *myself*. *I* couldn't perform half-as-well as the one being criticized, but *I* still spit my venom at him or her.

John Wooden put the focus on his player's performance, not on his opponents. Fix *yourself* before you waste a lot of time criticizing your opponents. What are you doing to fix yourself? What is your plan to fix yourself before the game? Where are you weakest? Details. Details. Details. NO EXCUSES. NO LIP. JUST SHOW ME.

IMPROVE YOURSELF. That should be your goal. Criticizing others wastes your time and that of everyone around you. Be slow to criticize and quick to commend.

4—The best punishment is not physical, it's the feeling of letting down those whom you respect.

With John Wooden's family as they were growing up, and later with his six-foot to seven-foot-plus UCLA Bruin players, corporeal punishment—beatings, physical discipline, or the fear of same—was a non-starter. He didn't do it. Instead he substituted disapproval. The disapproved action brought a mini-lecture and sigh:

You have disappointed me. I thought you were better than this. I thought you were stronger than this. It saddens me. I've tried to teach you right. And you've let me down. But I know you are made of stronger character and can overcome this. I believe in you. I believe you can do better. (Wooden, *Wooden: A Lifetime . . .* 116)

Pride in yourself, to overcome temptations and mistakes—motives far more effective than direct punishment.

Pride is a better motivator than fear

5—Be true to yourself.

This was the first dictum of John Wooden. But you must define yourself before you can do it.

Who are you? Where do you come from? What are your values? How does religion affect your life? How do you interact or want to interact with others? How do you want others to treat you? How do you treat others?

You must be able to clarify your core principles and how you wish society and others to view you. Only then can you be true to that vision of yourself.

As Polonius said to his son Laertes in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*,

*This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day,
thou canst not then be false to any man.*

It takes courage to define yourself, then to follow it like a guiding star—correcting course every time you err.

- ❖ Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there. (Wooden, *Wooden on Leadership . . .* 43)
- ❖ *What* is right is more important than *who* is right.
- ❖ “If I were ever prosecuted for my religion, I truly hope there would be enough evidence to convict me.” (*Esquire Magazine*, 115)
- ❖ Don't let making a living prevent you from making a life. (Wooden, *Coach Wooden . . .* 32)

So who are you? Define yourself, and every day take a compass reading. Be true to yourself.

6—Happiness begins where selfishness ends.

Help others. All the world's great religions espouse some form of the Golden Rule:

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

John Wooden restated it as “Help Others”. He believed and taught that perhaps the greatest joy in the world comes from helping others. No day is perfect if you have not done some good deed, helped another, without a thought of getting something in return. Thinking you’ll get something back ruins the deed. It’s not the same. Wooden often quoted James Russell Lowell’s writings:

*It’s not what we give but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare.
Who gives of himself of his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungry neighbor, and me. (Lowell, 302)*

Wow!

As Calvin Coolidge once observed, no one remembers the recipient, only the giver:

*No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward
for what he gave. (Templeton, 4)*

And Jesus said:

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

But do we really believe that? *If* you do, then your path is clear.

Religion teaches us that all our earthly possessions are but gifts from God, which we did not earn and which can disappear anytime. So putting them to the most use—with others, helping others—feeds us too. But more often than not we fail to acknowledge our thanks for what we have that we did nothing for: life itself, flowers, trees, family and friends. We take them for granted.

Wooden believed, *truly believed*, that the things we want most—happiness, freedom, and peace of mind—are always attained when we give them to others.

- ❖ The smallest good deed is better than the best intention. (Wooden, *Coach Wooden . . .* 88)
- ❖ People are usually as happy as they make up their mind to be.

Remember the Golden Rule and help others. It is the *real* secret to true happiness.

When selfishness ends, happiness begins.

7—Bring out the best in people by being sincerely interested in them.

You’ve seen the talk show host who hasn’t done his homework about his guest, and who’s only interested in making the interview a platform for his own jokes. It’s shameful. It’s transparent. And the viewer learns nothing.

It’s true for everyone. If you are sincerely interested in your friends, your players, your teammates, your fellow workers and employees, your family—then it will *show*. Whether it’s the way you lean in to hear what they have to say, or look them steadily in the eyes and respond with understanding—THEY KNOW.

Likewise, if you aren't interested in them, if you aren't really listening, if you don't care—THEY KNOW. If you don't mean it, THEY KNOW. So which will it be? You bring no honor to your mission by being insincere to others. You educate no one. You fool no one—not your children, your wife, your work group members—by “faking” sincerity. BUT WHEN YOU ARE SINCERE, THEY LISTEN, THEY LEARN, THEY RESPECT YOU.

Sincerity shows through in other ways too. People who are sincere *are* more interesting to their friends and to others they meet. That drives closer, more satisfying, longer-lasting relationships.

Be sincerely interested in others.

8—Big things are accomplished only through the perfection of minor details.

Details create success. The tiniest details matter. Whether the subject is a winning team or a successful company, attention to 1,000 details or 10,000 details makes all the difference. Two teams can have the same strategy. Fifty companies can have the same strategy. But the one that pays attention to every one of the thousands of details wins. EACH ONE NAILED WITH PERFECTION.

Many details may seem trivial, unimportant, and overlookable. To some outsiders they are, but to many they *are* noticeable. To insiders each should be important.

Coach Wooden illustrated his fanatical attention to detail by socks. Socks? Smooth socks.

Before each practice, before each game quarter, he would insist every player very carefully check with their fingers for any folds or creases in their socks, starting at the toes and sliding the hand along the side of and under the foot, smoothing the sock out as the fingers passed over it. Paying special attention to the heel because that is where wrinkles are most likely.

He watched each player step through this regimen. *No exceptions.* No laxity. Because he knew that wrinkles, folds, creases cause blisters. Blisters inhibit performance.

Every perfectly done detail gives you, your children, your team, or your company an infinitesimal edge. Enough of those and with luck you'll become a winner in anything you try to achieve.

Little things make big things happen. It's the little details that are vital to achieving big goals.

9—The man who is afraid to risk failure seldom has to face success.

Winners make the most mistakes. John Wooden remembers his coach at Purdue University, Ward L. “Piggy” Lambert, emphasizing this:

The team that makes the most mistakes will probably win. (Wooden, My Personal Best . . . 74)

Wooden subscribed to this idea because it holds a lot of truth. The child or player who is trying the hardest, *doing* when others are lazing, will make the most mistakes. Mistakes are the result of doing, but only the doer can claim success. Anyone who avoids performing is automatically setting themselves up for failure. That's the mistake you and your children don't want to make.

- ❖ Never fear failure. It is something to learn from. You have conquered fear when you have initiative. (Wooden, *Wooden: A Lifetime . . .* 185)
- ❖ If you are going nowhere, you'll get there.

Practice taking risks. But carefully calculated risks. List the pros. List the cons. Estimate the probabilities. What does the math say? What does your gut say? What do your emotions say? How big is the upside potential? What is your downside risk? What is your maximum financial, emotional, and time loss? Calculate whether it is a good or bad risk. BUT DON'T BE AFRAID OF RISK.

10—Families, teams, and companies win with teamwork.

It's an aphorism that everyone ascribes to. But many people don't really practice it. Most teams and companies give it only lip service. Individuals are rewarded mostly for their *own* contributions. The team's reward is secondary. That's exactly the opposite of what should happen. *The team's performance is paramount.* Individuals should be rewarded according to how they help the team perform.

Teams fail, families fail, parents fail when they don't instill rewards for *real* teamwork.

John Wooden had many players over the years whose individual performance could have reached far higher in the record books. And left on their own, most players would have done just that—performed as individuals to achieve that record. But Wooden personally taught and rewarded teamwork—performance achieved as a team. Only in that manner could the UCLA Bruins have won ten National Championships in twelve years.

Treat all people with dignity and respect.

A great team needs supporting players. The smallest job is part of the team effort. Not all players are the stars. It takes many others not sharing the media spotlight to contribute to the team. Doing any job wrong or poorly threatens the whole team. Everyone is important to the team goal. No one should feel unimportant. All have their task for the good of the whole. All have a role to fulfill. They are needed and it's *your job* to let them know they are needed—because little things make big things not only possible, but happen.

Teamwork wins. Companies never win without teamwork. It just doesn't happen. Leaders learn how to manage and run teams. It's the key to corporate efficiency. Effectiveness. Winning.

11—Persistence wins.

John Wooden was famous for quoting Calvin Coolidge:

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. PERSISTENCE AND DETERMINATION ALONE ARE OMNIPOTENT. (Perseus Publishing, 288)

Basketball practice is a grind. Hour after hour. Day after day. It's a *real grind*. But without it, without really getting better and better every session, winning is a crapshoot. Uncertain. Unreliable. Maybe. Maybe not. Often not. MOST OFTEN NOT.

Abraham Lincoln was *the* paradigm of persistence. His career suffered more “defeats” than can almost be enumerated. But when the last political defeat was viewed by the pundits as certain, he was instead elected as the 16th President of the United States. He went on to be one of the greatest U.S. Presidents. But he didn’t get there by accepting failure and defeat: Once. Twice. TWELVE TIMES POLITICALLY DEFEATED, before becoming President. *Persistence* was his hallmark before that shining moment.

- ❖ Do not permit what you cannot do to interfere with what you can do. (Wooden, *Coach Wooden . . .* 72)
- ❖ It’s not important who starts the game, but who finishes it. (Marques, 79)

Persistence.

Drive.

Don’t get sidetracked.

Persistence *wins*.

12—Get your priorities in order.

First you must define your priorities. Then put them in the proper order. And finally you have to always keep them in the proper order in your own mind.

John Wooden’s priorities, in his own life, and in his teachings and coaching to his players were these:

Family

Faith

Friends (Wooden, *Wooden: A Lifetime . . .* 29)

He regarded his team as members of his family. He cared for each as a distinct person. With different backgrounds, different abilities, different motivations, different weaknesses. And he treated each team member as a separate, *unique* human being.

So what are your priorities? Define them. Get your priorities in order. Follow them.

13—Be fair and use discipline to improve results.

Discipline is an integral part of leadership. No leader can avoid it. Praise is fine, but disciplining *correctly* is far harder.

Fairness means giving people under your supervision—whether they are your children, your players, or your company employees—the treatment they earn and deserve. *It doesn’t mean treating everyone the same.* That would be unfair. Because they haven’t earned the same treatment. People who work harder *deserve* better rewards. People who work less *deserve* fewer rewards. People who achieve better results should receive bigger rewards. People who achieve lesser results should receive smaller rewards. THE REWARDS SHOULD BE RELATIVE TO THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE TEAM EFFORT.

You begin this process by eliminating your own prejudices. And by recognizing and eliminating your own natural biases toward rewarding for individual performances. It helps greatly if you emphasize and orally reinforce to your children, players, and company employees your commitment to be fair and reward for contributions to team efforts. Those statements reinforce the process in their minds *and* your mind—BUT BE SINCERE.

Public criticism, delivered harshly, is almost always self-defeating. It embarrasses people, riles their emotions, and often blocks their receptivity to the message. In short, it should be avoided unless all other methods fail. It is occasionally, but rarely, useful.

The overriding goal of discipline is IMPROVEMENT—not punishment (which usually antagonizes the recipient). Using *tact* in all discipline situations is essential—to balance reaction to action.

- ❖ You discipline those under your supervision to correct, to help, to improve—not to punish. (Wooden, *Wooden on Leadership* . . . 169)

Be fair. Recognize the need for discipline. Help your children recognize the need in their lives. They will see fairness, or not, in your actions—maybe not every time, but over time.

John Wooden's Seven-Point Creed

- *Be true to yourself*
- *Make each day your masterpiece*
- *Help others*
- *Drink deeply from good books, especially the Bible*
- *Make friendship a fine art*
- *Build a shelter against a rainy day*
- *Pray for guidance and give thanks for your blessings every day (Wooden, Coach Wooden . . . 38)*

Quote from Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

A team will always appreciate a great individual if he's willing to sacrifice for the group.

LANCE ARMSTRONG

Lance Armstrong is an American professional road racing cyclist, the only person to seven times win the world's most prestigious cycling race, the Tour de France.

Lance's mother was at various times a supermarket checkout girl, a cashier at a fast food restaurant, a postal sorter, a secretary.

Who is Lance Armstrong?

Who else but his mother would believe in a scruffy kid. Whose child shrugged at football and basketball. Who thought it better to eat triathlons for breakfast. A mother whose mantra was, "Son, you never, ever quit."

Lance Armstrong was born September 18, 1971 in Dallas, Texas. He grew up in Plano, Texas, just north of Dallas. His mother, Linda Gayle Mooneyham Armstrong, was a teenage bride twice—first to Edward Charles Gunderson, Lance's father, and then to Terry Keith Armstrong, who adopted Lance. Both marriages resulted in divorce—the first due to Edward's immaturity and abandonment; the second due to Terry's frequent absences, abusiveness and adultery. So the reality was that Lance essentially lived alone with his mother.

His mother's father was an adulterer and drunk who went off to Vietnam, with little remorse from his family. He had created a love-hate relationship at home. Cursing, disparaging and beating his wife for failing in her sexual duties to him. Impregnating a side girlfriend multiple times, and finally abandoning the family. Once the family moved just to avoid living next to Linda's half-siblings (through her father's adultery), which would have been a blow of death-rattle proportions to her mother's dignity.

Money was tight, very tight. Linda's grandmother made the girls one dress a year at Christmas or Easter, and bought them a pair of shoes in time for school.

Linda won a high school tryout with Gussie Nell Davis, the physical education teacher who ran the "world famous" Kilgore Rangerettes cheerleaders. Hours of practice, self-discipline, unity. A huge influence on Linda, who eventually became a drill team captain, then the school's homecoming princess.

Linda worked two and sometimes three jobs to support herself and Lance. Lance remembers her as an "uncomplaining dynamo . . . with seemingly inexhaustible energies . . . never complaining about her burdens or fatigue . . . refusing to acknowledge limits for herself, or for me."

Linda created a world that revolved around Lance. She was his sun; he was hers. Together they rode the whirlwind of his career—from his first forays at the triathlon, to his roaring take-no-prisoners climb up the cycling hall of fame.

She created a partnership with her son—fighting obstacles, trusting only their own drive and initiative. *Luck? They made their own.* Lance can only express gratitude for Linda's overarching parenthood—conveyed as a single mother most of the time. She was ever supportive in his athletic endeavors.

She never said, 'I'm too tired.' And she taught me to never say it either. (Kelly, xiii)

Once when Lance was near collapse and thoroughly exhausted during a triathlon, Linda walked miles out of the course line, limping, and found him. She walked beside him,

Son, you never, ever quit. Whatever you do, you stick to it. You may have to walk, but you're going to finish. (Kelly, xiii)

He did, with his mother walking alongside him.

Linda fed the fires of competition. Both she and Lance reveled in the cameras, the ribbons, the celebrations of winning. But Lance's head never swelled, because he always brought it down into the wind of the next race—bearing harder and harder. No letup. No rest. No holidays.

Said Linda,

A child doesn't build a life on what you give him. He builds his life on what you show him. The good and the bad . . . I showed my son how to climb hills. (Kelly, 7-8)

Lance's father, Eddie Gunderson, knocked up Linda. They set up housekeeping, but he was seriously irresponsible. The daydream of family rapidly turned into a nightmare. Eddie felt suffocated. According to Lance, his father never loved them. He blew his chances over and over.

Linda recounted, "for years I despised the guy. He made me believe in love, then he left me. He opened my soul to the profound joy of physical intimacy, then shut my heart with the profound humiliation of physical abuse." (Kelly, 64) He was a boy trying to live a man's life, and he couldn't do it—he left before Lance was five year old. Linda's son was her salvation. Binding herself to him set her free.

Linda's father changed after Lance was born. Went sober. Attended Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. Helped with little Lance while Linda went job-hunting—giving them a place to stay, and got a job.

Her second marriage to Terry Armstrong lasted ten years. He sold meats to industrial buyers and it kept him on the road during the week. Gross infidelities were the order of the day.

About this time, Lance related "I saw a little thing in the paper about BMX bike racing in Dallas with events for kids as little as kindergarten. "That sounds like fun, doesn't it?" he asked as his mother set dinner on the table. That was Lance's standard response. He was up for anything that involved keeping his little body in motion. Linda was mentally up to it too. She gulped very hard and spent three hundred dollars for a bike for a six-year-old—three times what she had in mind.

By the third grade his personality had fixed. White-hot energy. Proud, fiercely loyal, willing and able to defend himself against anyone. By the time Lance was in the eighth grade he had combined three loves—riding, swimming and shooting into competitively running the triathlon. And in high school he won two national age-group triathlon championships. His full-time cycling career had begun at the age of sixteen—training by biking hundreds of mile each week.

By 1996 Lance had already achieved the 1991 U.S. Amateur National Championship, turned professional, competed in the 1992 Olympics, won the 1995 and 1996 Tour DuPont (America's top multi-stage bike race) and become the youngest ever to win a stage at the Tour de France. He had endorsement contracts with Nike. "He thought he was invincible."

On October 2, 1996, at age twenty-five, Armstrong received the terrible news: "You have cancer." Testicular cancer. A particularly virulent kind. And it had spread to his lungs and brain. He had been coughing up blood and had a large, painful testicular tumor. Immediate surgery and chemotherapy were needed. Armstrong was given only a forty-percent chance of survival.

It could not have come at a more heartbreaking time. But in his typical fashion he underwent grueling surgery and chemotherapy treatments to beat the disease. He attacked the cancer the same way he raced: "Whatever it takes to win." One horrible year. Never losing hope. Carefully selecting the treatment that might produce awful side effects, but would still allow him to ride competitively—with his balance and lungs intact, should he survive the cancer.

In his autobiography he writes,

Fear should never fully rule the heart, and I decided not to be afraid.

In that vein he takes life at full throttle—flat out to the finish. Competitors won't stop him. Cancer won't stop him. Of those that look to him and his story for inspiration in their own fight against the disease, he says, "I think of them all the time. I want to motivate them. They motivate me."

In 1999, two years after hearing the superb news that he had beaten the demon, and having trained for more perfection, more endurance, he won the Tour de France for the first time. Six more were to follow, 2000–2005. The first person in history to win the Tour de France—the most grueling cycling race in the world—seven times.

In return for his cancer survival, he established the Lance Armstrong Foundation, helping it raise millions for cancer research. In 2005 he retired from racing, but returned in 2009 to earn monies for his charities and "raise awareness of the global cancer burden." He raced for no salary or bonuses. And in 2009 Lance competed in the Tour Down Under in Sydney, Australia—in order to spread the "Livestrong" message. His popularity and cycling fans filled every hotel room in Sydney.

Lance Armstrong married Kristin Richard in 1998 and has three children by her. Subsequent to his divorce, he had two children by a later girlfriend, Anna Hansen.

Parenting Techniques

1—Make every obstacle an opportunity.

Linda was a young seventeen years old when she bore Lance. He was an only child. A big baby—9 pounds, 12 ounces—huge by most standards for a young mother of five-foot three-inches, weighing 105 pounds. She had little guidance as to how to raise him. It was mostly trial and error. Instinct. She had no help. The biological father was absent. He left after two years. For several decades Lance had no idea who his father was. For twenty-eight years Lance never once asked his mother about his father. He was a non-entity, a "so-called father." Neither Lance nor his mother cared. There was no pull, no connection mentally. Just biologically.

From day one, criticism pervaded Linda's predicament. No one else thought that they had a good future. Others were downers. Critical. Unbending. But Linda had a different outlook. Her fierce spirit believed in herself. She believed in her young son. She believed. There were many obstacles along the way for a single mother, lacking a

support system of relatives. But she persevered. She overcame obstacles. Overcame obstacles with Lance's help. Helped Lance overcome obstacles by refusing to recognize them as insurmountable. He saw her struggles and it made him want to succeed. Her words,

Make an obstacle an opportunity, make a negative a positive. (Armstrong, 38)

2—Talk to your children as adults.

Single mothers have it hard. Linda Armstrong was no exception. She had few friends. Her world revolved around Lance. So they invariably faced each other across the dinner table, consoling and counseling each other. After her divorce she relaxed. The tension oozed from her personality. The pressure of a poor marriage was gone. In its place was a different set of pressures.

When she got home from work, we would sit down to dinner together, and turn off the TV, and we'd talk. She taught me to eat by candlelight, and insisted on decent manners. She would fix a taco salad or a bowl of Hamburger Helper, light the candles, and tell me about her day. Sometimes she would talk about how frustrated she was at work, where she felt she was underestimated because she was a secretary.

'Why don't you quit?' I asked.

'Son, you never quit,' she said. 'I'll get through it.' (Armstrong, 27)

But it was this honest conversation—one adult to another near adult—that helped Linda get through the day and elevated Lance to a partnership with his mom.

Talking down to children is common among parents. Through their tantrums and childish behavior. But children remember the honest conversations that open up one adult's life to another. They may not have the experience and mental capacity to appropriately respond with helpful comments, but they appreciate being raised to the same level as an adult. They appreciate your confidence in their confidence.

Too often parents underestimate the need of children for adult conversation. How can they act and decide like adults if not given the chance to understand your experience, your analysis, and your emotions? You do it with your other adult friends. Why not create a "friend" of your children? But superficiality doesn't work. A child recognizes quickly whether the effort is sincere. One instance is not enough. You have to develop a regular pattern of consulting on an adult level with your child. A *real* confidence. On many problems, of all kinds. Consulting with your children as if with a mate or close friend. It's really the casebook technique of Harvard Business School. Kids learn by experience—either their own or vicariously through your experiences. It's a chance for you to instill your own perspective on life. Your guidelines for living, for making decisions.

My mother had given me more than any teacher or father figure ever had, and she had done it over some long hard years, years that must have looked as empty to her at times as those brown Texas fields. When it came to never quitting, to not caring how it looked, to gritting your teeth and pushing to the finish, I could only hope to have the stamina and fortitude of my mother, a single woman with a young son and a small salary—and there was no reward for her at the end of the day, either, no trophy or first-place check.

For her, there was just the knowledge that honest effort was a transforming experience, and that her love was redemptive. (Armstrong, 38)

You don't have to treat your children as grownups before their time. But talking down to them is usually the wrong approach. They appreciate being elevated to a higher level in the conversation. Talk to your children as adults. They will rise faster to comprehend and subscribe to their responsibilities and your values.

3—You have to do it yourself. No one is going to do it for you.

Back then I was just a kid with about four chips on his shoulder, thinking, maybe if I ride my bike on this road long enough it will take me out of here. (Armstrong, 22)

Plano, Texas. Hometown. A typical American suburb. It seemed to exist to promote football and the upper middle-class. Lance wasn't a part of either arena. He didn't have the hand-eye coordination to handle a football. He recognized this, but was determined to participate in some athletic endeavor in which he could succeed. First it was distance-running, then swimming, then biking. A daily workout of six miles swimming laps, then twenty miles on the bike. Then the triathlon. It melded biking, swimming, and running—three activities in which he excelled.

Lance enjoyed it. Winning suited him. Linda bought him a triathlon outfit, which he needed because it had to be fast-drying and tailored for performance under each phase of the competition. Without even training specifically for the first triathlon, he won by a considerable margin. Then a second win. Confidence built rapidly. He was now full of it. And he recognized that he was better than any other triathlon athlete in Texas. Heady stuff. Triathlons were rich purses, at least in the eyes of a youngster. First-place checks started filling his bank account. Competitive cycling followed—locally at first, moving up fast from the bottom Category 4 races. A 16-year-old competing with other much more experienced riders in their late 20's.

About this time Lance realized that he needed help if cycling was to be his future. He needed backing, sponsors, supporters—because expenses to compete in the national races required funds. Required people with enough courage and confidence in him to pay up front. Although he had compiled a Rolodex of business contacts, he needed to tap them for more than pats on the back. But to whom to turn to?

His mother put it succinctly,

Look, Lance, if you're going to get anywhere, you're going to have to do it yourself, because no one is going to do it for you. (Armstrong, 30)

Wow! It was all on his shoulders. But curiously, once he realized this and started to act, it became easier and easier. Dependency is cut. Self-reliance is in. You strike out on your own—by yourself, for yourself. Aware that you can do it if you try hard enough, knock on enough doors.

Someone once said that asking for funds is a numbers game. A certain percentage of people are ready to give. Want to give. But a small percentage. The one asking has to realize that *NO* is only a step on a long ladder to *YES*. Don't give up. *Keep asking*. If your pitch is well constructed, appeals to their "buttons," and you keep trying—making the pitch to all prospects and their contacts, then you will probably succeed. Maybe it's five percent. Maybe it's one percent. But enough tries and you *will* connect.

Lance got those funds, and they helped him cover the expenses necessary to compete across the country. And at that point his abilities and determination had to either win or lose for him. History testifies to the positive results.

We are all guilty of foisting off responsibility to others. *Someone else* needs to do something! But what if we ask ourselves this question: What if no one else will or can do something? I'll have to do it, then. And maybe that's the most likely thing. If it is, then why not just plan the next step that *I need to do* if no one else steps in to help? Get a plan together. Plan A. Plan B. Ready to act.

Plan as if you have to do it yourself.

Quotes from Linda Armstrong

- *Make every setback an opportunity.* (Kelly, xii)
- *It doesn't cost anything to have some personal pride.* (Kelly, 28)
- *You present yourself the way you see yourself.* (Kelly, 113)
- *It's not going to be easy . . . But nothing worth anything is easy.* (Kelly, 35)
- *If something is important to you, you don't mind working for it.* (Kelly, 35)
- *It just seems to me that when your kids come and tell you about something they want to do, it's different from when they come and tell about something they want to have.* (Kelly, 113)
- *Cheering someone on is a noble endeavor. It's such a purely giving thing, and giving feels good . . . Somehow a little of your soul gets transferred into their system and gives them this little snap-crackle-pop of energy.* (Kelly, 129)
- *Raising children is like an armadillo race. You tend to this little life and feed him well and put something out in front of him and teach him to want to chase after it. But at the end of the day he's still a wild thing. All you can do is let him go and hope he stays on track. And maybe, just maybe, he'll be a little faster than the other armadillos that day.* (Kelly, 146)
- *Losing is awesome too . . . That's when you really learn. That's when you grow.* (Kelly, 152)

Quotes from Lance Armstrong

- *I've always been better when I've had things stacked against me.* (Bradley, 15)
- *Whatever it takes to win.* (Kelly, 22)

WARREN BUFFETT

Warren Buffett is an American investor, businessman, and philanthropist.

Warren Buffett's father was a stockbroker.

Who is Warren Buffett?

The "Oracle of Omaha." Regarded as the most successful investor in the world. A 2,000-fold return for his investors. Eschewing gimmicks and rocket science. Investing in solid fundamentals.

As an American investor, businessman and philanthropist, Warren Edward Buffett is by some reckonings, the third richest person in the world—and in 2012 his wealth was estimated to be about \$44 billion. His investment vehicle, Berkshire Hathaway Corporation, is a public company, with millions of American shareholders.

Warren's mantra is "value investing"—à la David LeFevre Dodd and Benjamin Graham—insisting on the companies he invests in having very low operating costs, abundant cash, and little or no debt. In addition, his investing "morals" include no program trading, no long-shot bets or bets on the next quarter's earnings announcements, and no hostile takeovers.

Warren Edward Buffett was born August 30, 1930 in Omaha, Nebraska, in the midst of the Great Depression. As the second from the eldest of three children, in a family of French Huguenot origins, he was the only son in the family. He attended the public elementary school in Omaha and public high school in Washington, DC—where his father served four terms as a United States Congressman.

In 1927 Warren's father, Howard Homan Buffett, became a stockbroker for the Union State Bank in Omaha. There he met Warren's mother, the future Mrs. Buffett, Leila Stahl, who was a small town reporter for her father's newspaper. Warren was born about ten months after "Black Tuesday," October 29, 1929—the stock market crash which signaled the start of the Great Depression. After the crash, Howard Buffett hung on to his job for about two years, until August, 1931, when the bank failed. Just one of thousands to succumb to the more than brutal economic environment. He had no job and all of his savings were invested in his employer's failed bank.

Undaunted, he took the only course of action which made sense to him, given his background. Where he had both bowed and chafed before, now he struck out on his own—opening his own stock and bond brokerage firm, Buffett-Falk & Company, and selling a few diamonds as an inflation hedge. He dared to bet on his luck, his personality, and his knowledge of stocks and the stock brokerage industry. His sales strategy reflected the lessons of recent history: invest conservatively for both himself and his few customers.

Steadily the Buffett family's economics moved upward. And while Howard navigated the stock market shoals, his wife did her part—always watching her meager funds and buying Warren and his siblings thrifty, practical gifts at giving time. Those purchases couldn't have excited the children's fantasies, but they fit the times and supplemented necessities.

Howard Buffett's political leanings were isolationist, and vigorously opposed to Roosevelt's New Deal. He eventually parlayed those sentiments as a Republican Congressman (1942–1948, 1950–1952). Both his business and family worlds were cold and analytical. He gave no credence to warm and fuzzy emotions. Warren never received

the “I love you’s” or putting a child to bed that other parents followed for their children. His mother, although lively with an easy humorous mien to outsiders, had emotional problems. She was especially volatile after Howard left for work and she was alone with Warren and his siblings. During those times she often raged and lashed out verbally. Under such attacks, Warren, an introverted child, retreated frequently into a world of numbers or his model train catalogs. Mentally fleeing his mother’s religious beliefs, what mattered most to young Warren was rationality, facts, numbers, and money.

Warren attended three universities: Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania (1947–1949). Then a Bachelor’s degree in Economics from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln (1950). And a Master’s degree in Economics from Columbia Business School, Columbia University, New York (1951). He enrolled in Columbia after learning that Benjamin Graham, author of “The Intelligent Investor” and David Dodd, two well-known securities analysts, taught there.

Warren’s first employment after college was as an investment salesman, then as a securities analyst, then as a General Partner in the securities firm Buffett Partnership, Ltd.

By 1962 Warren consolidated several partnerships and invested in a small New England textile company, Berkshire Hathaway—ultimately taking control of it. That became the investment vehicle which he used to move from millionaire to billionaire. Along the way his investments have generated spectacular results for the shareholders of Berkshire Hathaway, and created an aura of invincibility around Warren. He continues to act in a rather passive investment manner—allowing the acquired company’s management to continue and work unobstructed. If the company falls out of favor with Warren, he generally sells his investment rather than act against management. He is not a fan of hostile takeovers, as they usually result in too much animosity for future workability together, or require replacement of management. Major investments he has made along the way include The Washington Post Company, Capital Cities/ABC, Salomon Inc., Coca-Cola Company and General Re.

Warren married nightclub singer Susan Thompson in 1952. Together they had a daughter and two sons. Warren and Susan separated in 1977, and he began living with Ms. Astrid Menks, whom he married in 2006. She was his long-time companion and never previously married. Warren’s first marriage was atypical in that even after separation from Susan (she moved to San Francisco) they still attended major social functions together as husband and wife. And Susan continued to sit on the Board of Directors of Berkshire Hathaway as a major stockholder. She was also the one who introduced Warren to Astrid Menks and remains friends with her and Warren.

With a well-deserved reputation for frugality, Warren Buffett and his second wife continue to live in the same house in Omaha that he bought in 1958 for \$31,500. His diversions today include bridge (an extremely avid player), Nebraska football, and attending minor league baseball games.

Warren Buffett is now in the process of giving away the vast portion of his wealth to the Gates Foundation (targeting world health and education) and the Buffett Foundation (providing scholarships for Nebraska children who attend college in the state, and donations to groups specializing in family planning and reproductive rights).

Parenting Techniques

1—Take them to work, your place of business, and involve them.

Warren’s father, Howard Buffett, owned a small stock brokerage firm.

Every chance he got, Warren found his way to his father’s brokerage office or the regional stock brokerage near his father’s office. His father never discouraged this. Warren could read there—books on stocks and investments—hear

the conversations with customers, listen to his father's thinking. Though he didn't make decisions, he was *involved*. He was treated as a young adult with a mind that could think independently.

When his father traveled on a business trip from Omaha to the east coast, he took Warren with him. Warren was certain what he wanted to see, and Howard made sure Warren saw them all: the New York Stock Exchange, the Scott Stamp & Coin Company, and the Lionel Train Company.

By the 1940's Warren's father had achieved a measure of success in business and had contacts with a number of Wall Street luminaries. On this same trip his father took him to the then and now preeminent investment banking firm of Goldman Sachs. And introduced him to the most famous guy on Wall Street—Sidney Weinberg—the Senior Partner in the firm. Once the introductions and pleasantries were out of the way, Sidney plopped his arm around Warren and asked him:

What stock do you like, Warren? (Schroeder, 62)

We don't know Warren's reply, but whatever it was, *Warren remembered that question forever. It became his mantra.*

So, find excuses or reasons for children and teens to follow you to work. Get them involved in real meetings, problems, presentations, decisions. Expect them to reason out answers and present them coherently, logically. Take them to work and get them involved.

3—At the dinner table have serious discussions about important issues.

Howard Buffett's voice and pattern was loud and forceful. Over dinner with the children he spat out the news of the day. In a booming voice (not shared by Warren) that could literally be heard rooms away, he expounded on current events and his interpretation of their effects on the market, the economy, and the world. The topics that Howard Buffett welcomed and considered appropriate for dinner discussion were *politics, money, and philosophy*—but rarely feelings. According to Warren,

I had the advantage of a home where people talked about interesting things.
(Schroeder, 43)

If you talk about drivel and trivia, then ultimately you and your children's lives only revolve around those. It shapes their values. Yours and their lives *become* it.

Make the dinner table the place for *serious* discussions.

4—Encourage competition, not based on sports, in business and numbers.

As a child and teenager, sports was not Warren's forte. He built his collection of stamps and coins and proceeded to exercise his mental skills by counting, solving math puzzles, and memorizing numbers. Competitive games, especially if they revolved around numbers, fascinated him. And in the absence of another real competitor he would challenge himself—by speed or complexity. He competed with the clock or classmates with equal gusto. His memorization of such facts as the state capitals, country statistics and esoteric almanac facts sharpened his intellect and sense of accomplishment. Bridge and music also involved him. Both honed his competitive drive. He could be a fierce player across the bridge table, locking his mind down to a sharp edge.

To compete in a sense with his father, and show his business skills, he began his first business foray by selling chewing gum—to neighbors, in the evening, in his spare time. Gradually he branched out, encouraged by his father.

Selling sodas (Pepsi and Coca Cola—the latter he is never without), peanuts, popcorn; reselling used, lost golf balls; and detailing cars. He obviously enjoyed it. At his apex in the newspaper delivery business he was delivering 500 papers a day on five routes.

Financial success and entrepreneurialism begat more. In 1945, in his second year in high school, Warren and a friend spent \$25 buying a used pinball machine. Convincing the local barber shop to allow him to install it there, over a short number of months he rapidly grew the single pinball machine into several in different barber shops.

In all of these ventures his mind was being molded, slowly and by personal experience, to recognize how both income and expenses affected the bottom line. *Profits were his competitive goal.* Though balance sheets were unknown to him, he could see his own savings grow or diminish, depending on his success at buying, selling, marketing, and pricing. By the time he finished high school he had amassed the then enormous sum of \$6,000.

So suggest and encourage competition away from sports. *Real competition.* Not board games or other “make-believe” charades. Learning business concepts and competitiveness bodes well for a child’s or teen’s future.

5—Teach them to enjoy talking with and to adults.

Warren made friends—his father encouraged him to strike up conversations—with adults. To do so required that he be interested in adult conversations. Topics that wouldn’t interest other teenagers. To act like an adult, to be accepted as “bright” in their world, required Warren to learn their ways, their interests and be able to orally communicate his knowledge one-on-one with them. Even as a teenager, he rapidly gained the ability to easily chat with adults at any level.

This ability doesn’t come naturally to most children. They need to be enticed, encouraged, rewarded, pumped-up for the next round or bout. But the rewards later in life are great.

Teach children to enjoy talking to adults about adult matters.

6—Allow them to learn investing by themselves.

Early on his father encouraged Warren to buy stocks with his small earnings. At age 12, Warren bought 3 shares of Cities Service Preferred stock, which he purchased at \$38.25. It dropped to \$27. Then it rose; at which time Warren sold it for \$46—for a \$7.75 profit. Later it rose to \$202. He learned two lessons from that investment:

- 1. Don’t fixate on the price you paid for a stock. Except for tax effects, the past is largely irrelevant to the future of a stock. The future price will depend on the current facts and situation, future events and your ability to predict them correctly.*
- 2. Don’t rush to grab a small profit. Larger ones may loom around the corner if you wait. Sell only based on your future expectations.*

From later investments (and handicapping at the racetrack. *Not* a pastime to be emulated) Warren learned another simple lesson that bore into his brain:

The key to handicapping [stocks or horses] is to have more information than the other guy.

A little “seed” money, hopefully *earned* by your teenager, offered for investment, can reap huge dividends in financial competence. A sincere, ongoing interest in finances can result in satisfying and lucrative careers. So let them learn investing—by actually investing themselves.

7—Let them repeatedly experience the difference between manual work and other work.

and

8—Teach them to consider all the consequences of their actions and not take anything for granted.

Howard’s father now owned the South Omaha Feed Company. Warren signed on to work there, but reached a breaking point quickly. To unload a boxcar of grain, it took Warren and his fellow employee three grueling hours in the sweltering heat. Disgusted, Warren walked home and never looked back. Manual labor was “*for the birds,*” according to Warren.

Warren’s avoidance of manual labor also derived partly from a lack of family interest, his own meager talent at it, and working in his grandfather’s grocery store. His grandfather, Ernest Buffett, was a hard taskmaster of an employer—paying low wages: \$2 for a 12-hour day of uninterrupted work. On one occasion Warren agreed to do a job in his grandfather’s store. It was an oral contract, really. But he did not clarify or understand all the conditions. After five long hours the job was done and his grandfather paid him. But *very* skimpily. What was the lesson?

Know what the whole deal is in advance—the full scope of the work to be done—and the price.

Manual work isn’t to be kept from your children. First, there is nothing immoral in manual work. Second, *it teaches them that manual work may not be what they want to do the rest of their lives. Demand* they experience manual work on multiple occasions—*for their own education.*

And teach children to consider all consequences of their actions and not take anything for granted.

9—Put down arrogance long before it becomes a character trait.

The paper route Warren built up was massive. It was so large that Warren had to figure out the most efficient way to deliver the papers. He was completely methodical and approached it as a mathematical problem. But in handling the huge paper route, with the monies that were flowing in from his diligence and aggressiveness, he became even more difficult and naughty in school. His ego got bigger and bigger. And showed regularly. A scamp actually. Rebellious in the extreme. To calm his tendencies, his father threatened to cancel his paper route—the sole source of his substantial (for a kid) income.

Humility 101. Teach it. Life is emotionally much more satisfying if you’re not an arrogant SOB. Humility is often best taught by *your* example.

Put down arrogance. It’s an offensive trait. Don’t let it take over the egos of your children. It will be even harder to squelch later on.

10—Raise the book: *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie, to the level of a mantra.

Warren was an experimenter and tester—and his father didn't dampen that drive. First he read *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie. This classic work of non-fiction has brightened the lives of millions of Americans and pointed them to better person-to-person relationships and success in business. But Warren didn't take Dale Carnegie's advice at face value. He insisted on testing it by running his own experiments—using both the positive advice and then the opposite of Carnegie's advice—to see if there really was a big difference in the results. The theories were tested and confirmed.

Buy this book: *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. You read it. Let your children read it. Discuss it chapter by chapter at the dinner table. Probably no book, other than the Bible, will pay bigger dividends.

11—Demand they think for themselves and be able to orally support their thinking with clear logic.

The legend of why Warren attended Columbia Business School, rather than Harvard Business School, has been told many times. Harvard rejected his application, much to their later regret. But a few tidbits of his college years are instructive. First, Warren was steered by his Columbia finance professor to two books: *The Intelligent Investor*, by Benjamin Graham, and *Security Analysis*, by Graham & Dodd. Then a Professor Lou Green, in one of his finance classes, posed this question:

'Why did you pick that stock [Marshall-Wells]?'

Warren's answer, 'Because Ben Graham bought it.'

and Lou Green's reply, 'STRIKE 1.' (Schroeder, 143)

The effect of this oblique putdown was electric. No longer could or would Warren hide behind the financial decisions of others, even other luminaries and supposed gurus.

Do your own research. Do your own analysis. Make your own decisions. Take responsibility for your own decisions. Demand that your children think for themselves and learn to express themselves well.

Quotes from Warren Buffett

- *Our favorite holding period is forever.*
- *Traditional wisdom can be long on tradition and short on wisdom. (Kilpatrick)*
- *Americans like to buy everything on sale except stocks.*
- *We simply attempt to be fearful when others are greedy and to be greedy only when others are fearful.*
- *It's only when the tide goes out that you see who is swimming without a bathing suit.*

- *I want to give my kids just enough so that they would feel that they could do anything, but not so much that they would feel like doing nothing.*

JULIA CHILD

Julia Child was an American chef, author, and television personality who introduced French cuisine to the American public.

Julia's mother was heiress to a paper company.

Who was Julia Child?

She felt big and unsophisticated. But ran with the spies of "Wild Bill" Donovan in China during World War II. Then spent ten years perfecting the classic French cookbook for Americans—*Mastering the Art of French Cooking*.

Julia's grandfather on her mother's side, John McWilliams, Sr., crossed the country by wagon train and panned for gold in Eureka, California. His fortune, however, was accumulated in mining, farming, and banking. He pointedly pushed his son to attend and graduate from Princeton University, with a degree in history.

Julia's mother, Julia Carolyn "Caro" Weston, the paper-company heiress, married Julia's father, John McWilliams Jr., when she was thirty-three years old. Courtship took awhile—eight long years. They married in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Honeymooned at the Hotel del Coronado, near San Diego, California. Settled down in Pasadena, California. Even though she had grown up on the east coast, Caro loved California.

Julia Carolyn McWilliams, the future Julia Child, was born August 15, 1912 in Pasadena, California to Caro and John Jr. Her new brother, John McWilliams III, was born two years later. Horse-drawn wagons still delivered ice, vegetables, eggs, and milk. And America regarded Pasadena as a near paradise.

Julia's upbringing began early, in the finest tradition and instruction of Dr. Maria Montessori. At the tender age of four and a half. Her living arrangements were sumptuous. Servants were Irish, Scottish, or German immigrants. In accordance with her family's wealth and social standing, Julia grew up in a house in Pasadena complete with playhouse, her own bathroom, an outside sleeping porch (for the hot summer), tennis court, rose and vegetable gardens, a large lawn, and a small orchard of citrus and avocado trees. Activities included acting in plays, tennis matches, school dances. She had a younger sibling, Dorothy, who was five years her junior. But typically Julia was "bossy and controlling."

Julia's parents' lives revolved around country clubs, swimming, horseback riding, golf, polo, and hunting. They were athletic, outdoorsy and very well respected members of the aristocratic community. Her father, with his father, managed their four thousand acres of rice land in Arkansas. Her father was president of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, on the Community Chest, the Republican committee, regional trustee of Princeton University, and a member of numerous boards including the local school and hospital. He was, said Julia, "a fine citizen and responsible member of his community, except he is violently emotional over politics." (Fitch, 18) He set an example—an example of community service and leadership which became a motivational force in Julia's later creative endeavors.

Julia's mother Caro ran the "large household, planned the meals, and entertained friends and business associates of her husband." (Fitch, 19) She loved the theatre. Never missed a new production. Hosted the book club. Caro "was a laissez-faire mother, encouraging her children to 'have fun.'" (Fitch, 19)

They traveled quite a bit. To many California locations. Beaches. Lake Tahoe in the high Sierra Mountains. More extensively on business trips to Arkansas, Illinois, Massachusetts. Summer camps. Reunions in Wyoming with the Weston family (Julia loved those. Riding. Setting up Indian tents. Canoeing. Wearing cowboy outfits. Fishing. Swimming).

For schooling, Julia attended Westridge School, Polytechnic School from the fourth through the ninth grades. Extracurricular activities blessed by her mother included plays, dancing classes, musicals, films and lectures at the Shakespeare Club on painters, artists, and musicians.

High school was the Katharine Branson School for Girls, in northern California. A private boarding preparatory school. Basketball was a high point of her athletic endeavors there; French classes were not. Her marks were pretty dismal, but the introduction to French proved quite beneficial in later life, when she lived in France and attended the famous Cordon Bleu cooking school.

On to Smith College. Her roommate, Mary Janny, was paired with Julia by their mothers who were graduates of the 1900 class at Smith.

In the door came Julia, this tall, very slender, very happy person smiling at me, saying, 'I'm Julia McWilliams.' I have never had a roommate who was so utterly fun to be with; she was almost too much fun . . . She was very tall and I was about five feet five inches, and she was very thin, and I was very plump—about 160 pounds, for I had eaten too many hot fudge sundaes. (Fitch, 47)

Due to her height, Julia felt “big and unsophisticated.” (Fitch, 51) She made up for that on the basketball court, excelling like her mother many years before her. Smith College was freedom of inquiry, culture, great fun, pranks, camaraderie with other girls, leadership, and minimal distractions from boys. Music and history were Julia’s favorite courses. She suffered through her sixth year of French classes (plus two years of Italian, since Smith required two languages). They “studied European languages, museums, and cathedrals—but not the sensuous elements of daily French life. Cold climate, hard currency, Northern respectability, and hearty food—these were the keys to virtue.” (Fitch, 55) Her junior year, however, was marred by the death of her father. And three years later by the death of her mother. At that point Julia, being the oldest daughter at home, became the defacto “mother” for her siblings: Donald, Dorothy and Philip. She graduated in 1934, majoring in English.

Food? Tasty junk food was more to Julia’s liking. The first cookbook she owned and used was *The Joy of Cooking*, a ground-breaking book by Irma Rombauer, a German-American widow. That book emphasized, in a radical departure for the time, the pleasure of cooking and eating, yet delivered a practical approach to the art of cooking.

And after Smith College? What then? According to Julia at the time, “Middle-class women did not have careers . . . You were to marry and have children and be a nice mother. You didn’t go out and do anything.” (Fitch, 65)

Not Julia! A year at home was more than enough. New York City beckoned; following a number of her Smith classmates. She lived frugally on her mother’s allowance, and only ate to stave off hunger. Took a job at W. & J. Sloane, an upscale home-furnishings store. As a copywriter and understudy/administrative assistant to the advertising manager. Learning the furniture business, writing copy. Upon the illness and then death of her mother, she returned to Pasadena, wasting five years as a self-described “social butterfly.”

At the beginning of World War II, infected with a “need for action,” she followed friends to Washington, D.C. and shortly was hired by the new Office of Strategic Services (OSS). It was America’s first espionage organization, which later morphed into the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Her position? Research Assistant in the office of

the legendary Director, General William J. Donovan. Ned Putzell, Jr. recalled Julia as “the life of the group. Julia was energetic, light of spirit, always of good humor—and willing to jump into any assignment.” (Fitch, 83)

Volunteers were needed. To head to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). “Clerks” was their cover job description. Collecting human intelligence was their real thrust. Three from her office, including Julia, were sent by slow boat. Adventure was definitely afoot.

May 1, 1945. Paul Cushing Child, her future husband, entered Julia’s life on a tea planter’s veranda. Eight years older. An urbane, multilingual OSS officer. An artist and poet with a keen knowledge of food. Tasked to “create the maps and graphs for the War Room of the OSS China Command” (Fitch, 95) in New Delhi.

Then posted to Kunming, China (headquarters for the OSS and General Chennault’s Flying Tigers). Julia’s job: building the OSS Registry (the filing system: “The files bulged with data of the OSS training of Chinese infiltrators, of the internal political strife, and the bumbling of the Chinese, who had little heart for bravery or risk after years of fighting and internal corruption.”) (Fitch, 111) With side visits to Chungking, China (Chiang Kai-shek’s headquarters).

The war finally ended. Julia and Paul Child were married in 1946. Paul now worked for the U.S. Department of State. Julia settled down to be the “consummate housewife” (Fitch, 145) in the Georgetown section of Washington, D.C. In her new role Julia focused on cooking. “Contrary to the feminine image of the day, she had an appetite and labored over recipes calling for fresh ingredients, taste, and texture. Reinforcing her labors was Paul’s view of the centrality of good food and drink and the artistry of the toiler in these vineyards.” (Fitch, 148) Julia struggled with the recipes.

Then, suddenly, Paul was sent by the State Department to Paris.

It was an epiphany for Julia. French food was *fantastic!* She later described a meal . . . as ‘quietly joyful.’ (Fitch, 156) Thus began the second romance of her lifetime.

The whole experience was an opening up of the soul and spirit for me . . . I was hooked, and for life, as it turned out. (Fitch, 156)

Taking Berlitz French lessons thrice weekly. Living on the Left Bank of the Seine (the artistic enclave). Exploring the gastronomic delights of Paris.

She enrolled in the world famous Le Cordon Bleu cooking school, 1949–1950. “She carried her white apron, cap, kitchen towel, knives and notebook.” (Fitch, 174) Quickly Paul referred to himself as “practically a Cordon Bleu Widower. I can’t pry Julia loose from the kitchen day or night—not even with an oyster-knife.” (Fitch, 175) According to Julia, “I just became passionate. I had been looking for a career all my life.” (Fitch, 176)

“American friends thought she was ‘a nut’ to shop, cook, and serve her own food.’ ” (Fitch, 177) What was also key was Paul’s “respect for French cuisine and for her future career.” (Fitch, 177) While pursuing *his* photographic talents, he was her biggest fan. Her biggest cheerleader and supporter. Joyfully eating her meals, lovingly prepared. Going with her shopping for ingredients at the ubiquitous markets. “Paul was a discreet and sensitive man with an aesthetic sense of appreciation for both wines and his wife. He wrote poetry about the smell of her cooking and the curve of her ankle.” (Fitch, 185)

She joined with two Parisian friends, Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle, to research and write her first cookbook. A *French* cookbook for Americans, the 734-page *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. Receiving a \$200 advance

from Houghton Mifflin in 1953, Julia noted, “I am in a state of stupefaction . . . it is going to be a classic.” (Fitch, 195) If they could ever finish it!

Julia did finish it. And over two dozen best sellers. Well-researched. Extremely well-received. Educating several generations of Americans about the intricacies of French cuisine and cooking.

Broadening their audience, she and Paul dared to produce a television cooking show, *The French Chef*, which debuted in 1963, garnered rave reviews, and began a three-decade run of this and more than a dozen of her cooking shows.

Julia Child died in 2004 at the age of 91, ten years after Paul.

Parenting Techniques

1—Encourage your older children to wait awhile after college before getting married. Use that time to travel, explore, learn to live on their own, and find their own identity.

Caro, Julia’s mother, was admittedly blessed with wealth. Old money. And colonial genealogy going back to the Revolutionary War, Plymouth Colony and England in the 11th Century. A strict Congregationalist family.

Caro’s mother and Julia’s grandmother, Julia Clark Mitchell, was twelve years younger than her husband. Ten children resulted. They lived in a mansion in Dalton, Massachusetts, with “servants, nurses, a governess, a coachman, and cooks.” Because of their wealth and number of servants, Julia Clark frequently traveled with her Captain Byron on his business trips, or was busy planning and attending social events.

Caro’s father and Julia’s grandfather, Captain Byron Curtis Weston, in addition to his paper manufacturing business, the Weston Paper Company, served as lieutenant governor of Massachusetts. Julia may have inherited his organization and stubbornness.

Caro was a *very* free spirit. Her wealth helped immensely in this regard. Headstrong. Adventurous. Independent. Daring. Playing tennis and basketball. Becoming the first woman in the county to acquire a driver’s license. And thereafter driving her shiny new car through the middle of town, or blazing along back country roads. Perhaps she displayed a “feminist” attitude because she disliked the way her mother had seriously impaired her own health by giving birth to ten children.

As mentioned previously, Julia was the beneficiary of a very adventurous history in her own family. Her grandfather crossing the United States by wagon train. Panning for gold. Building his wealth in mines, farms, and banks. Her childhood spun in the vortex of rich playgrounds. Swimming. Horseback riding. Golf. Polo. Hunting. And in the arts. Theatre. Social entertaining. Travel—crisscrossing the nation on her father’s business trips and visits to fancy resorts. It was in their blood. And once in their family’s blood, couldn’t be cut out of Julia’s.

To that question, Caro, Julia’s mother, had this pointed advice to her daughter.

See the world before settling down. (Fitch, 11)

And Caro indeed followed her own advice. Plus, even within the strictures of marriage to her beau, she remained stubbornly independent. If she wanted to do something, she did it. If her husband was away for a while on business, she just redecorated the house. Bought new china. Or whatever. She told her children, “I do what I want.” (Fitch, 11)

So don't let early marriage cut short your children's maturing in the world. Encourage them to be adventurous. To travel. To be independent. To avoid hanging onto mommy's skirt or daddy's pants. *To be themselves!*

ELIZABETH EDWARDS

Elizabeth Edwards was an American attorney, author, and healthcare activist.

Elizabeth's mother was the wife of a Navy pilot.

Who was Elizabeth Edwards?

Betrayed by her philandering husband. The same man who aspired to the U.S. Presidency. Cursed with terminal breast cancer. Her book *Resilience* gave women the courage to more than endure.

Mary Elizabeth Anania was born in Jacksonville, Florida on July 3, 1949. She had an older brother, Jay. A year later her younger sister Nancy was born.

Elizabeth's father, Vincent Anania, was a U.S. Navy pilot. Born in America; his parents born in Italy. He grew up in Brownsville, Pennsylvania, in a hundred-year-old, three-story house that doubled as the factory of his father, Dr. Flores Anania. Upper floor rooms were rented to roomers. As a pharmacist and chemist, his father mixed and sold his own potions and ointments, while his wife Mary made soaps in the kitchen. Families of that era commonly lived and worked at their family businesses under one roof. Similar homes and businesses surrounded them.

Elizabeth's father was six-feet three-inches tall. Good at sports. Handsome. Worked several jobs after high school. Then one year attending the University of Pennsylvania, before getting an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

During his time at the Naval Academy he made many lifelong friends among the other cadets. He made commander of his company. Did well in football and lacrosse. Graduated in 1944, after three years instead of four—due to the needs of World War II. His initial assignment was aboard the USS *Quincy*, a heavy cruiser, which participated in the first bombardment of the Japanese mainland. Post-war he went to Navy flight school and loved flying (don't all pilots?).

Elizabeth's mother, Mary Elizabeth "Liz" Thweatt, also the daughter of a Navy pilot, grew up on a Mississippi farm. Her life was peripatetic. Moving from one Naval base to another. Crisscrossing the country. She too fell in love with a Navy pilot. It was in San Diego that she received word that her first husband was lost in the Pacific.

Elizabeth's father's posts with the Navy included: Washington, D.C.; Iwakuni, Japan (as a reconnaissance pilot); Annapolis, Maryland; Saigon, Vietnam; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She was part of each move, a mostly enthusiastic student academically and of her father's and mother's interests. Then came time for college. Mary Washington College, a women's college in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

At the time her father was assigned to the Naval ROTC unit at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The war in Vietnam was still raging. This was the time of nationwide ROTC recruiting protests. The 1970 killing of four students by National Guard members at Kent State University in Ohio. Elizabeth transferred to the Chapel Hill campus during her father's assignment and didn't excuse herself from the protests. But tried not to go too far and incur mention on her father's personnel reports. Her involvement was meetings, posters, fliers, organizing,

demonstrating. She believed that the nation's policies were wrong, but that the sailors and soldiers were honorable. Yet she had to step in front of the issues. "Even if I was spitting in the wind, at least I had to try to spit . . . we were all trying together to let our outrage, our sadness, our vision be heard."

She earned a Bachelor's degree, then attended law school in Chapel Hill. There she also met her future husband, John Edwards. They married and both graduated with Juris Doctor degrees. Her career began by clerking for a federal judge, then working in the Office of the Attorney General of North Carolina, then working for a private law firm.

Along the way Elizabeth and John Edwards had six children. She died in 2010 of breast cancer.

During her lifetime she wrote three highly acclaimed books regarding the loss of her son, her husband's infidelity during his bid for the Democratic nomination for President in 2008, and her bout with breast cancer.

Parenting Techniques

1—Teach empathy for others' troubles.

1959 was a tough year. On Memorial Day four airmen died in her father's squadron. Crashed into the Sea of Japan. Lieutenant Commander Ben Decker was one of the downed flyers—a classmate of her father's at the Naval Academy. Upon hearing the news first, her mother was the one who immediately went to break the news to the downed airman's wife. It wasn't something she had to do. Others in the Air Force were officially tasked to do that. It was something she had to do from a personal standpoint. Yes, the airman served under Elizabeth's father. But the family and wife were also close friends, and the daughter, April Decker, was a classmate of Elizabeth's.

The armed services breed that closeness. Danger is often imminent for their husbands or loved ones. Away for long periods of time. Not knowing whether they are safe or not. It constantly preys on the minds of spouses. Their friends in the service provide emotional support. Day in. Day out. When danger becomes tragedy, that support demands action. You rush to help. You rush to comfort. You rush to assist them in coping. Doing whatever is necessary.

Empathy. Not just sympathy. *Empathy*. Trying to feel what others are feeling. Putting yourself mentally in their shoes. Not assuming that everything good that happens to you in the world is due to your own prowess, your own talent and intelligence. There is a great deal that happens that is simply due to luck. Good luck. Bad luck. All kinds of luck. Another person's condition or position is a combination of their luck and actions.

The old adage,

There but for the grace of God, go we.

It's true. So teach your children to have empathy for others.

2—Learn to talk to anyone.

Elizabeth's mother loved to roam the Japanese countryside and cities. She was continually seeking and finding new haunts. New places to explore. Driving around the islands. And when she did, she very often dragged her children along. "Dragged" was probably an apt description many times, especially when they were younger. Sundays might be spent on the sacred island of Miyajima. Her mother sketched and the children roamed and played.

Mother had a secret list of junk stores and antique stores where she knew all the shopkeepers, their wives, and their children by name . . . Or out to see a

farmer who had a few things he was willing to sell stored in the treasure room behind his house. (Edwards, 48)

Once there, she loved to make connections. “My mother would sit and talk with a Japanese farmer, or the Admiral’s wife, or the maid Toyo-san, and her demeanor was never different. She once told me that if I could talk about the news, about soap operas (when in the States, of course), and about sports, there were very few people with whom I could not have a conversation. It turned out to be true.” (Edwards, 48)

Elizabeth’s father was even bolder. He didn’t hesitate to clasp the hands of strangers, to gather teenagers together and inquire of their likes, dislikes, thoughts, feelings. Small conversation rolled off his tongue. Anything that came into his head—to comment on, to ask a question. Anything to start a dialogue.

He would chat with cashiers as if he knew them, complimenting them on their hair or their eyes or the speed with which they worked . . . By the time they left, my father would know the life stories of the family in the next lane at the bowling alley. (Edwards, 48)

Elizabeth learned from both her parents how to reach out to others, to make connections with extraordinary *and* ordinary people. Later on, when her own troubles became unbearable, those connections came back to comfort her. The emotional support reversed itself and flowed back to her. *So put yourself forward*, time and time again. Make the small effort, which over time becomes second nature. And in the process, learn the backgrounds and stories of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of interesting people. *They make your life more interesting*. They enrich *your* experience. They add to the stories you tell your friends. And those stories make *you* more interesting.

So don’t limit yourself to knowing people “like you.” What a boring world that becomes. Spread your knowledge base. Everyone out there has a story. Everyone out there has hopes and dreams. For themselves and for their children. Hopes and dreams, needs and wants, connect us as people. Connect us as individuals.

Never pass up an opportunity to make that connection. Sitting at the bus stop. Standing on a street corner. Waiting in line. Browsing in a shop.

How’s business? Where did you get that crazy hat? What’s the name of your dog? What does this thingamajig do? How does this work? What are you doing? How do you like your job? How long have you worked here?

Ice breakers. Leading to the next question. Perhaps a further dialogue. Perhaps a life story. Commenting back with something from your experience. *Enriching both your lives*.

And dive into something with more than just a few curious questions. Show *real* interest. Show *depth*. In Japan, Elizabeth’s family engaged the people and their culture, not merely with polite conversation, but by direct involvement. Her mother hired a woman, trained to be a geisha, to teach Nancy and Elizabeth Japanese dance and music. The kids also took lessons in sumi—Japanese ink drawing; and ikebana—flower arranging. Learned phrases from the Japanese language.

So practice makes perfect. The more you mix and truly engage others, the more wonderful stories and backgrounds you discover. The more stories you hear, the more stories you have to tell. *The more interesting you become*. The more new friends you acquire. *The richer your life becomes*.

3—Consider sending your daughter to a women’s college.

It was a recommendation almost obliquely made. On the Naval Academy parade grounds, made by one of the younger Navy wives. They were just chatting. She was acting like a friend, though she was merely an acquaintance. She suggested to Elizabeth, “when the time came, I should go to college where she had gone, Mary Washington College. I hadn’t heard of it, but if she liked it, I liked it, and I carried this flimsy notion with me throughout high school . . . [and] when it came time to apply . . . I applied to Mary Washington College, the women’s college of the University of Virginia, in Fredericksburg. And when I was accepted, I went.” (Edwards, 65)

Prior to attending, Elizabeth’s impression was that at a women’s college young women, “uninhibited and unintimidated by young men, would blossom and find their rightful place in communities, and they would take that sense of confidence and sometimes entitlement with them into the world.”

Elizabeth *didn’t* fit that pre-college mold. She was neither inhibited nor intimidated. She had been president of her high school class. Kicked off her cheerleading team. Independent minded.

What she found there that she liked best was camaraderie. Intellectual, social, political. “We were not all friends, but within that larger body, we worked out communities, often more than one, which met our needs and allowed us to find essential parts of the adults we would become.”

That was the beauty of a women’s college. Like a good sorority or fraternity. You make lifetime friendships. Your different points of view are wrapped in the friendships of common core experiences. Without the every-hour intrusion of the opposite sex. Without those distractions.

Women’s colleges. A hidden resource for your daughter or daughters. Investigate them earnestly. Thoroughly. Don’t reject them out of hand. They could be the most valuable gem in your daughter’s education. Remembered forever.

EDWARD KENNEDY

Edward Kennedy was an American politician who served forty-seven years as the United States Democratic Senator from the State of Massachusetts.

Edward's father sold bootlegged liquor.

Who was Edward Kennedy?

His family suffered more tragedy than any American family. Assassinations, plane crashes, a lobotomy. A bootlegger father. A mother that made iron stand straight up. He was kicked out of Harvard for cheating.

Edward Moore "Teddy" or "Ted" Kennedy was born February 22, 1932. He was a United States Senator from Massachusetts and a member of the Democratic Party. Affectionately known as "the Lion of the Senate," he embodied selfless service to the nation and was a champion of compassionate liberalism during his entire career.

The Kennedys were a family of tragedy that never lost their moral and political compass. Ted survived to become the most prominent member of that family—after the assassinations of his brothers: John F. Kennedy (President of the United States) and Senator Robert F. Kennedy (former United States Attorney General); and the fatal air crash of Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., (killed in action in World War II).

Ted Kennedy was an adept orator. A compromiser in an era of hard-line views and obstructionist political tactics. A champion of social and economic justice led by appropriate government intervention. He lent his considerable force to legislation passed under his purview, including immigration, cancer research, health insurance, disability discrimination, AIDS care, civil rights, mental health, children's health, education, and volunteering.

Said Ted,

It's enormously significant to me that the only description in the Bible about salvation is tied to one's willingness to act on behalf of one's fellow human beings. (Kennedy, 29)

He shared with his maternal grandfather an overriding vision of politics as a glorious game in which whether one won, lost, or tied, the players should return to the field to play again. And because of this vision, he bore no grudges and did not try to demonize his opponents.

Ted was born in Boston, Massachusetts, the youngest of nine children. When he was born, the Kennedys were far from being a leading political dynasty. He arrived into the safe cocoon of a wealthy Irish immigrant family whose patriarch Joseph "Joe" P. Kennedy, Sr. attended Boston's Latin School and Harvard University. His father bulldozed and bullied his way through a succession of enterprises. As a banker. As a shipyard builder. As a liquor distributor in the prohibition era. As a real estate investor. As a movie producer. And as the United States Ambassador to England. The fortune Joe Sr. eventually amassed made the Kennedys one of the wealthiest families in America.

Joe Sr. astutely understood the psychology of money—that one key to the success of the great families lay in placing money in irrevocable trust funds, permitting no one generation to squander the family's assets. Each member could know that he would go into life spared the necessity of scrambling for a basic living.

Ted's mother, Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, came from the *opposite* end of the professional spectrum—a family of deep political roots. Rose was profoundly religious, educated a Catholic, and socially conservative. Her father served in the United States House of Representatives and as the Mayor of Boston.

Together the two personalities formed a powerhouse union—whose children would lead the country with a President, an Attorney General and candidate for the Presidency, and a Senator who pulled himself and his family from the brink of despair. Although the Kennedys never accomplished Joe Sr.'s dream of membership in Boston Brahmin society, they crafted nine children determined to follow his dream—of service to the nation as the highest ideal.

Teddy, due to his father's moving—Bronxville, New York; Hyannis Port, Massachusetts; Palm Beach, Florida; and London, England—struggled while attending ten different schools by the time he was eleven. At age seven he received his First Communion from Pope Pius XII in the Vatican. He attended Catholic elementary and middle schools, then private preparatory school. He was athletic—tennis, hockey and football—but coupled those interests with drama, debate and glee clubs.

Teddy's childhood was curiously lonely many times, because of the family's near constant moving. He was always the new kid, unable to put down roots or make lasting friendships in school. But he developed, as a byproduct of his childhood, empathy for the vulnerable, the underdog.

To Joe Sr. the football field was the plain of honor where boys forged their manhood. On that field the Kennedy boys were tougher than tough. It was a testing ground. Only the bravest, strongest survived and won. Some say that the Kennedys "competed among themselves and against the world." (Canellos, 31) Anything could be turned into a contest. Mental or physical. And as competitive as they were with each other, they were doubly competitive against outsiders. But within the family "confrontations (as opposed to competition) were rare in our household . . . Dad raised us to cooperate, not to quarrel." (Kennedy, 67)

Ted entered Harvard University, but was expelled in his freshman year for cheating on an exam. He then spent four years in the U.S. Army and returned to Harvard, improving his study habits and graduating with a Bachelor's degree in history and government. Afterward he pursued Law at the University of Virginia, graduating in 1959. Ted's working career began inauspiciously in 1961 as an Assistant District Attorney for Suffolk County, New York. But soon the family's political ambitions prodded him to run and win a Massachusetts special election for United States Senator.

Ted met his future first wife, Virginia Joan Bennett, in law school. They married, the ceremony officiated by Cardinal Francis Spellman in New York. They begat three children. But the mid-1960's saw their marriage hit the rocks due to Joan's alcoholism and Ted's womanizing.

1964 saw Ted in a horrible crash—attributed to bad weather—while riding as a passenger in a small private plane. Ted was a true "local" politician. For even if the forecast was for stormy weather, it came with the job—you just *had* to show up at the next town's event. It was an unspoken, calculated risk of political life—required by your constituents if you wanted to keep getting reelected.

The pilot and a friend of Ted's were killed in the crash. When Ted was taken to the hospital, he had "almost no blood pressure, three damaged vertebrae, a collapsed lung, nine broken ribs and a back broken in twenty-six places." (Leamer, 23) For several days the doctors used no anesthesia on him, because they were terrified that there might be other internal injuries they didn't know about. They told him "You may never walk again, Senator." (Leamer, *Sons of Camelot* . . . 24) But Ted survived. Spent months in the hospital rehabilitating, and for the rest of his life suffered chronic back pain.

World War II was incredibly hard on the Kennedy clan. Ted's sister Rosemary was lobotomized, and then institutionalized in 1941. Jack narrowly escaped death in 1943 in the Pacific when his PT-109 Navy boat sank. Joe Jr. was killed in 1944, his navy plane shot down over the English Channel. Then in 1948 Ted's sister Kathleen died in a plane crash over the French Alps.

Joe Sr. was a womanizer, and that may have influenced his children, most notably John and Ted, to imitate him. But their mother and father's ability to compartmentalize that black mark of marriage and not overtly parade it before their children, allowed them to concentrate their children's minds on the family's bedrock goals and principles.

With an efficiency that was a wonder to behold, Joe Sr. and Rose raised their brood according to three overriding principles:

Family, Faith, Country"—our core values and guiding principles. (Canellos, 28)

Ted opined:

From my vantage point as the youngest of the nine Kennedy children, my family did not so much live in the world as comprise the world . . . I have never questioned its emotional truth. We depended on one another. We savored food and music and laughter with one another. We learned and taught one another . . . We were mutually loyal, even as we were mutually competitive . . . They [My brothers] set an extraordinarily high standard for living a life in general, and in particular in public service. (Kennedy, 18-22)

After John's and Robert's deaths, Ted, the surviving sibling, became the surrogate father to their thirteen children. Ted Kennedy married his second wife, Victoria Anne Reggie, a Washington lawyer and divorced mother of two, in 1992. He died in 2009 at the age of 77.

Parenting Techniques

1—Hammer out different areas of child development for you and your spouse, and work hard to reinforce them.

Joe Sr. took the time when he was home (from his many business interests) to anchor the emotional center of his children's lives. He put the children first in the hierarchy of attention.

Dad was always an early riser. At around 6 o'clock, I'd blink awake to a rap on my bedroom door . . . 'You can come riding if you are downstairs in five minutes.' He meant exactly that. If I were late, he would be gone. I was seldom late. (Kennedy, 12)

Joe Sr.'s usual habit was to be the first of the family up in the mornings—reading the newspapers and gathering the business, national and international news of the day. He involved the children who were too young to absorb the news by reading to them the “funnies”—the comic strips of the Boston Globe. They *became part of the ritual of reading the news*, even though it wasn't the “news” that they enjoyed. They saw that Joe Sr. loved them, wanted to be with them, and wanted to share his interest in the outside world with all of them.

Joe Sr. asserted his role as the emotional centerpiece of the clan. In return they came to him with their problems. He listened, gave advice commensurate with their ages and needs, counseled them, and disciplined them when

necessary. It was Joe Sr.'s visible guidance, not just occasionally, but day-in and day-out. Taking the time from his busy schedule to exhort his wisdom of the world.

Whether he was home or away, he always put his children first. Away, he kept in almost daily touch with them by letters. He was a never-flagging writer of letters to his children. Admonishing, boosting, suggesting, cajoling, instilling his own and Rose's values in their daily lives, problems and tribulations. He always let them know that he was there to guide them and cared deeply about their progress on life's path. But he was not afraid to be critical. Constructive criticism, blended with encouragement to *do better and be better*, was the hallmark of his correspondence (always accompanied by treats). Joe Sr. further instilled in his children the value of the dollar and the virtue of frugality. In return, Ted and the other children loved their father, admired him, and respected his opinions and guidance.

Joe Sr.'s standards,

... were the highest for each of his sons, but they were different standards for each—standards which recognized our individual strengths and weaknesses. Often he compared us to each other, but only in a way which raised each of our expectations for what we hoped to accomplish. (Canellos, 33)

As the children grew older, he would take them aside and speak to them about their plans for the future. Joe Sr. would say,

What are you going to do with your life? Kennedys don't just sit around. They do something. (Canellos, 28)

Joe Sr. put Teddy to work at a nearby farm and stables which he owned. Cutting bridle paths through the woods. Hard, buggy, hot work. Plus the children had to read the morning newspapers and listen to the radio so they could intelligently discuss current events. And before they could go out to play they had to spend at least an hour reading a book.

Rose had to contend with nine children. She focused *her* child-rearing efforts on education, usually handling matters related to school. She made sure that homework assignments were completed. She checked the children's preparation for tests and consulted with teachers. She wanted to be the perfect young mother. For achieving perfection was in her mind the only passing grade. Experts of the day warned her that the failures of her children were *her* failures. Those "experts" viewed the nursery as a place where children should be cultivated and overseen like rare orchids. And if they did not blossom with beautiful colors and fragrances, then the fault lay with the gardener—and cast a shadow of shame on her for all to see. It was, to the educators of the day, a scientific imperative.

Rose ran a no-nonsense household and set the daily rules. She was the disciplinarian. Sometimes strict. If the children broke the rules: *WHACK* with the wooden coat hanger or a spanking. And occasionally Teddy was relegated to the closet for some infraction. Rose was the consummate perfectionist. The children must get up at the same time each day, eat their meals together at the same time, and go to bed at the same time. And after lunch they must read or take a nap. Her comment on punctuality is telling:

Promptness is a compliment to the intelligent, a rebuke to the stupid. (Canellos, 29)

Rose supplied the "gentleness, support and encouragement that made Joe Sr.'s standards reachable." Rose wrote:

*A mother knows that hers is the influence which can make that little precious
being to be a leader of men, an inspiration, and a shining light in the world.
(Canellos, 27-28)*

Thus she was ever the encourager. Insisting that perfection could be achieved. Was within reach. Was just around the corner. If only they would try harder, strive, eliminate timewasters, maintain their priorities, and always remember their goals. Hers was the soft side to Joe Sr.'s sterner side. She plied the softer encouragement of a knowing mother—ever ready to understand Ted and each of his siblings' different personalities and needs. But when it came to education, she would brook no slackness, no laxity. Her children were going to make it. With degrees and honors, in preparation for life and service to humanity.

For Rose, Teddy was her last child and she nurtured him longer and deeper than his siblings.

*Mother was also our Pied Piper into the world of knowledge and ideas. She led
us on educational outings to museums and concerts, to [historical sites] . . .
rattling out math challenges along the way. She was our unflagging
grammarian and standard-bearer of decorous speech. (Kennedy, 30)*

In return, he lavished on her his love.

So divide the household and child-rearing duties. Specialize. You and your spouse. Clear lines of responsibility. Each spouse backing up the other. But consulting on major decisions. Keeping the other spouse informed.

2—Build strong family bonds.

The Kennedys were all about family.

Joe Sr.'s and Rose's emphasis was three-fold, in this order: Family, Faith, Country. Family came first. The others followed. From the day they were old enough the boys played together. Competed together. Worked together. Strategized together. Campaigned together. Governed together. And ultimately wept together

*They were imbued with the importance of family—and of the Kennedy family. It
was all for one and one for all. Though they did allow a constellation of
close friends and loyal retainers into the orbit, if you weren't a Kennedy you
just weren't a Kennedy. (Canellos, 28)*

The tragedies of the family—the deaths of Joe, Jr., Jack and Bobby and the institutionalization of Rosemary, cemented in grief a new level of commitment to each remaining member of the clan. No other American family of prominence had such bad fortune.

The Kennedy family's common goals were public service and imbuing the Kennedy family's name with luster. Helping each other was a given. No backbiting. Pull together. One face to the world. Age differences (Jack was 17 years older than Ted) meant that the older boys (Joe, Jr. and Jack) didn't see Teddy as a rival, but rather a friend to be nurtured and protected.

“Signature sports” of the Kennedys included *dinner-table quizzes, football, sailing, and politics*. Learning to excel in each was an expected rite of Kennedy manhood.

Dinner table conversation. Answering Joe Sr.'s peppering questions on current events and politics.

Football. No family played harder or rougher.

Sailing. “Like politics, the ocean held a hypnotic lure, and sailing was as much a part of the Kennedy makeup as good teeth and a strong jaw line. They took lessons; the family owned boats. When there were only eight children, Joe [Sr.] named the family’s boat *The Ten of Us*.” (Canellos, 32) Each child was expected to participate, to compete avidly.

Politics. “Teddy, [was] always eager to emulate his brothers.” (Canellos, 50) In getting elected, as Bobby had been, to head the Student Legal Forum at the University of Virginia, or traveling to North Africa and other foreign locales, or campaigning in the thirteen western states for his brother Jack’s 1960 squeaker U.S. Presidential win. Later Teddy “embraced the opportunity to prove that Joe [Sr.]’s faith in him had not been misplaced.” (Canellos, 67) So he ran for the U.S. Senate seat from Massachusetts at his father’s behest—trusting his father’s judgment. All the boys pulled their political weight for each other.

Bind the family with strong bonds of togetherness.

3—Develop mantras for the family.

The Kennedy children were expected to be cheerful. Cheerfulness was valued by Rose and Joe Sr. Tears, sadness, moping—Joe Sr. told them—were worthless.

Said Ted,

- *Dad wouldn’t let any of his children feel sorry for himself. Yet he was quick to scold a child who tried to smile too readily or to charm his way through life.*
- *No sour-pusses.* (Canellos, 18)
- *Kennedy’s never complain.* (Kennedy, 66)

Joe Sr.’s favorite mantras that he came back to again and again, were:

No losers in this family. (Canellos, 18)

No rich, idle bums. (Canellos, 18)

Things don’t happen, they are made to happen. (Leamer, *The Kennedy Men*, 351)

And Joe Sr. specifically addressed Ted,

You can have a serious life or a non-serious life, Teddy. I’ll still love you whichever choice you make. But if you decide to have a non-serious life, I won’t have much time for you. You make up your mind. There are too many children here who are doing things that are interesting to me to do much with you. (Kennedy, 40)

And when it came to mistakes, Joe Sr. was practical. According to Ted,

We knew that we could always come home, that we could make mistakes, get defeated, but when all was said and done, we would be respected and appreciated at home . . . This was the abiding philosophy. (Kennedy, 31)

Mantras. Short. Easily understood. Easily remembered. Worth their weight in gold.

Develop mantras for the family. Some may appear hokey at first to your kids, but they will stick in their noggin.

4—Read to them when they are young.

Each evening during Ted's very early years, his mother Rose read to him a children's story, personifying the characters with her own "voices," after which they would say prayers together and go to bed.

Jack Kennedy, Ted's older brother and future President of the United States, drilled this into him:

Read books enthusiastically

Jack was a famously quick reader (reportedly reaching 2,000 words-per-minute with good comprehension). And as a student Ted looked up to Jack, as do many younger brothers to their older, wiser sibling. *Jack insisted that Ted never be without a book.* He also introduced Ted to his favorite authors and writings—with both of them reading aloud together—bonding and instilling in Ted a love of literature, the classics, as well as poetry and verse. It was a way for Jack to revisit his most esteemed writers, and at the same time pass them along to the next generation of Kennedys.

Ideas, desire to travel, role models, literacy—all come from books. *Read to your children to encourage a love of reading.* Teaching them by example to read. Plumb biographies, well-written fiction, words of the Bible and great religious books, important history, great speeches, and beautiful poems. Let them become the friends of your sons and daughters.

Reading. One of the most important gauges for future success. Don't let it slide. Do your part by reading to them when they are young. And reading more mature texts—Shakespeare, poetry, memorable passages from fiction—when they are older, as teenagers.

5—Eat dinner together and discuss important world news events and ideas.

In the Kennedy household, dinner was more than simply eating a meal. Dinner was a time to show what you had. Brains. Ideas. News. It wasn't enough to look cute, to make people laugh. You must show Joe Sr. and Rose you could keep up with your siblings—that you had the brainpower, the learning, the command of the English language, the poise, the speaking ability, to hold your own with the grownups. Only in that way did you get praised and were you able to prove that you had what it takes. Had what it takes to tackle the public arena to which the family aspired.

[Rose] was the moderator of our topical dinner table conversations, the topics—geography one night, the front-page headlines the next—announced in advance on cards that she wrote out and pinned to a billboard near the dining room. (Kennedy, 30)

Since the Kennedy children spanned a broad range of ages, there were two tables at dinnertime. One table for the adults and older children. Another table for the younger children. The younger Kennedys were expected to behave themselves and listen closely to the adult conversation.

The adult table fielded politics, history, current events, and literature. Young adults had to contribute on any and all topics. Any topic brought up for discussion was not a one-liner, one-idea, one-thinker topic. Any of the children could be called on to speak their thoughts about a topic that had been introduced by another. And it needed to be a well-spoken, logical, coherent comment or idea. Joe Sr. and Rose quizzed the children and encouraged participation and varying opinions. To be deemed worthwhile, it was imperative that you *contribute something meaningful and worthwhile to the dinner table discussion. That was the iron rule.*

Teddy often resorted to talking about a book he was reading—illuminating the ideas of the author and offering a critical review.

Mother was obsessed with learning. She would pin clippings from newspapers and magazines onto a bulletin board so the children could bone up on the news of the day—and comment on it at the table. (Canellos, 30)

After dinner the family would sing Irish songs around the piano, played with gusto by Rose—supplemented by stories of her youth.

Eating dinner together reinforces the family unit and builds solidarity, competitiveness, and a broader outlook of the world and world events. Don't let other activities take precedence over eating together, over discussing important topics at the dinner table

6—Teach them to fight their own battles.

At the age of nine, Rose sent Teddy to a Catholic boarding school. The story goes that one time another student was bullying and pushing Teddy around. Bobby, his older brother, saw what was happening, but refused to intervene. Telling Teddy,

You've got to learn to fight your own battles. (Canellos, 25)

He did and it stood him in good stead the rest of his life—in battles emotional, physical and political. He didn't rely on others to fight for him. He met and fought them head on, with courage and grit.

Teach them the difference. Not every battle should be fought. "Live to fight another day" has its place. If you must fight, then pick the time and place. Marshal your resources. Be prepared. *Fight hard.*

But teach them how to fight their own battles. Don't shy away from conflict that builds character and stamina.

SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR

Sandra Day O'Connor is an American jurist and the first female member of the United States Supreme Court.

Sandra's father was an Arizona cattle rancher.

Who is Sandra Day O'Connor?

The Lazy B. A huge cattle ranch in Arizona. More work than you could conceive. And Sandra wasn't spared.

Sandra Day was born March 26, 1930 and grew up on the Lazy B Ranch. On the border between New Mexico and Arizona, near Duncan, Arizona. She has two siblings. Her parents were Harry Alfred Day ("DA") and Ada Mae Wilkey, ranchers on land as hard as anyone could imagine making a living on. Harry Day's father came to New Mexico from Vermont in 1880, seeking his fortune in ranching. He bought a herd of cattle in Mexico and settled in for a tough, hardscrabble life in the saddle. His coming coincided with droughts, overstocking, and falling cattle prices. Barbed wire was replacing the "open range."

The Lazy B Ranch was vast—8,560 acres owned, and the balance of 160,000 acres leased from the state or federal governments. This acreage supported (sometimes) 2,000 cows and a few working horses. Thirty-five wells and windmills on the ranch had to be oiled and serviced regularly. Any breakdown was a *very* serious matter, and both the machinery and cattle depending on it had to be taken care of immediately. Harry Day had to learn fast how to do almost any conceivable repair on the Lazy B—and usually do it alone. According to Sandra's father, "If you want something done, do it yourself."

The 1921 death of his father forced Harry Day, then age 23, to forswear his dream of attending Stanford University. Instead he had to assume direct responsibility for the Lazy B. He compensated for lack of a University education by reading widely. Periodicals such as *U.S. News & World Report*, *Time*, *Fortune*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. And soaking up the mechanics of how things worked. When he was growing up, the Lazy B was the largest and most successful ranch in the region. Harry Day did it. He was smart. Powerful. Exceedingly kind to all. But never wrong. *A perfectionist. Always things had to be done his way.* A very careful business manager. *Income must exceed expenses.* He earned the respect of both other ranchers and his cowboys. Sandra saw how hard he worked, recognized and appreciated his exemplary qualities, and tried hard to live up to his standards. Unusually, he took an interest in everything and everyone he met.

The Day's house was thirty-five miles from the nearest city. Over very rough roads. No indoor plumbing, running water, or electricity. The house was shared with several cowboys who slept on the screened porch. Sandra's mother Ada Mae did the cooking. Washed clothes using a corrugated washboard. No proper bathtub. Instead, a large tin tub was brought in and sufficed for their weekly baths. Sandra's mother was born in 1904, the first of three children. She grew up in Arizona, the daughter of a cattle trader, rancher, and mercantile store owner. Musically inclined, she learned to play the piano and socially was exceedingly outgoing. When she met Harry Day she was a graduate of the University of Arizona. Not intimidated by her family's skepticism of Harry Day's shortcomings (remember, Harry Day was tough, self-taught, had little money, a rancher with no college education). They eloped after a three-month, mostly long-distance romance. He was thirty. She was twenty-three. She then hurled herself into her new existence. Sandra's mother played the piano, dressed well, and was indefatigable. She read avidly and subscribed to various magazines and newspapers (*The New Yorker*, *Vogue*, *House Beautiful*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Time*, *Life* and

National Geographic). And she passed that reading trait on to her children. She was the only woman on the ranch, but the men respected her for her endurance, her work ethic, her dignity, her poise. She was “a tidy package of good looks, competence, and charm.”

Sandra delighted in long walks with her mother across the Lazy B, both peering inquisitively at the desert flora and fauna, and searching for Indian artifacts. And the three R’s were not neglected either, for by four years of age Sandra could already read—a testament to her mother’s instruction and Sandra’s intelligence. On the social side Ada Mae was no wallflower. She loved music and entertaining, and passed those passions on to her daughter too.

Ada Mae had a problem. The schools near the ranch were not of a high enough caliber to benefit and challenge Sandra. She wouldn’t let poor education cripple her daughter’s otherwise bright future. Although Ada Mae tried for a year to home school Sandra’s siblings, it didn’t prove a satisfactory solution. Her solution was to (reluctantly) let Sandra school in El Paso, “boarding” with her grandmother, Mamie Wilkey. She sent her to Radford School for Girls, acclaimed for its rigorous traditional teaching. However, the separation from her mother and father and the Lazy B was traumatic for a girl of eleven. Homesickness often rolled over Sandra. In the eighth grade she won a temporary reprieve from Radford, for a year of schooling near the ranch. But that commute by car and bus from the Lazy B consumed about four hours per day, and was not sustainable.

In 1946 Sandra entered Stanford University at the young age of sixteen, majoring in economics. The school her father had very reluctantly passed on. She was naturally apprehensive, due to her age, but that worry proved idle. She excelled with high grades. A natural verbal ability honed on the ranch. An avid competitor in sports and games.

Professor Harry Rathbun, Stanford’s esteemed economics professor. Her experience in Professor Rathbun’s classroom propelled Sandra to enter Stanford’s law school after her undergraduate work. His teaching melded economics and personal responsibility. You, an individual, can make a difference. You have a responsibility to the community. Go out into the world and solve problems. Go out and make a difference. Go do something worthwhile. Do something to help others. Take with you your knowledge of economics to improve the world.

On to Stanford Law School. And who should she meet in her law class? While only one of five women in the class, Sandra bumped against fellow law student, William Rehnquist, who would later become Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Confident and articulate, both became members of the *Stanford Law Review*.

Another Stanford law student, John Jay O’Connor III, caught her eye romantically. Their interest percolated over many weeks while they jointly checked citations and proofread law review articles. She was smitten and married him in 1952.

1952 also brought reality to the forefront. For Sandra’s interviews with several law firms in California were disheartening in the extreme. She had graduated in the top ten percent of her law-school class and had been on the board of editors of the *Stanford Law Review*. All for naught. No employment offers. Except for the position of legal secretary. A disaster. Instead she pivoted to work as a deputy county attorney handling civil cases for San Mateo County, just north of Stanford. It proved an interim solution, for in 1958 she started her own law firm, pitching in with a Princeton and University of Michigan law graduate. Their office was in a shopping center in Phoenix, Arizona.

Politics provided another avenue for Sandra’s talents. County vice chairman for the Republican Party. All the while continuing her private law practice. Trustee for the Federal Bankruptcy Court. Then Assistant Attorney General of Arizona (representing state agencies and boards). And appointed, then re-elected twice to the Arizona State Senate. 1964 supporting Barry Goldwater’s bid for the presidency. Appointed to the Arizona Court of Appeals. All the while raising her three sons. *She was a very busy woman.*

1969 was the payoff for her industriousness and Republican connections. President Richard Nixon appointed her to fill an open United States Senate seat, and following that she quickly secured the chairmanship of the Senate's State, County and Municipal Affairs legislative committee. And a seat on both the Appropriations and Judiciary Committees. She was finally in her element. Prepared. Ready to "rock and roll."

In 1981 she was nominated by President Ronald Reagan to serve as an Associate Justice for the United States Supreme Court. Affirmed by a vote of 99–0. And during her tenure—until her retirement in 2006—she was regarded as the Court's leading centrist.

She retired to better care for her husband, who suffered for two decades from Alzheimer's disease. In her "retirement" she is now the Chancellor of the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. And also deeply involved in heightening the public's awareness of Alzheimer's.

In 2002 she co-wrote with her brother and published *Lazy B*, a book chronicling her life growing up on a cattle ranch in the American southwest.

Parenting Techniques

1—Teach genuine interest in other people.

Sandra:

[My father's] most distinguishing characteristic was his genuine interest in everyone he met, whether poor or rich, educated or illiterate, well dressed or in rags. He never talked down to his children; he spoke to us as adults and wanted to know our thoughts and views. (O'Connor, 28)

As a result, Sandra and her siblings felt the ups and downs of others. The hired cowboys. Cowboys that stayed sometimes for decades with Harry Day and the Lazy B. Sometimes even worked there until they died. She saw their weaknesses. She saw their towering strengths. They were all human beings. Some had families. All had hopes and dreams. They worked hard. Were honest. They deserved respect. For a young girl, needing to "learn the ropes," Sandra needed their confidence and she needed to show confidence in them.

Her life lessons with common working people of all backgrounds formed the basis for fair and compassionate judicial rulings on the United States Supreme Court.

Don't let your children merely talk to others. Show them by example that they should be genuinely interested in others. Their life stories, problems, joys, and sorrows.

2—Allow your children to work with you.

Sandra:

The value of hard work and honest, fair dealing were drilled into us constantly. Whenever any of us were at home, we could go with DA [my father] to help with his work . . . [my siblings] Alan, Ann, and I knew exactly what DA did and could accompany him and help him most of the time. We could see how

hard he worked, and we learned to appreciate the desert and how difficult it is to make a living on that arid land. (O'Connor, 28)

Work. You spend a great deal of your life at work, in your profession. But most of the time your children know very little about what you do. They don't appreciate how hard you work. What an impact it has on theirs' and others' lives. How it fits in with their world and the world of others.

Taking them to work and bringing them into the business's problems, meetings, solutions. That's the way to make them appreciative, aware of where their "food and clothing" comes from, and more knowledgeable and enthusiastic about business.

3—Show them the job should be done right.

Sandra:

DA encouraged each of his children to accomplish whatever they undertook in a competent and professional manner. Slipshod work would be quickly uncovered, and he would redo it in a proper manner. He would not scold someone who performed a task inexpertly, but that person would know without being told that he or she had not met the desired standard. Each of his children would work hard to receive a nod of approval from DA. (O'Connor, 33)

All three of us, many times, saw DA spend an hour or more doing some little inconsequential job but having the patience to stay with it until he got it right. (O'Connor, 28)

We all can work to slack standards or high standards. We do it. Our children pick up on our standards and do it too. Do you want them to proceed in life always aiming low? Or aiming high? It's up to you. Every task. Every project. Every job. High standards? Or low standards?

Do it right all the time. Take the time to do it right. Practice the Golden Rule. If it were someone else doing the job or project for you, what standards would you want? Of course *you'd want it done right!*

4—Let them memorize important prose and practice dramatic recitation.

At Radford School for Girls classes were small. Sandra especially enjoyed Miss Fireovid's dramatic-arts class. Memorizing short essays and poems. Reciting them in dramatic fashion. Miss Fireovid insisted on clear enunciation. Proper pronunciation. Look at the audience. Initially frightening for Sandra, but an incredible learning experience.

Remember your school days? What stayed in your memory the rest of your life? It was your English public speaking or classes where you had to memorize well-known passages or poems. The exact wording and meaning stayed with you for a long, long time. Maybe now it's fading, but you still remember those with fondness and enjoy re-reading them in books.

But the experience of memorizing, learning the meaning, practicing recitations, diction, enunciation, projection—those can be life-changing experiences. Preparing your children for big things in the future. So even if they don't get that practice in school, let them do it at home. Or even if they *do* get it at school, *add to it at home*. Let them practice dramatic recitations!

5—Discuss current events at the dinner table.

One hallmark of the Day household was the evening meal. When the farm work was done (that always came first), Harry Day relaxed. He loved nothing more than to spend hours each day at the dinner table discussing current events. Ranching. Economics. Politics. It wasn't a talk-down-to-the-child period either. Sandra had a facile mind for her age. Ada Mae was an avid participant too. They talked about real problems. Problems that either did or could or would affect their lives. Real meaty issues. Back and forth. Debating. Lecturing. Wrestling with reality.

Every home should resonate with the cognizance of current events. What's happening in the world? What's happening in our state? In our community? Newspapers. Online. Discussions with friends, neighbors. All those sources feed into our view of events. Analyze. Take a position. Defend *that* position. Switch positions. Defend *that* position. Learn to empathize with the opposition, but fight orally for your position.

The dinner table is the ideal battleground to wage this educational war.

RONALD REAGAN

Ronald Reagan was the 40th President of the United States, a Republican, and the former Governor of California.

Ron's mother performed dramatic recitals and crusaded among prisoners.

Who was Ronald Reagan?

Bedtime for Bonzo. A movie to forget. An actor to remember. Carried the Republican Party's conservative banner to the Presidency. Burnished it with his humor and faith in the greatness of America.

Ronald Wilson Reagan was born February 6, 1911 in Tampico, Illinois to John Edward "Jack" Reagan and Nellie "Nelle" Wilson Reagan (he was their second son). He was President of the United States from 1981–1989, and the 33rd Governor of California from 1967–1975.

Ron's father descended from Irish Catholics with roots in County Tipperary, Ireland. A poor land which suffered greatly during the potato famine of the 1840's. His mother, a Protestant, came from Scots-English ancestry. Ron's nickname "Dutch" was given to him by his father, reportedly due to his "fat little Dutchman"-like appearance and/or his "Dutch boy" haircut. Whatever the truth, it stuck throughout his life.

Religion was a focus of Ron's early life. Tempered by his father's religious skepticism and cynicism, Ron molded his opinions of religion differently. As President, Reagan almost never left the White House to go to church, and seldom invited a chaplain in to give services. He did not wish to see Americans submissive to the religious establishment, but defended religion from those groups that strove to rid it from public life. The substance of one's personal religious convictions was of less concern to him than *the freedom to believe*. Thus it was no coincidence that as Governor of California he told students that their professors should teach them not "what" to think, but "how" to think.

Ron's father Jack was a Democrat. Through and through. He coupled that with a deep respect for the value of hard work and ambition. He believed in the workingman and his right to a fair shake for his labors. That all men were created equal, just as the Bible said. And that a man's own ambition and drive foresaw what happened to him thereafter.

He had street smarts. He was a great salesman. And "my father was filled with dreams," said Ron. Still, Ron's father had a cynical view of mankind and suspected the worst of people.

Ron's mother, Nelle, began life on an Illinois farm. Her sons called her Nelle. Not mother or mama. Reagan's parents were polar opposites in their views of people and the world. "[My mother] had a drive to help my brother and I make something of ourselves." (R. Reagan, *An American . . .* 23) While Jack was teeming with dreams and discontent, Nelle was doggedly determined. Exuding kindness and feminist assertion. While Jack smoked and drank to excess, Nelle prayed, worked extra hard, and made sure that there was money enough to pay for food and the rent. Nelle's one dream was that her two sons would go to college (both she and her husband had only completed the sixth grade).

Ron's memory of his childhood differed greatly from that of his brother Neil. Neil said, "We were poor—and I mean *poor*." (R. Reagan, *Where's the Rest* . . . 310) Nelle, very much aware of the Reagan family's precarious finances, did her best to minimize expenses. Ron wore clothes previously worn by his brother, as did most children in his day. Later he firmly stated his belief that this and other "scrimping" built his character and attention to thrift.

Of the financially rough patches in his early life—when the family was clinging by its fingernails to a rung on the middle-class ladder, Ron said,

We didn't live on the wrong side of the [railroad] track, but we lived so close we could hear the whistle real loud. (R. Reagan, *Where's the Rest* . . . 311)

In keeping with his personality, Ron viewed his childhood in rosy, idyllic terms—roaming and enjoying the hills and outdoors in summer, sledding in winter. Woods. Creeks. Mysteries.

The Great Depression wreaked havoc on the family finances. Forcing the family to lead a nomadic life. Though a loner by nature, probably from his constantly shifting schools, and thus never being able to retain friends for long—Ron's personality turned out sunny. He was very popular. Moving ten times before he was ten years of age, he always considered Dixon, Illinois his real hometown. That was where his heart was. Dixon. A "small universe" of a mid-western town. In 1920, on his family's arrival, the town had only 8,000 residents (really not so small in those days).

In the summer of 1926 Reagan, a strong swimmer, became the first lifeguard at Dixon's Lowell Park beach, on the treacherous Rock River. Drownings were scandalizing the township. Ron lifeguarded there for seven summers. *Pulled seventy-seven swimmers to safety.* And the local Dixon newspaper crowed over his heroics.

Later, with his acting career well underway, Ron met his first wife, actress Jane Wyman, when he co-starred with her in a 1938 film. They were married two years later. Jane came from a similar mid-west middleclass home, but from a home life that lacked the Reagan home's nurturing aspects. Their marriage in 1940 lasted eight years. They had a daughter, Maureen, and adopted a son, Michael. The marriage broke up in 1949 as a result of arguments pitting Ron's political ambitions against both of their acting careers.

Ron met his second wife, Nancy Davis, when he was president of the Screen Actors Guild. After she asked his help when her name appeared (mistaken for another Nancy Davis) on a Hollywood communist blacklist. Describing that meeting, she said, "I don't know if it was exactly love at first sight, but it was pretty close." In their marriage, they were extremely close. Frequently displaying their affection for each other. One press secretary said,

They never took each other for granted. They never stopped courting.

He called her "Mommy" and she called him "Ronnie". He once wrote to her,

Whatever I treasure and enjoy . . . all would be without meaning if I didn't have you. (N. Reagan, 103)

Ronald Reagan began his political career as a Democrat, but began to change in the 1950's as he wrote and spoke around the country for the General Electric Corporation (GE). Changed to a conservative, pro-business stance. Switched allegiance to the Republican Party in 1962, supported Barry Goldwater's presidential candidacy in 1964, and won the Governorship of California in 1966. Four years later he was re-elected. In 1980 he ran for the Presidency of the United States for the Republican Party, and won. He was re-elected four years later.

The American people accorded Ronald Reagan high marks for his presidency. His peaceful end to the cold war with Russia was tempered with the large deficits necessary to build up America's military might. His lasting imprint was placed on the Republican Party and America's modern conservative politics—as standing for less government and lower taxes—though the former was never achieved.

Reagan's ability to connect with the American people earned him the affectionate title "The Great Communicator." He learned how to speak and communicate well as an actor and over many years as spokesperson for GE. So much so that when an occasional scandal or controversy arose, he was nicknamed the "Teflon President"—due to the public's perception that he could do almost no wrong.

Reagan believed in "American exceptionalism"—that there is something unique and wonderful about America—that God ordained her birth and rise to preeminence. He spoke of America as:

A land of hope, a light unto nations, a shining city on a hill. (Deconde, 76)

Few other Presidents had such total faith in the future, or believed so strongly that America would continue to be a beacon of goodness. President Reagan was always willing to take responsibility for the government's wrongs. But rarely did he ask the American people to do the same for their own lives or to curtail their wants and desires. Government might err and do wrong, but the people never did.

He viewed equality of opportunity as the government's role, rather than uniformity of outcome. If a man worked harder and smarter, he should be rewarded more abundantly.

Ronald Reagan died in 1989 at the age of 93, after suffering several years with Alzheimer's disease.

Parenting Techniques

1—Build your ideals and values into your children.

Reagan's mother, Nelle, harbored a deep optimism toward life and other people. She looked for and expected the best in people—and she often found it. Nelle reflected,

*Everything in life happens for a purpose. If something goes wrong, don't let it get you down. Step away, step over, move on . . . If later something good will happen, you'll think 'If I hadn't had that problem back then, then this better thing wouldn't have happened.' (R. Reagan, *An American* . . . 21)*

Nancy, Ron's adored second wife, often commented on Ron's optimism. That he received it from his mother. The idea that the glass is always half-full:

It can be difficult to live with somebody so relentlessly upbeat. [Sometimes] I longed for him to show at least a little anxiety. (Angelo, 295)

Nancy quipped,

*Depressed? He doesn't know the meaning of the word. He is not impervious to events, but he is very resilient. Nelle [Ron's mother] never saw anything evil in another human being and Ronnie is the same way. Sometimes it infuriates me, but that's how he is. (R. Reagan, *Where's the Rest* . . . 311)*

Ron's mother placed a high value on prayer. She wanted Ron to dream, to believe in dreams and to believe in his ability to work and make his dreams come true. While his mother never doubted the power of prayer, she also believed in the need for action. Helping people in trouble. She was "a natural do-gooder." She had the conviction that everyone loved her—just because she loved them.

A diploma is not needed for kindness.

Her deep faith, as a member of the Disciples of Christ Church, led her to spiritual and social activism. She welcomed the down and out even into her home. She followed a weekly schedule for herself. Visiting prisoners in the local jails, and later in a tuberculosis sanitarium for indigents. Nelle's religion and that of her children, was a relaxed religion. Grounded in the scriptures and fellowship. Preaching optimism and minimizing doctrinal differences. Turning away from external authority. Instead trusting in the inner self. Kindness and religion were her rocks. And Dutch followed her religious lead as an active youth participant.

In time the previous generosity of Nelle to her neighbors came back to save the Reagan family. When Jack Reagan, Ron's father, lost his job on Christmas Eve of the Great Depression and the grocery store cut off their credit, friends brought food to them. In desperation the family rented out all but one room of the family house. They hung on by their fingernails and sheer willpower.

What are your values? Your ideals? Create a master list of your family's values. Day by day, one by one, instill them in your children.

Build your ideals and values into your children.

2—Build empathy with ordinary people.

Ron's "hometown" of Dixon was where his parents instilled many small-town lessons that shaped Ron's thinking for his entire life:

- *Everyone is a unique individual, but we all also want the same things:*
 - *We all want freedom, liberty, peace, love and security.*
 - *We all want a good home, a chance to worship God in our own way.*
 - *We all want to improve our lives, to work at a meaningful job, to be rewarded for our work.*
 - *We want to control our own destiny, and*
 - *We all dream and seek pride and accomplishments in our life. (R. Reagan, An American . . . 27)*

Said Ron,

*America, especially in a small town environment, gives us this opportunity.
America gives us the chance to make our dreams come true.*

Empathy with ordinary people. The taxi driver, the garbage man, the waitress, the retail clerk, the manager, the ordinary worker. Cultivate the ability to talk to everyone and treat them all with courtesy, respect, and dignity. They

have families, children to feed, problems of race, education, money—that we may not have. “There but for the grace of God go we.” Have empathy. Learn empathy with others.

3—Firmly reject racial bigotry.

Long before racial tolerance and respect came of age in America, Ron’s parents were practicing it. They inculcated in him the tenet that people should be judged as individuals. Irrespective of their skin color. His mother was racially color-blind. She allowed no racial slurs or religious intolerance in the Reagan family. *The Golden Rule ruled!*

Treat thy neighbor as you would want your neighbor to treat you. (R. Reagan, An American . . . 30)

Judge everyone by how they act, not who or what they are. (R. Reagan, An American . . . 30)

Ron told a personal story that stuck deep in his psyche all his life:

After arriving at his traveling destination on one of his [many] sales trips, his father Jack began registering at the hotel desk—and heard the clerk tell him: ‘You’ll like it here, Mr. Reagan. We don’t permit a Jew in the place.’ His father reacted by grabbing his suitcase and leaving. But before he did, he leaned over the desk and spit out his remarks: ‘I’m a Catholic. If it’s come to the point where you won’t take Jews, then someday you won’t take me either.’ (R. Reagan, An American . . . 27)

Race bigotry is a moral flaw. It corrodes the intellect. Reject it forcefully. Over and over. And your family will reject bigotry too.

4—Insist that your teenage children work each summer—even if they or you don’t need the money.

Early on Ron learned the value of work. True, he loved football in high school. But his seven summers spent lifeguarding brought personal responsibility for others’ lives. And it was hard work. Though not hard in a manual sense, except when a rescue had to be performed. Instead it was a lesson in attentiveness, concentration, and defense against distractions: girls, passersby, other interesting beach happenings.

Ron’s college aspirations? Money was the problem. His dad couldn’t afford to pay college expenses, but was very emotionally supportive. Eureka College, a small liberal arts college in Eureka, California, sponsored by his church, the Disciples of Christ. It recognized Ron’s earnestness and gave him a half-tuition scholarship plus a job that covered his board. That, coupled with his earnings from lifeguarding, coaching swimming, and helping to build and remodel houses (with pick and shovel)—enabled him to attend Eureka and survive financially.

He majored in economics and sociology. Excelled in campus politics, sports, and theater. Played football and track, captained the swimming team, cheer led for basketball, edited the yearbook, and was elected student body president. And to boot, he organized a student strike when the college president tried to cut back the faculty. An all-around “big man on campus.” He reveled in it.

Manual work. It instilled in Ron an appreciation of common people—who earn their living through the trades and manual labor. It propelled him through school. It taught him that hard work is an essential part of life.

You don't get your dreams by daydreaming. (Skinner, 91)

America offers everyone who is willing to work hard, unlimited opportunity.

Work. It rarely hurts kids. Ninety-eight percent of the time it helps. Helps make them understand that life is not free. That whatever they want in life won't be free. Luck is usually made by people working hard, preparing for their "lucky break." Ready to take advantage of opportunities. The lazy need not apply. Life rarely rewards them, except with third-tier careers, terminations, good-for-nothing education degrees, broken marriages, perpetual financial troubles, and unhappiness. Work done well provides intrinsic, internal rewards. *Teach that.*

Summer work builds character. Help and guide your children to finding meaningful summer work. Fight for their chance at building character and the work ethic. *Even if you have to subsidize it surreptitiously*, it's more than worth it. Don't let them sit around during their free time or summers. Do so and you're asking for trouble. Asking for them to get into trouble. Providing them with the opportunity to get into trouble. Fill that free time with meaningful work. Work that puts change in their pocket. That helps pay for their academic education, transportation, or splurges. *It pays big, very big dividends.*

5—Teach your children about risk—how to assess and take risks intelligently.

Jack was tall, handsome and muscular. He had his passions: Sports. Storytelling. Practical jokes. Dancing. Daydreaming. Whisky. He was a charmer. A teller of endless stories. Sure that his fortune awaited him in the next town.

Jack loved shoes and all the marketing and science that went with them. He took correspondence courses in shoe salesmanship and spent hours studying the bones of the foot. He sold on the shoe floor, managed shoe departments, and eventually sold shoes in his own stores. He might have had a brilliant sales career were it not for the Great Depression and his alcoholism. It left him a frustrated father. Restless for change. Burning with unrequited ambition. He lost his shoe sales job during the Depression. Unemployed, yes. But he *never gave up. He never stopped trying.*

Because of his father's difficulty finding work, Ron gradually came to admire entrepreneurs and small merchants. Those who take risks. Those who build financial security and community respect for themselves and their family.

Sometimes it's riskier to do nothing, to continue on the same path, than to change, to strike out in a different direction. If your current course of action offers little or no hope for advancement toward your goals, then get off that path as soon as practical. Pick up your gum shoes. Shake off the cement. And MOVE. *But don't quit your job until you have a better one* (in writing). Assess the risks and *carefully* change direction.

Each fork in the road has risks. Decisions. Benefits. Teach your children how to assess risk and take intelligent risks. *Don't shield them from all risks.* Just help them analyze those risks. Whether it is health, financial, or physical.

Teenagers are notoriously lacking in the skills to properly take risks. It typically takes several decades to learn from their own mistakes and experience. They need to be taught. *Schools don't do it. It's your job.* You, with your life experiences, are best suited to advising, coaching—as to how to take risks. What to look out for. How to read contracts. The fine print. What does it mean? How can that phrase or clause come back to bite you? What are the benefits *and* consequences.

Begin today. It's really the case study method of Harvard Business School. You are the professor. You are the moderator. Don't just lecture. Help them analyze the risks in everyday decisions.

6—Find ways for your children to act and speak—excellent talents for any profession.

Ron's mother Nelle had an innate love of books, poetry, and the dramatic arts. Each night she gathered the boys in bed and read aloud to them. Teaching them to read and follow her loves.

Nelle was the maven of dramatic recitals for Dixon's county [in California]. Those recitals provided a respite from her family and charitable endeavors. She approached each rehearsal and recitation with the earnestness of a great actress, though her talent may not have measured up to that standard. Ron's love of acting undeniably emanated from his mother. Mother and son put together a simple act of music (she playing a respectable banjo) and readings—and performed at the Dixon State Hospital. Later Nelle was the star performer of the Dixonites, a group in their hometown that enjoyed reading dramatic excerpts from famous poems, plays, speeches, and books. These were read with all the gusto they could muster. Soon Ron, with trepidation and hesitation, but *with his mother's encouragement, tried it—and loved it.*

It really changed his life!

Formerly he was shy and insecure. Now he learned to project his voice. Enunciate words. Build inflection and meaning. Into what could otherwise be a dull recitation. He loved the audience approval and sense of clout that he got from being able to communicate with powerful speaking. He cherished the opportunity. Then joined and loved acting in school dramas.

The benefit of his mother's strategy and encouragement was evident in Ron's later career. It was then said of his acting: "he never forgot his lines, never blew a scene and always hit his marks." Shades of his mother.

New things should be exciting. You never know what will trigger your children's interest. What will improve their personality and/or become a career or lifelong interest. *Show you are open to new things and your children will be too.*

Ron's big break into the entertainment industry began with a bit of luck in the midst of the Great Depression. After graduating from Eureka College, Ron found a job announcing the home football games for the University of Iowa Hawkeyes—earning \$10 per game. When a local sports announcer in Des Moines suddenly died, Ron asked to try out as the replacement announcer for the Chicago Cubs baseball games. In those days the game results were telegraphed from the game with a delay—and the local announcer had to "create" the radio version from the paper copy, making it sound like a real play-by-play account of the game. The manager stated the tryout's terms: "announce an imaginary football game." After eight years playing high school and collegiate football, Ron was ready. Sitting there at the mike, he recalled one of the electrifying games he had played in. He put his all into recreating that excitement over the radio microphone. *It worked!* It was an exciting, but imaginary game. His employer took a chance. Gave him his first job in radio. He had won the tryout.

Acting and speaking represent extraordinary abilities. That if done well will propel your children in their respective careers. Find ways for them to speak and act. Whether formally in an academic setting, or in clubs, Toastmaster meetings, or dramatic groups.

Quotes from Ronald Reagan

- *Freedom is one of the deepest and noblest aspirations of the human spirit.*
(Hayes, 42)

- *Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free. (Biographiq, 47)*
- *History teaches that wars begin when governments believe the price of aggression is cheap. (M. Reagan, speech)*

YVONNE THORNTON

Yvonne Thornton is an African-American medical doctor, practicing obstetrics, gynecology and maternal-fetal medicine; a Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in New York City; and an author.

Yvonne's father dug ditches for a living..

Who is Yvonne Thornton?

Her father was a ditchdigger. Her mother was a maid. Yet with great parenting, the five ditchdigger's daughters defied all odds. And achieved professions in medicine (two doctors), dentistry, legal, and nursing.

Yvonne S. Thornton, M.D. graduated from Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons with an Executive Master's Degree in Health Policy and Management. A certified specialist in obstetrics, gynecology and maternal-fetal medicine. A Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Vice-Chair of OB/GYN and Director of Maternal-Fetal Medicine at Jamaica Hospital Medical Center in New York City.

Prior to her work at Jamaica Hospital, as senior perinatologist in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, Dr. Thornton established and developed the program for a new form of early prenatal diagnostic testing known as Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS). She was one of the original American investigators whose CVS results were relied upon by the United States Food and Drug Administration prior to its granting approval for the procedure in 1989.

Dr. Thornton is an avid spokesperson for the March of Dimes and women's health issues, having appeared on television shows and hosted her own show. She is the best-selling author of the Pulitzer prize-nominated book, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, published in 1995. Over 250,000 copies in print. In addition she has authored three other books: *Something to Prove: A Daughter's Journey to Fulfill a Father's Legacy*, *Primary Care for the Obstetrician and Gynecologist*, a medical text, and *Woman to Woman*, a woman's health book. And in her free time Dr. Thornton won the prestigious Daniel Webster Oratorical Competition, the first woman in its 165-year history to do so.

Yvonne's mother, Tass Edmunds Thornton, cared passionately about education. She attended and completed her junior year at Bluefield Teachers College in Bluefield, West Virginia. Was part native-American Indian blood, but mostly black. Majored in English at Bluefield (then an all-black college). In her senior year she had to drop out because the tuition money ran out. Those things happened. There were few resources then to appeal to outside of the family. So by necessity she became a cleaning lady in order to earn a living.

Yvonne's father, Donald Thornton, dropped out of high school in the tenth grade. Ten years older than Tass. He also had a cleaning job. They met, pulled to each other by their shared love of dancing. His forte was the jitterbug. They both were crazy about it. Then about each other. Then it was too late—they fell in love. They were hooked on each other.

Mostly Donald dug ditches at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Plus odd jobs on the side. But along the way he developed a vision for his family. And determination that nothing was going to stop him from reaching that vision. Part of his vision was to build his own house for his wife and five daughters. He did so, cinder block by cinder block, week after week, year after year—by scraping and saving and building.

Parenting Techniques

1—Show your children how to overcome discrimination.

Yvonne's father had a way about him that others could surely see.

A black man in the 1950's had little rank in the white community. His was the back of the line. Bowing and scraping. Receiving only leftovers. Struggling to survive. America has made light years of progress since then, but in the 1950's, even after the war, it was tough for a black father to keep body and soul and family together—fighting for their dreams. Daddy's tactic was simple and straightforward. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't, but he stuck to it.

Along the path of life Yvonne's father and the family needed help from all kinds of people – some sympathetic and some not so.

First, he approached the top person for a decision. Why?—Because according to his thinking, that person didn't have anyone to answer to if he made a wrong decision. That person could think for himself—without fear of looking over his shoulder. And in those days, any special consideration to a black man brought second guessing and potential criticism from a boss.

Second, he established a bond of humanity by talking about something both could share in common—say their children.

*I just tried to make him understand where I'm coming from and where I'm goin'. People aren't gonna throw their time or money away on somebody who gets a bottle of Thunderbird wine and lies down on the sidewalk—but, if you show people you're trying, they're gonna want to help. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 23)*

His entire life Yvonne's father never challenged the man, "Whitey." There was something special about Daddy—a solidarity, a sincerity, a simplicity—that opened doors. He gave the impression of courteous determination. He would cause no trouble, raise no commotion, but he would remain until he saw the person he had come to see. Then, when he saw him, he would get him to relate to Daddy's situation, bring him around to his side. *He put him in his shoes.*

Some people are more sensitive to discrimination than others. Sensitivity to discrimination is a very commendable trait when you are *not* the person or persons being discriminated against. *Recognize discrimination.* Fight it. Show your children that you *can* fight it. How to fight it. Don't let it slide. For tomorrow *you* might be the one discriminated against.

Discrimination is a cancer that festers in the mind of those discriminated against. Show your children how to overcome it.

2—Set a culture of thriftiness-by-example.

Yvonne's father had a talent for squeezing a penny. After about three years of marriage, when he realized that Tass, though trying hard, was not able to save much from their tight budget, he took over the family's shopping and finances. He regularly bought day-old bread at the bakery. Deli ends of meat rolls—salami and bologna. Meat cuts and chickens that couldn't be displayed one more day after not selling. Scraps and soup bones were often proffered gratis by the deli owner, to go along with the rest of Daddy's purchases.

He squeezed because he needed to. Had to. Donald's appreciation of how to save, coupled with his and Tass's clearly stated goals for those savings, sank deeply into the character of their five daughters.

Create a culture of thrifty-by-example. These days thrift is not a dirty word. It's a necessity for survival for many. And a commendable trait for all. You need to show you are on the thrifty bandwagon. Haven't fallen off after your last pay raise. Still subscribe to its tenets. Still see its value. The old saying, "a penny saved is a penny earned." Still very much applicable.

Suppose your business or household spends \$100. What is needed to generate that \$100? Well, if it's your business and your gross margin is 10%, then you must sell \$1,000 of product or services to be able to spend \$100. If it's your household and you spend \$100, then if your marginal tax rate (federal plus state) is 50% (very common), then you have to earn \$200 to spend \$100. So what's the point? The point is that saving \$100—not spending \$100—means you don't have to sell \$1,000 or earn \$200. And these days those sales and earnings are harder and harder to come by. *Saving makes sense.*

The old saying,

The best survival technique is to keep your overhead low.

Overhead is by definition your recurring expenses. Rent. Communications. Mortgage. Transportation. Even discretionary expenses. Cut. Pare. Slice. There is probably a lot of slack to be cut. Some cuts will hurt more than others. Start saving for that proverbial "rainy day." *It may be raining sooner and more frequently than you ever expect.*

Thrift. Your job. Your spouse's job. Your children's job. Your survival or your children's survival may *someday* depend on it.

3—Define education as their primary goal.

Considering his and his wife's background and finances, some would say Yvonne's father set impossible goals. Clear goals for his family and daughters:

*I love you. I love you better than life. But I'm not always going to be around to look after you. You gotta be able to look after yourselves. And for that you gotta be smart. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 3)*

*If you expect me to be nice and give you the things you want, you got to be nice and give me what I want. I want you to study. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 57)*

Clear goals. Unambiguous goals.

Donald loudly proclaimed to Tass, his daughters and anyone else who would listen. That he had a bet with the world. And that bet was one of the ways he cajoled his daughters into studying. Not just for a passing grade, but *to study harder than hard.*

*When what you got goin' for you is inside your head, that's something nobody can take away from you. Nobody. Ever. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 36)*

Education. A good education. That's their goal. Their *primary* goal. *Let them know it!*

4—Show them how to beat their weaknesses.

Daddy loved rabbits. He used them as metaphors for academic striving. He created a story that showed his daughters how to beat their weaknesses. How to train their minds and compete with better students. How to leapfrog to the head of the class and advance their life goals.

When each child started the school year, he replayed these instructions: "Pick out a rabbit." Then he would explain how, when greyhounds race at the track, a rabbit is zoomed around the track. As a result, the greyhound dogs chase the rabbit *with all their heart and determination*. That is what he asked his daughters to do.

*When you get settled in class you'll soon notice that one in your class does very well and is clearly out in front academically. That's your rabbit. If that person gets an A, that lets you know you can get an A too. You just have to try harder. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 19)*

*Study with all your heart and you will achieve your goals and make Daddy proud. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 19)*

Show your children how to define and beat their weaknesses.

Help them analyze their weaknesses. Don't just tell them. *Let them define them*. Agree to them. Then analyze how to beat them.

5—Give them life goals.

Donald Thornton's heart was fixed on the impossible idea that his five daughters would each grow up to be a doctor.

His reverence for doctors was rooted in his own experience. During one of Tass's pregnancies she required eighteen pints of blood for a transfusion. Directly threatening her life. Yvonne's father was everlastingly grateful to the hospital doctors for saving her life. *Beyond words*.

*I can't imagine nothin' greater than knowin' how to make someone well. People are bound to respect you if you can do that. It don't matter what color you are. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 22)*

That coalesced in his mind and became his astounding fixation—that *his five daughters were going to defy the odds and grow up to become doctors*. That admonition ultimately resulted in one becoming a dentist, one a lawyer, one a nurse, and one a court stenographer.

What are their life goals? Define them. State them. Repeatedly. Until it's *their* mantra.

6—Supervise their study time closely.

As Yvonne and her sisters grew, her parents had full-time jobs and could not (until they came home from work) supervise them after school. Instead, the sisters were instructed to proceed straight from school to nearby Nanna's (Nanna was their grandmother). They nicknamed her "The Wicked Witch of the East."

Nanna subscribed to a harsh, but nevertheless effective supervision style. The sisters were not allowed to play outdoors. Instead they sat in *one row* on Nanna's couch. Across from Nanna's big chair which was positioned by the front window of the living room. Nanna monitored the comings and goings outside. At the same time she kept a sharp eye on her granddaughters. They were *only* allowed to do their homework. They were *not* allowed to move or talk. The girls later christened those three hours a day the worst times of their lives. But *Nanna got the job done. And brokered no sass. You had to obey her rules. Or suffer the consequences.*

Supervision.

The old saying,

Don't let the inmates run the asylum.

Well, it's not an asylum. But sometimes it seems like it. There is no substitute for exerting moderate to strict supervision—fitted to the child and the situation.

7—Show them what will happen in life if they slacken and get lazy.

Yvonne's sister, Jeanette, got a C on a class test. Tass woke her at 6 a.m. Ordered her to the kitchen.

*I'm going to teach you how to do it [clean the kitchen] and do it right—because that's what you're going to be doing for a living when you grow up. Anybody who gets a C on a test is either too dumb or too lazy to be a doctor. Now start by scouring the oven. And I want it spotless. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 36)*

So she worked the whole day under Mommy. Who was relentless. Making her do each item perfectly. Spotless. Redone the second time. Redone the third time. Until her hands were raw and cracked.

On other occasions Tass lined up the kids and spoke sternly:

*Your father works. I work. The job you children have is to study. As long as you work at your job as hard as your father and I do at ours—we'll take care of the house; we'll do the cooking, the washing and cleaning. But if you don't do your job, if you fool around or get lazy, then you'll do the housework—because that's what you'll be doing the rest of your life. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 36)*

Lectures. Coupled with meaningful work that shows—no proves—the lecture's truth.

Show them what will happen if they slacken and become lazy. They forget. They need to be reminded. Sometimes with physical examples. Don't be afraid to let them physically experience what will happen if they slacken.

8—Drill them in proper behavior and etiquette.

Mommy's injunctions on proper behavior were burned into Yvonne and her sisters' brains:

Sit up straight [in your chair], knees together, legs crossed at the ankle. When you talk to a person, look him straight in the eye. Always speak to inferiors as readily and as cordially as to superiors. Never be loud or obstreperous.

Walk shoulders back, head high. A person meeting you for the first time judges you, by how you walk, how you talk, and how you're dressed.
(Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 38)

And she would point out various people in the park. How you could guess their character from their walk. Their dress. She had the girls walk up and down the hall at home with books on their heads—giving them instructions.

Proper behavior and etiquette is the base layer of the pyramid for successful relationships. In a family. In any company. With new people you meet. Friends. Acquaintances.

Improper behavior and poor etiquette can block *all* advancement in life. It's not just for the etiquette books. *It's for life.* For common sense. For getting along with others in a friendly, courteous manner.

Drill them in proper behavior and etiquette.

9—Create a harsh scenario if girls get pregnant.

Tass was determined to vaccinate her daughters against pregnancy:

Boys get girls pregnant and what's the difference to them? It's no difference to them, but the girl's life is over. All the lovely things you were going to do, all the wonderful things you were going to learn, all the exciting places you were going to go—there's none of that now. Your life as you know it is ended. Boys don't care you're gonna be doctors. They're lookin' out for what they want so you gotta be lookin' out for what you want. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 42)

And further,

If you have a baby, you're not bringing it back to this house. You have it, you take care of it. If you're stupid enough to get pregnant, you're out of here, on your own. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 89)

Those words were too harsh? Over-exaggerated? Maybe. But with crystal clarity it echoes in a young person's mind. Yes, they get tired of hearing it. But when the situation arises that a stark choice must be made, the words will hopefully come back to reverberate in the brain.

Create a harsh scenario of out-of-wedlock pregnancy (and drug addiction too). Teenage pregnancy is statistically rampant now. Maybe it isn't actually the end of the world, but for a teen's goals and dreams, it often shatters them. You need to be prepared. Construct lots of rules in advance of that catastrophe. Strict rules. Hard to circumvent. Penalties for breaking the rules. Enforced. Only in that way can you *hope* to prevent pregnancies.

But rules and penalties won't do the total job. They need to be coupled with admonishments from parents. With examples repeated over and over again of the consequences. *Creating the harsh scenario.*

10—Ask them to exceed their previous best.

Donald gave his daughters goals. If they got an A+, he would say,

Now I want you to get an A++. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 57)

Always pushing. Motivating. Rewarding. Punishing. Prodding sternly or gently. Never letting them forget their life goals and near-term goals. Donald said,

Girls are very determined to win and keep the love of their Daddy. For me to smile was like Santa Claus coming to a child on Christmas. (Thornton, The Ditchdigger's Daughters, 56)

Push. Push gently. Push harder. What are your goals? Will this push get you closer? Take the time. Get it *right*. Get it *better than right*.

Your previous best is not good enough. This is another day. Another challenge. *Do better than your previous best*.

11—Repeatedly explain the consequences of wrong actions.

Always when they did something wrong, Mommy and Daddy sat the girls around the front room table. Elaborating on what would happen if they didn't listen to them.

We've told you time and again not to cross those railroad tracks, but you're late and somebody says to cut across, and a train could have come and killed you. You have a mind. You've got to use it. You have to think things over because you could get hurt. (Thornton, The Ditchdigger's Daughters, 69)

These lectures were far more effective than whippings. Their precepts never left them, because they were *vivid and memorable. Nothing abstract*.

Pointing out the consequences. Multiple facets. Each elaborated, but maybe at different times. Each time different examples of the consequences.

12—Don't glorify or glamorize luck.

Daddy:

You make your own luck.

It's not glamorous. It's not rolling the dice. No casinos. *Just preparation and work*. Work and preparation. *You make your own luck*.

Don't glamorize luck.

13—Instill a built-in determination and drive toward their goals.

Interviewing with the Dean of Admissions at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1968. Yvonne was asked,

What if you find Mr. Right? [Will you drop out?]

If I do, he's just going to have to wait until I finish medical school and become a doctor.

And what if he doesn't want to wait?

*Then he's not Mr. Right. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 144)*

You are not an adult yet. But almost. I can't put the drive into you. You build it or not. You waffle through life *or* find your star. *Find your star and go for it. Don't let others stop you.*

Life goals can be talked about *ad infinitum*. But if your children don't take them to heart, burn them into their brains—then all is in vain.

14—Insist on punctuality.

When Yvonne was in college she came home at 12:30 a.m., instead of midnight as promised. She rang the bell and Daddy came to the door.

Hello

Daddy, it's me. Let me in.

*My daughter was home at 12 midnight. I don't know who you are. (Thornton, *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, 93)*

He switched off the light and walked away. [But after much pleading he let her in.]

Daddy laid down the rule and his rules were not to be broken. If you want to enjoy the benefits of this family, you have to obey the rules.

Sometimes presenting a logical argument for the rule to be bent is acceptable. Sometimes. But not often. *Repeated argumentation is not appreciated or tolerated.* Not acceptable. There are better, more productive ways to spend our time.

Punctuality. A very admirable trait. And the converse—always being late; always having a lame excuse. Not an admirable quality. Not a quality that future employers are liable to put up with. A near certain prescription for getting fired. And rightly so.

Insist on your children being punctual.

Quotes from Donald Thornton

- *If I told [my daughters] to reach for the moon, and they never got it, they knew in falling they could grab a star. That's the kind of thoughts I would give them. (Thornton, *Something to Prove*, 45)*
- *If you can't get on the other guy's wagon, you make your own wagon. (Thornton, *Something to Prove*, 131)*
- *Keep a fresh horse in the barn well-fed and ready to go, because the horse you are riding on now may come up lame. (Thornton, *Something to Prove*, 157)*
- *You've gotta be thinking five years ahead. (Thornton, *Something to Prove*, 237)*

- *Love is taught, hate is taught. I've taught my kids to love, to understand people.*
(Thornton, *Something to Prove*, 243)

ALICE WALKER

Alice Walker is an African-American author and poet who writes extensively about race and gender.

Alice's parents were tenant farmers, descendants of slaves.

Who is Alice Walker?

Relatives sold into slavery. Reflected in the black and white television images of Dr. Martin Luther King being handcuffed and shoved into the backseat of a police car. Searing visions that infused Alice's poems and stories.

Alice Malsenior Walker's great-great-great-great grandmother arrived in Eatonton, Georgia in the 1800's as a slave. Sold at auction along with two babies, one on each hip. Fast forward. Alice was delivered at birth by a black midwife in Wards Chapel, Georgia on February 9, 1944, a few miles from Eatonton, Georgia. The youngest of eight children. Her parents, Willie Lee Walker and Minnie Tallulah "Lou" Grant were tenant farmers. They were sharecroppers on a six-hundred-acre farm. And a newborn daughter wasn't an excuse to shirk work. So Minnie returned to fieldwork shortly after Alice was born—and either placed Alice under a shade tree while she planted or weeded, or left her with her sister Ruth.

Alice's father, Willie Lee Walker, was born to a black cotton farmer, Henry Walker—of Scottish slaveholder descent, whose father was wiped out financially by successive years of boll weevil plagues. As a widower with five children, Henry desperately sought a wife. He married the shy teenager, Rachel, one month after his widowhood. For a grieving Willie Lee, the death of his mother and the introduction of a new mother was traumatic. "He eventually learned to love and respect her, but he never called her 'Mama'—she was always 'Miss Rachel' to him." (White, 20)

Coping, Willie Lee kept his emotions bottled up closely. And worked constantly. *It was the only way to survive.*

All the Walker children were bright. Which made sense since their father was known as one of the community's most intelligent and industrious. Under his leadership, Alice's school, East Putnam Consolidated, was built from an old Army barracks. He led the area's black farmers in buying, disassembling, moving and reassembling it in Eatonton on land donated by one of his relatives. With the help of their wives, the men of the community—after their normal workday—put in walls, windows, and floors. They turned the structure into a wonderful schoolhouse. The sacrifices that these poor black sharecroppers made—their warmth and generosity—have remained fresh and vivid throughout Alice's life.

Alice's mother's personality was the opposite of her husband's. She freely expressed her emotions, her joys, and sorrows. Got it from her father, William A. Grant, a farmer. Who always poured out his thoughts to whomever was near, even if scandalous. His family numbered twelve children. He loved another woman, and blamed his wife Nettie for the family's troubles. "He would beat her for just the least little thing. He was mean as a bruised rattlesnake." (White, 20)

Alice's father was hard-working. Calm. Clear-thinking. The emotional counterpoint to Minnie Lou's father. Six months after their first meeting, Willie Lee and Winnie Lou married. Though the newlyweds had to live for a short time with Willie Lee's volatile father, Winnie Lou took no berating from him. She stood her ground at every turn. So much so that Alice insisted,

I grew up believing that there was nothing, literally nothing, my mother couldn't do once she set her mind to it. So when the women's movement happened, I was really delighted because I felt they were trying to go where my mother was and where I always assumed I would go. (White, 22)

Nothing illustrates the predicament and torment of Southern blacks at this time better than the family story about her father Willie Lee's confrontation under a blazing Georgia sun with May Montgomery, a wealthy white matron. Willie Lee had taken a job previously held by a white man, Ed Little, and worked for Montgomery for six dollars a month—or seventy-two dollars a year. At that time a white family's average yearly income was \$1,300—roughly 20 times as much. Willie Lee milked cows, did general labor, and chauffeured May Montgomery around. And after several years, as the economy dramatically worsened, he asked for a raise to twelve dollars a month, *to prevent his family from starving*. Her reply was, "I was only paying Ed Little ten dollars and I would never pay a nigger more than I would pay a white man. Before I'd pay a nigger twelve dollars a month, I'd milk the cows myself." (White, 25) Cruelty knew no bounds in the still degrading South of the 1930's. The Ku Klux Klan was very active. "Uppity niggers" could be reported, kidnapped, and lynched. *It happened frequently*. And by 1944, when Alice was born, the Walkers with eight children, were still making only three hundred dollars a year.

Willie Lee and Minnie Lou Walker survived the Great Depression by fighting for every scrap of food and every dollar to feed and clothe their brood. Though President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs promised some assistance to the poor and poor blacks, what was actually obtainable by blacks often fell far short of the law. Still, Minnie Lou's lovely fruit and vegetable garden provided sustenance. And Minnie Lou wasn't bashful about canning nearly everything that grew. The lessons of the Depression burned into Alice's psyche. Discrimination. Making the most of what you have. Not complaining. Persevering. They coursed in the white heat of her poetry throughout her high school and college years, and later professionally.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s image flickered across the black and white television screen when Alice was sixteen. Alice's mother had ceased working the cotton fields. She was getting too old for that. Instead she worked as a maid for white families. Cooking, scrubbing, ironing, and dusting. But after work she enjoyed gardening ("A house without flowers is like a face without a smile." (White, 56)). Quilting ("I feel just really good and protected and blessed . . . when I am under quilts made by my mother." (White, 57)) And catching a few glimpses of the television she had saved to buy.

Dr. King was being handcuffed and shoved into the backseat of a police car. Charged in Montgomery, Alabama with leading another protest against Jim Crow. The offender: "an Atlanta department store whose white owners were all too happy to take the money of blacks wanting to buy new stoves or refrigerators, but who banned them from enjoying so much as a tuna fish sandwich or a cup of tea at the lunch counter. Those who demanded equality were gruffly greeted with, 'No Colored Allowed,' or worse." (White, 60)

Later Alice wrote, "He [King] had dared to claim his rights as a native son . . . His whole body, like his conscience, was at peace. At the moment I saw his resistance I knew I would never be able to live in this country without resisting everything that sought to disinherit me, and I would never be forced away from the land of my birth without a fight." (White, 60) She acted on her emotions by attending the famous 1963 March on Washington. And volunteered her time registering voters in Georgia and Mississippi.

At age eighteen she chose Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. A highly regarded, all-female, historically black college. It certainly helped financially that she won a scholarship (reserved for students with disabilities—her eye). Her mother gave her a going away gift of three items:

Three things she never owned herself, a typewriter, a sewing machine, and a suitcase . . . That suitcase gave me permission to travel and part of the joy in going very far from home was the message in that suitcase. (White, 64)

Spelman College Professor Howard Zinn became Alice's inspiration. A Jewish professor with a doctorate from Columbia University. The Chairman of the history and social science departments. Professor Zinn related, "It was as if there was an unwritten, unspoken agreement between the white power structure of Atlanta and the administrations of the black colleges: We white folk will let you colored folk have your nice little college . . . And in return, you will not interfere with our way of life." (White, 68) Such was segregated Atlanta.

But Professor Zinn "stood in unshakable solidarity with black people." (White, 69) And Alice would later state that "Howard Zinn was the first white man with whom she'd ever had a real conversation. 'He was funny, friendly, and genuinely cared about the students.'" (White, 69) She proceeded to forge an intellectual bond with him throughout her stay at Spelman. And quickly achieved mostly A's in her studies.

During her sophomore year studies, Alice relished her trip to Helsinki, Finland. As a delegate to the 1962 World Festival of Youth and Students. And following that, with a companion, a trip to Moscow and the Soviet Union. But in 1963 she realized that her evolution as a writer, thinker, and activist was becoming suffocated at Spelman. She had to get out. Two and a half years was enough.

Helped by Spelman Professor Staughton Lynd, she transferred to Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York. With a wealth of illustrious alumni, Sarah Lawrence famously paired each student with a faculty member to guide her through a "personalized course of instruction for which she received an evaluation detailing her progress as an 'educated human with an obligation to the larger community' . . . Students took only three courses per year, exploring each intensively in small seminars and private conferences with their professors . . . She was encouraged to write as she pleased and to develop her own voice." (White, 100)

At Sarah Lawrence College, Professor Jane Cooper commented that Alice's writings brimmed with integrity and confidence. Fresh and precise. "She had a wild intelligence [that] she refused to hold back." (White, 104) And reaching out to the world, in the fall of 1965 Alice flew to Kenya to help build a school in the middle of a pineapple plantation. Then continued to Uganda. She graduated from Sarah Lawrence in 1966.

In New York City, while she tried in the off hours to focus on her post-graduate writings, she took a job as a social caseworker on the Lower East Side. From her efforts at Sarah Lawrence, written in her senior year, came *Once*, a collection of thirty poems. Although serendipitously reviewed by a very respected literary agent, publishers failed to commit. The mood of the book-buying American public was not then in the direction of the black experience, in poetic form, by a unknown black woman. Nevertheless Alice was "energized and engaged by the vibrant art scene and political fervor pulsating in various enclaves all over New York." (White, 129) Reflecting that, her writings "probe human suffering through her poems and stories."

Then in 1967 Alice married Melvyn Leventhal, a Jewish civil rights lawyer, in New York City. Relocating to Jackson, Mississippi, they became "the first legally married inter-racial couple in Mississippi." (White, 19) They divorced amicably in 1976, after having one daughter, Rebecca.

Building her writing career, Alice's first novel was *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, followed by *Meridian*, and her best known, *The Color Purple*. That book won the first Pulitzer Prize in fiction for a black woman writer. It was also a bestseller, and subsequently made into a movie of the same name in 1985, as well as a 2005 Broadway musical.

Parenting Techniques

1—Emphasize the power and knowledge to be gained from reading.

Alice grew up in an oral tradition. Listening to stories told by her grandfather. In addition, Alice's mother placed great store in books and by her actions stamped OK on Alice's reading passion.

I would go into my room and shut the door and lie on the bed and read, knowing I would never be interrupted. No matter what was needed, there was no word about making me leave a book. I suppose because I was the last child there was a special rapport between us [my mother] and I was permitted a lot more freedom. Once when I was eight or nine she was about to whip my brothers and me for something, and when she finished whipping the others and got to me, she turned around and dropped the switch and said, 'You know, Alice, I don't have to whip you; I can talk to you.' (White, 58-59)

As a child Alice blossomed naturally into a sweet bundle of curiosity. Independent of spirit. Minnie pushed her to enter school at four years of age. Two years early. Asserting to a white plantation owner, who had remarked that there was "no need for education" [for Minnie's children],

Don't you ever come around here again talking about how my children don't need to learn how to read and write. (White, 15)

Alice's future would not be stolen by Jim Crow (Southern racism and the doctrine of "separate but equal"). Her first grade teacher, Miss Reynolds, found her a "smart and extremely focused little girl." (White, 15) She greatly enjoyed reading stories like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, out spelling children twice as old, and reciting nursery rhymes or poems perfectly. Remembered Miss Reynolds, "A lot of children passed my way, but Alice Walker was the smartest one I ever had." (White, 15) And it should be noted that this was an era in which the State of Georgia shamefully was allowed to spend on black students only one-seventh the amount that they spent on white students.

Recalled Doris Reid, a frequent playmate of Alice around age six, "she [Alice] was always reading something. I can recall I would say, 'Why on earth do you read all the time?' and she would look back at me real serious-like and respond,

The more you read, the more you know. (White, 31)

So by her teenage years, Alice's mind had vacuumed up most of Shakespeare (the collected works rescued from a trash heap by her father), Oedipus Rex, and Frank Yerby. And she also had an extraordinary fascination with nature, that would permeate her poetry.

READING.

A huge percentage of our knowledge can be directly traced to this ability. Anything you can do to improve your child's reading ability, comprehension, knowledge of word meanings—is going to pay big dividends. Whether the

solution is *your reading to them or your reading with them*, insist on their looking up word meanings in the dictionary.

Spark small-prize contests to encourage learning.

Winning. Feeling proud of herself. Feeling proud of her abilities, her knowledge. Alice remembers “winning a countywide contest when I was also really little. The principal of the high school offered to give a dollar bill to whoever knew all its symbols—the pyramid, the eye. I suspect my father, a Mason, thirty-third degree, taught me.” (White, 32) But what a rush! For a small pittance (maybe not quite so small for a child), her pride in winning swelled *enormously*.

Forget about big prizes. They rapidly get too expensive. Individually or cumulatively. And *they send the wrong message.* The message you *don't* want to send is dollars. *The message you do want to send is the value of knowledge.* Small prizes are just the tickler.

2—Invest in rectifying psychological boulders.

Alice lost an eye, by accident, when she was fourteen. It was BB guns, given by Mama and Daddy, that did it. Horseplay with knives and BB guns. By Alice and her brothers. And it ended tragically. She lost sight in her right eye. And an ugly scar formed that wouldn't go away. It would be years before a doctor could erase the scar. There was no one to help her. No one could pierce her shame of the scar, the feeling of abandonment by her brothers who initially failed to own up to the deed—and who subsequently were only mildly reprimanded. Alice Walker withdrew psychologically in pain and anguish. Her personality and marks at school turned 180 degrees downward. She became despondent and withdrawn. Felt betrayed, abandoned, and punished. Ashamed of her appearance—unable to understand her emotions.

Meanwhile Alice's brother, Bill Walker, took off for Boston when he was twenty-one. Fed up with the South. Hired by a local tire-repair shop at fifty-five dollars a week (an enormous leap from his Georgia wages), he faithfully mailed twenty dollars home each payday. He and his wife offered Alice a job helping them with their new baby. But that was a ploy. A ploy to assist in getting medical attention for her blinded eye and scar. It worked. Dr. Morriss M. Henry, an ophthalmologist at the Eye and Ear Infirmary of world-renowned Massachusetts General Hospital performed the operation. An extra capsular cataract extraction. He removed considerable scar tissue. But her sight in that eye could not be recovered. He commented, “What I remember most is that she [Alice] was very mature and we established a really good rapport from the start . . . With her being from Georgia and me from Arkansas, we had similar accents. We laughed and joked about how we understood each other. When I asked about her studies, she told me she was interested in a writing career and I thought that was impressive.” (White, 47)

Alice returned from the hospital revitalized by the operation. Emotionally alive. Vibrant. *Optimistic again.* Confidence and self-worth restored. Proud. Purposeful. And later she realized that her traumatic injury had some value. It allowed her to really see people and relationships—and learn patience.

It may be rare, but some children do have very serious psychological blockage to proper behavior. If you recognize those signs, get them *professional* attention.

DENZEL WASHINGTON

Denzel Washington is an American actor, screenwriter, director, and producer.

Denzel's mother was a beautician.

Who is Denzel Washington?

It was only a matter of time. Before he succumbed to the lure of street crime. The Boy's Club. Changed his life. Saved him. That and Fordham's *The Emperor Jones*.

Denzel Hayes Washington, Jr. was born December 28, 1954 in Mount Vernon, New York, just outside New York City. It was a mostly middle-class community of different races and cultures. Living and working in apparent peace. Denzel was the second of three children. His mother, Lennis "Lynne" Washington, owned and operated a beauty parlor in Harlem, New York. She would eventually expand her parlor to several other locations. She was undoubtedly his strongest influence. According to Denzel, "I owe her everything." (Simmons, 9)

His father worked three jobs to pay the bills. As a Pentecostal minister, for the Water Department, and for S. Klein Department Store. He put food on the table in the most honorable way: he worked hard for his family and his God. Denzel followed that hard-working example with his first job, doing errands and sweeping in a local barber shop.

Both parents wanted their family to have a strong, religious foundation. "[My father] and my mother gave me a moral center that has never gone away." (Wooten, 19-20) They were strict in Denzel's upbringing. Tough. They had high expectations of him. Anchored in their conviction that motivation, hard work, and devotion to family were essential to a successful life.

But for the Washington family trouble was on the horizon. For in the same year when Denzel was fourteen, his parents divorced. An event that hurt all three of the Washington children deeply. Later his parents' breakup and divorce infused in Denzel a vow to make his own marriage work, lest his own children feel the alienation which he experienced.

Now his mother, single, undertook to support the family. *Alone*. Her beauty parlor barely paid the bills. But she managed somehow. Yet having no father figure in the house, Denzel began behaving more recklessly. According to Denzel,

I never did anything bad. I never robbed anybody, or anything like that. But I was around people that did. I was putting myself in a position to get into trouble. It was only a matter of time before I would be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Between my brother, my sister, and me, I was the one most likely to get into trouble. I ran with some wild people. (Simmons, 15-17)

He was even asked to go along on a robbery. But chose not to.

Oaklyn Academy in New Windsor, New York near West Point. Recommended to Denzel's mother by the school guidance counselor, who, along with his mother, sensed his talents. It was a very private upstate New York boarding school. By Denzel's reckoning it was, "very rich and very white." (Brode, xvi) He survived financially with a partial

scholarship and his mother's earnings from the beauty shop. But kept his grades up and participated eagerly in their athletic program.

Oaklyn's best part, according to Denzel, was football. It was Denzel's dream to become a professional athlete. But that proved illusory. Abysmally,

My father only came to one football game during all my high school years.
(Simmons, 15-17)

That game was the championship game. Regretfully for Denzel. For although he scored the only two touchdowns in the game, the team lost. And his father had chosen to see that loss during his only attendance. In the classroom Denzel's grades were good, second in his class. He was very competitive. Still, neither academics nor sports held great attraction. Denzel later reported, "I went to college because that was what you were supposed to do." (Simmons, 15-17)

He entered Fordham University in Manhattan in 1972. A pre-med major. He financed Fordham by babysitting and several loans. Yet sensing that pre-med was not the career for him, however noble, he vacillated in his planned major. He played football, but wasn't the star as he was at Oaklyn. Unhappy with the academic subjects. Starting to cut classes. So in 1973 Fordham asked him not to return. Fortunately his mother intervened to get Fordham to change it to "time off" until Denzel could sort out his thinking.

Six months of odd jobs. The United States Post Office. Collecting trash. Camp counselor. Denzel finally came to his senses. *Realized that this life wasn't for him.* Realized that he had to complete college in order to have a decent life. An experience during an YMCA camp counselor stint, where he was invited to coach the camp's athletics and help stage talent shows, propelled Denzel to thinking about an acting career (along with a recommendation from a counselor). On Denzel's efforts as director and actor, in his advisor's words "excitement rippled." (Brode, xvii) He found he enjoyed performing. It wasn't frightening. It wasn't hard. It felt good. He could exercise creativity. And the feedback from the audience was especially gratifying. That feedback contrasted with his own feelings over the past two years. Feelings of confliction and non-achievement.

I had found my niche. Again it was because someone had told me, 'You're good.' We all need someone to tell us that. (Simmons, 26-27)

His acting "presence" begged at least a try at a follow-up in the real world. So, upon returning to Fordham he refocused and switched to the theater department. Bore down on his grades and acting.

At Fordham he met a professional actor, Professor Robinson Stone. Stone's workshop taught the basics of acting and inspired Denzel to continue. At the same time, Professor Stone took a personal interest in Washington. Recognizing raw talent. Encouraging a mentor relationship that steered Denzel to the right career choices.

What followed was Denzel's auditioning at Fordham for student productions of *The Emperor Jones* and *Othello*. *Serious drama*. Lacking an education in stagecraft, he nevertheless wasn't shy about exuding a raw command of the role and the stage. The leads in both plays. First as the Emperor Jones, then as Othello. His performances swiftly motivated him.

1977 was Denzel's graduation with high honors from Fordham. He had earned a Bachelor's degree in Drama and Journalism. Time to search for an agent. All actors need agents, don't they? To get them into auditions. Denzel was extremely lucky to find Otis Bigalow, who also happened to be the agent for the acclaimed actor Morgan Freeman. He was off and running. Or walking at least, with a credible wind at his back. Quality auditions followed. TV movie

auditions, one during which he serendipitously met his future wife, Pauletta Pearson. Sparks didn't fly then. Only later when they met again.

In the meantime Denzel realized that he needed more training if he was to develop his craft. Needed more basics. With scholarship in hand, he headed to the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, California. It had an international reputation for excellence in training actors. He moved from New York. Took a part-time job at a restaurant (so he could be assured of being fed). Denzel was luckily one of forty-five applicants selected out of thousands. His reward was fourteen-hour days, studying acting, dance, and scene design. Acting was broken into memory exercises, emotional immersion, and the intellectual approach to roles.

Much later Denzel would expound to anyone who would listen, and especially to youths, "Mastering those [acting] basics is *so important*." (Brode, xix) In part that also stemmed from a high school coach's advice when Denzel was running track. He had seen another kid who was faster and felt threatened. Taking him aside, the coach admonished, "Don't worry. He's fast, but he don't know how to run." (Brode, xix) Since then Denzel has applied that dictum to every aspect of his life.

He meant that technique can outperform raw, untrained talent every time, which is true to any endeavor, so you should learn your craft. It's like I believe musicians should be classically trained even if they're never going to play a note of classical music, because it makes the music they play so much richer. Likewise, actors should be familiar with the classics. Even if they only perform contemporary material; mastering Sophocles and Shakespeare ultimately enrich modern work. (Brode, xix)

Denzel left the Conservatory after the first phase of a three-year program, in order to "test the waters" for acting jobs in Los Angeles. Then, back to New York and more auditions. At one point—despondent about his roles, audition results, and progress in his career, as well as his need for funds to feed and house his family—he was about to chuck it. Had already accepted a job to work at a neighborhood recreation center. One week before he was to start he learned he had been selected to play Malcolm X in the play *When the Chickens Come Home to Roost*. From that beginning came Joseph Papp's Shakespeare in the Park. Off-Broadway productions. The TV series *St. Elsewhere* (six years). *A Soldier's Story*, the play and movie. He was garnering lots of critical attention, and soon other meaty parts followed—in *Cry Freedom*, *The Mighty Quinn*, *Heart Condition*, and *Glory*. Other memorable movies Denzel made from 1990 on include: *Mississippi Masala*, *Malcolm X*, *Philadelphia*, *Pelican Brief*, *The Hurricane*, and *Training Day*.

Denzel Washington is considered a romantic lead and one of Hollywood's biggest box office successes. He earned two Academy awards: Best Actor for *Training Day*, and Best Supporting Actor in *Glory*. A Tony award followed in 2010 for his Leading Actor performance in the play *Fences*.

Denzel Washington puts his money *and* time into worthy endeavors away from acting. He has for decades helped raise funds and advocate for the Boys & Girls Club of America.

Denzel and his wife—Pauletta Pearson, whom he married in 1983 (they have two sons and two daughters)—have additionally given \$1 million to the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, for the purpose of helping needy children in South Africa. And \$2.5 million to his favorite church in Los Angeles.

Parenting Techniques

1—Let your child participate in a quality extracurricular organization.

Denzel often says that one of the most positive aspects of his teenage years was the influence of the Boys Club of America (now renamed the Boys & Girls Club of America). Though the facility wasn't fancy (it was in an old, two-story building), for young Denzel it held a myriad world of sports and games (especially football and basketball), plus camping trips. And the counselors gave advice, guidance, and encouragement—to impressionable youths who were surrounded by the housing “projects.”

Everything you've seen or heard about me, in the media and in the movies, began with lessons I learned to live by at the Club. (Brode, xxi)

The Boys Club, that's where I looked for hope and purpose and direction. (Washington, 12)

Denzel is forthright in his advocacy for corrective nudging,

I believe we miss our marks from time to time, and without a certain push in the right direction we might never find the path we were meant to follow. Train up a child in the way he should go, and he might get to where he's meant to be headed all along. (Washington, 9)

His favorite counselor was Charles White, whose forte was identifying what each youth did particularly well and complimenting and encouraging that aspect. It was this positive reinforcement—*making each boy feel that he excelled at something*—that marked and still marks the way the Boys & Girls Club influences the youth of America. He can still hear Charles White's admonition:

You can do anything you want! (Simmons, 10-11)

That advice stuck particularly deep within Denzel. And spurred his future attitude. Denzel joined the Club at age six and stayed with the program until his late teens. At age thirteen he also served as a camp counselor to other boys in the club. He belonged. He had friends. All was well in his world.

There are many fine extracurricular organizations, in addition to the Boys & Girls Club of America: Boy Scouts. Girl Scouts. YMCA. YWCA. Religious youth organizations. Community centers. Many others.

Find them. Fill your child's time with quality activities and friends. Make sure they are actually participating. Meet their friends. Meet their friends' parents. Don't let your children “hang out” with bums, hoodlums, criminals. For if you do the latter, the results are as predictable as the sun setting. And it will set—on your child's future.

2—Don't allow your child to remain in dangerous environments.

His mother knew that Denzel, like many African-Americans in the neighborhood, was always in serious danger of falling. Falling off into *serious, very serious trouble*—with crime, with the law, with jail. You only had to look on the street corners to see kids who strayed, who had devolved into the criminal arts. *She feared for him.* She watched for him. She and her husband prayed for him. No matter how nice the home life, how nice the Boys Club, there was always the chance—no, the probability, if one was honest—that he would stray. *And she would not allow that.*

After attending public schools, the family sent him to a private preparatory school, Oaklyn Academy, near West Point, New York. He was fourteen. There were about one hundred students. In retrospect it was literally a life-saving change of venue. As Denzel saw it,

That decision changed my life because I wouldn't have survived in the direction I was going. The guys I was hanging out with at the time, my running buddies, have now done maybe 40 years combined in the penitentiary. They were nice guys, but the streets got them. (Parade Magazine)

Because Oaklyn Academy was a boarding school, Denzel was away from home for the first time in his young life. And the school, by necessity, was filled with rules, structure, discipline. Emphasis on academic achievement. Keep the students busy, focused, out of trouble. Idle minds, you know.

If you allow your children to remain in physically or psychologically “dangerous” environments, *then forget about their future.* It will not be pretty. Pull them out if at all possible. Move them to a “safer” place. *Do whatever it takes to move.*

3—Let them earn their own spending money.

Age twelve saw Denzel working at a local barbershop (partly owned by his mother). Menial work. But honest work. Doing odd jobs. Sweeping up. Running errands. But the real pride came from earning his own spending money. *It validated his worth. And helped him develop pride and independence.*

WORK.

It's not a dirty word. You work. They should work. Your children and teenagers need to see the value of work too. Life is not free. Money doesn't grow on trees. Thrift is not built on unlimited allowances.

Some household chores should be done without compensation. Maybe a nominal allowance. The remainder of your children's spending money ought to be earned. Either by working in the household on more demanding tasks or projects. Or outside, the law allowing, based on their age. If it is outside, it's up to you to assist them in finding meaningful opportunities.

And don't let them remain in the same job summer after summer. Let them grow over time. Change jobs. New jobs. New things to learn. New industries. Variety is important. After all, how can they choose a career properly if they have no experience in that industry. New experiences. New bosses. Learning to work under various supervisors is important too.

Learn your children's interests. Search for jobs that fit. Better to find out early what they *don't* like (for example, nursing)—than wasting four years in nursing school and umpteen thousands of dollars—then a year after graduating deciding: “nursing isn't for me.”

4—Encourage them to read and debate quality magazines and newspapers.

Reading *The New York Times*. Not a notion that would come immediately to mind for a black teenager. But Mr. Underwood, one of Denzel's teachers at Oaklyn Academy, made reading the newspapers a daily class assignment. What was happening in the world? What do the columnists think? How might events affect your life? What is your opinion? What do you think will happen? And Mr. Underwood also introduced Denzel and his classmates to famous authors.

Quality periodicals and books. They abound. So do trashy novels, magazines, newspapers. *Find out what is quality.*

Read the best. Enjoy the best. Be the best.

Quotes from Denzel Washington

- *Luck is where opportunity meets preparation.*
- *You never know who you touch.*
- *We all have a responsibility to give something back, to leave this world a better place for our having been there.*
- *[of son, John David] I'm his father. I'm supposed to pump him up with praises and support and love. It's in my job description*

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