

Reflections On What Works In Parenting Teenagers

BY VAL FARMER
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Reflecting back on our parenting years, here are some of the principles we used to form positive relationships with our children during their teen-age years. Admittedly we weren't perfect but now we are enjoying the fruits of having survived those turbulent years.



Val FARMER

Our seven children, now adults, have good memories of their childhood and family life. Besides a mutually enjoyable relationship with us, they like each other and enjoy time together at family holidays and other family events.

1. Really love your children. This means going out of your way for them - meeting their needs and being dependable in your concern and attention. Take time to teach them what they need to know and stay connected emotionally with their lives. This foundation of unconditional love starts in infancy, continues all the way through childhood and can cushion the teenage years for both of you.

Too many parents are too wrapped up in their own lives. They don't put in enough time and energy to get involved as they need to be with their children. Children need a backdrop of loving attention and sacrifice to develop an attachment bond. This gives firm discipline a chance to work without harming the quality of the overall relationship.

2. Give respect and freedom. Another way of loving your child is to respect their individuality and opportunity to make choices for themselves. Parents can be too intrusive, bossy and controlling of children in order for their own lives to go smoother. Not everything has to be done the parents way or to meet parents' needs.

Allow room for thinking, privacy, negotiations and discussion. Be willing to be influenced by reason and allow the child to make their own decisions within basic outside limits. Explain and reason with children instead of ordering or demanding. Help them explore their own interests and talents without taking over and pushing them for your sake.

Be a good listener, recognize their valid points, be willing to explain yourself and negotiate with them. If you are a good listener, your teen will not be as reactive when you don't agree.

3. Be a team player with your spouse. Form a united front when it comes to discipline. Support each other's discipline in front of the children even if you disagree with your spouse's approach. Work through your differences in parenting style, rules and consequences in private. Don't side in with your child against your spouse.

Use your spouse as a resource and a sounding board for parenting issues. You'll need all your eyes, ears and wits about you if you are going to keep up with problems that come up in the family. If you're a single parent, find a trusted confidant with whom you can discuss parenting issues.

4. Have a system of discipline, not your temper. You are human and are bound to lose your temper occasionally while raising children. However, it shouldn't be a part of the discipline process. Temper outbursts used to control behavior are self-defeating. They usually lead to an escalation of hostility and further displays of temper by both you and your teenager.

Don't apply consequences in anger. Take whatever time you need to calm down and think through a situation before starting the discipline process. Think through your basic values, family rules and consequences and discuss them ahead of time with your teens. Allow their ideas to help fine tune a system they fully understand.

With common understandings, your discipline can be matter-of-fact without emotion getting in the way. You don't have to think on-the-spot or allow your emotion to be a part of the punishing process. Tolerate their emo-

tions without escalating the conflict. Teenagers are inventive and will discover any loopholes and new situations you haven't thought about. When they confront you with something new, take the time to think through the consequences and the new rule before you give any on-the-spot discipline you may regret.

5. Be consistent in your follow through. A rule isn't a rule when the consequences aren't applied. Exceptions should be rare or your teen will expect every time to be the exception. Have as few rules as possible, keep them simple but be willing to back up the rules you do have. Don't be afraid to be the "bad guy" and incur their displeasure for a time.

6. Expect courtesy and respect in the way they talk to you. Understand the difference between legitimate expression of feeling and back talk. Have clear understandings that certain demeaning forms of address such as profanity, sarcasm, contempt and name calling will not be tolerated. Follow the same rules of courtesy and respect you expect from them.

7. Have fun as a family and keep the overall tone of the family positive. Make time for the family. Do fun things together. Make memories. Don't save up your interactions with them for when they do something wrong.

Admire them. Find good in what they do. Encourage them. Compliment them. Take interest in their accomplishments and activities. Notice and thank them for what they do well. Enjoy them as much as you can so that conflict is only a small part of your relationship.

This all takes firmness, patience, love and a huge commitment to their lives and well being. The inevitable bumps in the road are only bumps on what can be a remarkable life-long journey.

For more information on parenting, visit Val Farmer's website at www.valfarmer.com.

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VISITING HOURS

Are Bladder Control Issues Treatable?

BY SANDY COPE
Physical Therapist, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

Urinary incontinence, or involuntary loss of bladder control, is experienced by fifty to sixty percent of individuals at some point in their lives. This condition affects men and women alike and is most prevalent in women who are three to six months postpartum, individuals who are experiencing back pain or have had back, pelvic or abdominal surgeries, and men and women over the age of 50.

Urinary incontinence is a debilitating condition that can leave individuals feeling socially isolated. Many people wrongly assume that urinary incontinence is normal for their condition. Even if an individual has been diagnosed with fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, organ prolapse, stroke, Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's disease, urinary incontinence is often treatable.

The most common types of urinary incontinence include:

Stress incontinence — the loss of urine when you exert pressure on your bladder by coughing, sneezing, laughing, exercising or lifting something heavy. Stress incontinence occurs when the sphincter muscle of the bladder is weakened.

Urge incontinence — a sudden, intense urge to urinate, followed by an involuntary loss of urine. With urge incontinence, you may need to urinate frequently, including throughout the night. If there is no known cause, urge incontinence is also called overactive bladder.

Mixed incontinence — a

combination of stress and urge incontinence symptoms.

Conservative treatment options are available for the treatment of urinary incontinence. According to the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), proper preventive measures and treatment by a physical therapist can help patients manage, if not alleviate, this condition.

A trained physical therapist is able to develop an individualized treatment program for each patient. Treatment may include exercises to strengthen and re-educate pelvic muscles as well as nutrition and lifestyle education to optimize bladder health.

For more information on physical therapy treatments available for urinary incontinence call (605) 665-8268.

Sandy Cope, physical therapist at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, has completed coursework and training in the rehabilitation of pelvic muscle dysfunction, including treatment and management of urinary incontinence and bowel control, pregnancy and postpartum therapy, and neurological disorders affecting body movement and function.

Sources include:
American Physical Therapy Association (www.apta.org)
Phoenix Core Solutions (www.phoenixcore.com)
Mayo Clinic Online (www.mayoclinic.com)

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USD To Confer Degrees At Winter Commencement

VERMILLION — Rep. Kristi Noem (R-S.D.) is the keynote speaker for the 36th Winter Commencement ceremony at the University of South Dakota on Saturday, Dec. 17. More than 470 students will receive degrees during the ceremony, which begins at 10 a.m. at the Dakota-Dome on the USD campus.



Noem

A native of Hamlin County in northeast South Dakota, Noem was elected to the United States House of Representatives on Nov. 2, 2010 after serving in the South

Dakota House of Representatives. Win the U.S. House, Noem serves on the Agriculture, Education and Workforce, and Natural Resources Committees. While a member of the state house, Noem represented South Dakota's 6th District and was Assistant Majority Leader before taking a run at Congress.

Prior to her career in state and national politics, Noem was an experienced rancher, farmer, and hunting lodge owner and operator. She grew up on a farm where she learned the value of hard work caring for cattle and horses, and helping with planting and the harvest. Her work on the farm and ranch didn't go unnoticed. In 1997, Noem received the South Dakota Outstanding Young Farmer award and six years later she was honored with the South Dakota Young Leader award.

In addition to her work in the state and U.S. House, Noem's service includes the South Dakota State Farm Agency State Committee, the Commission for Agriculture in the 21st Century, the South Dakota Soybean Association, and numerous other boards and committees, including as Hamlin County 4-H Leaders Association president. She and her husband, Bryon, still call Hamlin County home along with their three children, Kassidy, Kennedy and Booker.

AAA Offers 'Topsy Tow' Service For Holidays

SIOUX FALLS — Free AAA Topsy Tow services will once again be offered over the Christmas and New Year's holidays this year to AAA members and non-members alike. The auto club will give you, your car, and up to one more person a free ride home if you feel unsafe behind the wheel after drinking.

"During holiday periods, up to 40 percent of all fatal crashes involve alcohol. With AAA's Topsy Tow service, the motorist, up to one more person, and the vehicle all get home safely and in one piece," said Mark Madeja, spokesman for AAA South Dakota. "We've expanded Topsy Tow and now offer this life-saving service to AAA members and nonmembers alike over all of the year's major holidays."

Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Aberdeen, Mitchell, and Yankton. The free service starts at 6 p.m. this Friday, Dec. 16, and runs until 2 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 2, 2012.

"We're always hopeful that more and more South Dakotans will call us for a Topsy Tow," said Madeja. "Because we know many holiday parties go ahead and take that chance behind the wheel when they really know they shouldn't."

To call for Topsy Tow, dial (800) 222-4357 (AAA-HELP) and ask for Topsy Tow. AAA will take you and your vehicle home — up to 15 miles from point of pick-up.

YOU'RE NEWS!
The Press & Dakotan

National Flood Insurance Filing Deadline Extended To Jan. 28

PIERRE — Missouri River residents who have flood insurance have an additional 60 days to file claims and statements of loss for the 2011 flooding, officials with the National Flood Insurance Program have announced.

Owners whose buildings or property were initially damaged by Missouri River flooding on June 1 now have until Jan. 27, 2012, to file their claims and their

proofs of loss (a statement of what was damaged by the flood). Those who first had damage on June 2 now have until Jan. 28, 2012, and so forth.

Flood insurance claims and proofs of loss usually must be filed with insurance agents within 60 days of the damage. That deadline has been extended several times for the 2011 Missouri River flooding.

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Matron of honor was Kayla Tomasek of Dodge. Bridesmaids were Jennifer Arens, Yankton; Maggie Young, Omaha, NE; and Dena Young, Omaha.

Best man was Scott Arens of Ann Arbor, MI. Groomsmen were Brian Tomasek, Wayne, NE; Adam Arens, Yankton; Dane Harley, Norfolk, NE; and Ethan Larson, Norfolk. Ushers were Chris Tomasek and Joshua Arens.

Music for the ceremony was provided by organist Marilyn Nyberg, soloist Sara Otteman Bray, and pianist Scott Arens.

A reception was held after the ceremony at the Riverfront Event Center, Yankton. Hosts were Tom and Jean Teply, Tammy Weverstad and Tom Wolfe.

Guest book attendants were Amanda Holub and Paige Holub.

The bride is a graduate of Dodge High School. She is a certified nursing assistant at the Avera Yankton Care Center.

The groom is a graduate of Yankton High School and Northeast Community College. He is a farmer.

Tomasek-Arens

Angela Ann Tomasek and Samuel Andrew Arens were married Sept. 24, 2011, at the Vangen Lutheran Church, Mission Hill, with Rev. Lance Lindgren officiating.

Parents of the couple are Kenneth and Doris Tomasek of Dodge, NE, and Tom and Terri Arens of Yankton.

Teen Driving Safety Task Force Created

PIERRE — South Dakota's Task Force on Teen Driving Safety will spend the next year reviewing statistics and laws affecting young drivers and preparing recommendations for the 2013 Legislature.

The task force, created by the last Legislature, meets in Fort Pierre on Thursday, Dec. 15 to begin its assignment. The group is charged with:

- Examining data on teen driving, including statistics on traffic citations, crashes, injuries and fatalities.
- Reviewing current laws affecting teen drivers.
- Examining data on driver education available for teens.
- Reviewing national best practices to improve safety of young drivers
- Examining policies or practices that hinder efforts to improve teen-driving safety.

"Too many young drivers are involved in highway crashes that result in injuries or deaths in South Dakota," said Lee Axsdahl, director of the Office of Highway Safety in the state Department of

Public Safety. "We need to get an accurate picture of the teen-driving experience in our state, and this task force will be a great way to explore the obstacles standing in the way of pushing those crash numbers down."

Task force members include: Sen. Todd Schlekeway, R-Sioux Falls; Sen. Craig Tieszen, R-Rapid City; Rep. Peggy Gibson, D-Huron; Rep. Nick Moser, R-Yankton; Staci Eggert, executive director, South Dakota Sheriff's Association, Howard; John Foster, South Dakota Department of Transportation, Pierre; Cindy Gerber, South Dakota Driver Licensing Program, Pierre; Maj. Randy Hartley, South Dakota Highway Patrol, Pierre; Bob Clark, Bob Clark Insurance, Pierre; Mark Swendsen, Dakota Radio Group, Pierre; Susan Randall, South Dakota Voices for Children, Sioux Falls; Capt. Steve Hansen, Sioux Falls Police Department; Chief Richard Greenwald, Oglala Sioux Tribe Highway Safety Division, Pine Ridge; and Nancy Allard, Unified Judicial System, Pierre

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