

We must be careful to live our values as we attempt to teach those same values to our children. There are several parenting qualities that are helpful in giving us a framework for living out our beliefs in front of our children. For each positive value there is a negative counter-value. One will bring them up, one will shake them up and tear them down.

ACCEPTANCE (rather than Ridicule)

Even though I don't always like what you do, this is distinctly separate from my feelings about you. You are special to me. We are in this for the long haul. You will succeed, and I will be there to correct you when you're wrong, comfort you when things are not well, and to applaud you when you overcome. But I will always take you seriously. *Ridicule is not a tool for training. It simply is ineffective at best, and destructive on all fronts.*

HONESTY (rather than Situation Ethics)

It is of utmost importance in our family that we be truthful with one another. If the truth cannot be told within our family, it probably won't be communicated outside of our family. We must all admit when we are wrong and attempt never to lie to one another. *We must learn that the truth cannot be bent for our own purposes.* We can try to do so, but we will surely fail!

INTIMACY (rather than Distance)

It is important that we be close. *We cannot afford to be isolated from each other.* We must have the freedom and the listening ear to share our deepest thoughts and to have them be respected and honored. We can do this without smothering each other or meddling.

ACCOMPLISHMENT (rather than a Better Way)

I must allow my children to learn with guidance. Even at an early age they must learn to successfully complete and accomplish. It must be my high priority to see them succeed, level by level. I must rejoice in their success, even if they end up eclipsing my own. After all, this is one of the goals of good parenting! I need to avoid holding them to standards that I know deep within my heart I do not even keep myself. *Even though they may fall short on particulars, I am confident in their ultimate success!*

FAILURE FREEDOM (rather than Performance)

Just as I have never done anything perfectly the first time, so my children have many years to perfect their skills. As they experiment and fail and succeed, it is my job to encourage the desire to continue to try. *Even though they may fail, they are not failures!* They can disappoint me without being a disappointment.

SELF DISCIPLINE (rather than Control by Guilt)

It is my job to help my children to the place where they can rule themselves. All discipline moves toward this goal of independent responsibility. I am not my children's or my spouse's conscience. It is my job to help them to accept responsibility for their own beliefs and actions - and to press on!