

The One Key to Effective Parenting



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Family psychologist John Rosemond was once asked by a reporter – “Can you please condense all of your parenting tips into just one sentence?” Of which, John replied – “I can do better than that – only four words are needed**PUT YOUR MARRIAGE FIRST**”.

The objective of parenting is to raise our child to a level of maturity so that they can leave the home with confidence but in the quest of raising the child, we have become so “kid-myopic” that our spouse is left on the side line. In other words, while we parent so that our child will leave us eventually, we end up parenting so intensely on our own till our spouse “leaves” us! Think about it. I am not talking about divorce (although this may happen as many of the first time divorce cases today comes from empty-nesters i.e. couples who no longer have any children at home and they are left with nothing else to talk about!).

What are the signs that your spouse is “leaving” you?

1. Both of you no longer have any common hobbies or activities that you do together.
2. Both of you no longer have regular “dates”. Every time, the conversation revolves around the children, work, money, etc. Anything and everything except *each other*.
3. When in trouble, the first person you talk to is *not* your spouse.
4. Both of you no longer hold hands when in public (the hands are dominated by the little ones!).
5. Both of you do not go to bed at the same time.
6. Both of you do not make united decisions on parenting issues. In fact, you are in constant dis-agreement with each other.

While it is normal for parents to revolve around the child when they are below 2 years old, but beyond that both father and mother need to make that critical transition back to playing the role of **husband and wife**. It is the marriage that created the family and it is the marriage that is going to sustain the family. What’s happening today, is that we have put so much expectations and effort on the child that we no longer look out for our *life partner*. Have we forgotten our marriage vows which affirm that the only relationship worth having until our dying day is that which is between a husband and a wife?

The irony is this : The more attention you pay to your child, the less attention he will pay to you. Think about it – have you seen a child while surrounded by mountain-loads of toys complains – “*I am bored*”. And what do we do? We scramble around for the next great thing that will occupy his attention. What every child needs in our home today is a strong center of leadership that is rooted in a strong marriage relationship. Would you like your child to have a happy marriage and a stable family – well, the best training he can receive is to see it being modelled right before his very eyes on a daily basis! Why do we have young adults nowadays who are not matured to handle the ups and downs of relationships? Well, they have not seen that being demonstrated to them on a consistent basis at home. And the beat goes on....

Allow me to recommend five recovery steps you can take in order to restore your family back to a “marriage-centered” state :

1. Put in place a weekly “marriage time” – just the two of you. Let the kids see that you think the world of one another. This gives them real security!
2. Put in place boundaries around your work and career. Remember, no amount of success at work can compensate for failure at home!
3. Let others take care of your kids! Practice the freedom to allow others to babysit them! Go take a lesson on ballroom dancing together!
4. For the guys – when you get home from work, the first person you kiss, the first person you talk to must be your wife. The kids can wait.
5. For the ladies – your husband is not your parenting assistant. He needs your admiration and respect. Listen to what’s happening in his world. Support him. He needs you (but just doesn’t know how to say it!).

Real effective parenting is a test of your unity at home and it begins with the strength of your marriage. Think about it. For an audio version of this article, you can download from :

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