

Felt a Shift in your Parenting Role yet?

Parenting is a lifelong relationship

At every stage of life, family relationships present both joys and challenges. How good it is to pause for a moment and remember that it's by God's design each person is placed in a family. **Children need to be enjoyed and valued, not just managed.** After all, it is through relationship that children learn to understand and make sense of the world around them. **Our parenting commitment is meant to be permanent- lasting through all the phases of a child's life-not just until he turns 18 years old, or moves out of the house.** Yet, sometimes there comes a sudden shift in the parent-child relationship that catches us off guard or stirs up discouragement to the point of wanting to give up. Take courage! With a new perspective, navigating the ins and outs of this forever relationship is actually possible.

Your role as a parent needs to change!

While the primary relationship remains the same, your role as a parent needs to change as your child develops. Think of your first parenting role during the early years of life (approximately 0-6 years) as **PARENT-TEACHER**. Parents are a child's first contact with physical, intellectual, and emotional learning. This important time of nurturing takes place through the thousands of hours spent in day to day activity responding to your child's needs. In the middle years (roughly 7-12), your child will begin to initiate activities. *Without abandoning your role as parent-teacher;* you will take on the additional role of **PARENT- SUPERVISOR**- someone who oversees and guides your child's schedule, encouraging him to explore new interests. Then, beginning with the early teen years (13-15) and perhaps all at once, your first two jobs suddenly end as your child develops the ability to think abstractly. *In fact, as your child begins to manage his own schedule and decision making, he might no longer welcome or require your close supervision, but he does need you in the role of PARENT-COACH.*

Coaching might be your most important role

Before you can accurately take on this coaching role as a parent (or professional), you must keep in mind that you and your child are on the SAME team, not rivals! Next, picture him as an athlete, up on a platform, receiving a medal. On the sidelines stands you, the coach. You have trained, mentored, taught, cheered, and cried, while nurturing this young athlete toward his goal. The medal indicates that he has all the tools, training, and experience to win- he has become a successful adult. In addition, he has not become dependent on you, but goes on with greater courage and confidence to manage other areas of life, even after you step aside. *--In truth, if you embrace this coaching role, you both will be transformed.*

However, becoming a good coach takes more than having a "whistle" and a "clipboard of rules" for your child to follow. A dedicated coach starts by committing to do whatever it takes to accomplish the work ahead. She must stay honest with herself, strong in character through difficulty, and focus on personal growth in the midst of training. (Galatians 6:4 says it this way- "Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that.") A strong coach listens very carefully to her child's needs above her own instruction. She hears beyond what is spoken and is in sync with his mind and heart. She is willing to experiment with new ideas and is disciplined enough to set and reflect standards while consistently teaching the next important skill needed for the race of life ahead.

Skill building is a part of the coaching process. It takes time, practice, repetition, and refinement.

Here are a few strategies to get you started in your new coaching role.

- **What is taught at the kitchen table needs to be practiced and then tested elsewhere** as many times as it takes to master the skill. For example, teach your child how to purchase a meal and then take him to a restaurant to practice ordering. Order a meal while he is standing next to you. Then have him order something as you stand right beside him, coaching him on money skills and proper customer manners.
- **Teach replacement skills.** A coach does more than tell his athlete to stop; he teaches the skills needed as an alternative. Instead of saying, "Stop bothering your sister!" coach your child with specific ideas in how to handle his frustration. It will take practice, repetition, and refinement but he will "medal!"

Unlocking the mystery of your PARENTING ROLE could be a piece to your Parenting Puzzle!

To learn about parent coaching or for more training on this topic,
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