

## Questions Every Parent Should Ask

In the first column list the various activities that you participated in as a child. In the second column list the key people who have impacted your life. Evaluate the importance of activities vs. relationships in preparing you for adulthood. Which column has had the greatest impact on you in your adulthood.

Childhood Activities	Key Relationships

### Experience Rich vs. Relationship Poor

*Traps we fall into ...*

- Getting kids to do things on time is a matter of life and death.
- Dressing them in the right clothes is of utmost importance.
- We must be constantly on the move. Rush, rush, rush!

Change Conjunction – from “and” to “or”. Keeping an “or” in the water prevents filling your boat with so many good things that they ultimately sink the ship. (Weird, pg. 33)

When we reach adulthood we know that it’s our ability to have deep, rich, mature, meaningful relationships that makes life worth living. Experiences ultimately leave us wanting.

Two Extremes: Over Discipline vs. Under Discipline (overreact or under-involved)

Parenting Tip: Restriction Doesn’t Work!

Your Receptivity Posture: *“I don’t need this; I was a kid once.”* That’s like saying, *“I had a surgery once, therefore I can perform one.”* There is a big difference between having money and managing it wisely. Just because you can make a kid doesn’t mean that you can manage/raise one!

### THREE DIALS

Relationship w/ Parents

Relationship w/ God

Relationship w/ Others

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What if you could go back and remix the dials ... change friendships, dating relationships, moments with parents, seasons with God, decisions made, etc. Simply put, we are the sum total (result) of our experiences, our choices and our relationships. We may not be able to control our kids' experiences or their choices but we can certainly influence the relationships they have with us, the Lord and others.

“Parents, don't be hard on your children. Raise them properly.  
Teach them and instruct them about the Lord.”  
Ephesians 6:4 (CEV)

Never lose influence! But instead, bring them up in the instruction of the Lord.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup> in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”  
Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

We have a partner in the parenting process. It's our heavenly Father! We need to help them enhance their relationship with God to the point that they see that they are accountable to Him and that He feels responsible for them.

“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.”  
Proverbs 13:20 (NIV)

Your friends will determine the direction and quality of your life.

These questions are designed to give you a framework/grid through which to parent ...

### THREE QUESTIONS

1. What are you doing to enhance your child's relationship with you?
2. What are you doing to advance your child's relationship with God?
3. What are you doing to influence your children's relationship with people outside the home?

*“IT IS NOT WHAT A PERSON DOES, BUT WHO HE IS, THAT GIVES HIM VALUE.”*

### Let's Pray!

“A study of 1,000 young people in grades 3-12 asked kids and teens this question, ‘If you were granted one wish that would change the way your mother's or father's work affects your life, what would that wish be? In a parallel study more than 600 mothers and father were asked to guess what their children's wish would be. What do you think your kids would most want from you? Most parents guessed that their kids would want more time with them. They were wrong. Only 10% of kids wanted this from mothers and 15% about their fathers. What do kids actually want? The large majority wished that their mothers and father would be less tired and stressed. (Marcus Buckingham)

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## Discussion:

1. Why are parents today so prone to making their families experientially rich and relationally poor?
2. As you look back, how would you describe your childhood? Experientially or relationally rich or poor? Why?
3. What experiences have your children had that you never had? Is that important to you and why?
4. As you look at your parenting style, are you more experiential or more relational?
5. If your children's experiences outweigh your time with them, what changes need to be made to reverse this trend?
6. As you think back on your childhood, what was the setting on the three different relational dials?
7. Do you look back on your relationship with your parents with regret or relief?
8. Looking back to your childhood, are there people you regret meeting? Are there people you wish you met sooner?
9. How did the three relationships shape you? How are they shaping your children?
10. List some specific ways you can begin to influence the key relationships in your child's life:

Ways to influence my child's relationship with God: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ways to influence my child's relationship with me: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ways to influence my child's relationship with others: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Assignment:** This week observe your family's schedule. How many hours are dedicated to focused training in education, athletics, art and other extracurricular activities? How many hours are dedicated to focused relationship building – talking, playing games together, family activities, or just listening to each other?