

The Big "I"

Whether they know it or not, our children will need us most in the decisions that matter most. But by the time they're old enough to face those decisions, they're also old enough to choose whether or not they want our input. So how are you doing? If your child had to make an important decision today, would you be someone he/she truly depends on to help them? Be honest.

In the space below, list the top five people you think your child would turn to if making an important life decision today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Nothing impacts the trajectory of our kid's lives more than their relationship with us as their parents!

What are you doing to enhance your child's relationship with you?

The goal of this session is to motivate you to engage in relationship with your children. Two reasons to compel you to engage or reengage ...

1. When it matters most, the quality of your relationship with your children will determine the weight of your influence.

When our kids first arrive, our influence is not based on the quality of our relationship. It's based on our size and position (bigger & I'm dad/mom). Eventually that goes away.

Here's the dynamic: if we don't quickly shift and transition to influencing because of relationship the temptation will be to continue to influence from size and position long after they are no longer a factor. If you do this, you will erode the relationship with your children!

Reflection: When do our kids need our influence the most?

When they are making the most important decisions (dating, finances, education, career, where they live, etc.)

Tactics: Guilt & Bribery (alienates & erodes our relationship)

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up (*nourish; relationally rich word*) in the training and instruction of the Lord."
Ephesians 6:4 (NIV)

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

“And now a word to you parents. Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children,
making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline
the Lord himself approves, with suggestions and godly advice.”
Ephesians 6:4 (TLB)

2. Your relationship with your children will impact the quality of their future relationships.

An investment in your relationship with your kids influences not only the immediate condition of your relationship but all of their future relationships. It does more to establish their emotional health than anything else. **Your relationship with them and their moral choices determine their emotional health** ... all things being equal. Your relationship with them significantly influences their moral choices.

Two Things You Can't Ignore: our kids want to feel accepted & they want our time!

- a. What can I do to give them large doses of unconditional acceptance?

Life Rules CD – Acceptance

- b. What can I do to give them more of my time?

How do I regain what has been lost?

- 1) There is no guarantee that you'll ever have it back.

It's up to your kids. You can't “family history” your way back in.

- 2) The best way to reestablish a relationship with your adult children is to serve your way back in.

Let's Pray!

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Discussion:

1. Why do parents tend to lead by size and position instead of by relationship?
2. How did your relationship with your parents impact your other relationships? How did your parents’ influence affect your moral choices?
3. What things did your parents prioritize over their relationship with you?
4. Did your parents or the parents of your friends ever try to “jump in late”? What was the outcome?
5. At what age should your children move from being parented by authority to being parented by influence?
6. How are you investing in your relationship with your children?
7. What are your children seeing in you that is impacting their relationships?
8. What are you doing to undermine your relationship with your child?
9. What needs to change in order for you to prioritize your relationships with your children?
10. In what ways have you nurtured or nourished your children?

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In the space below, write down the three most recent major decisions you've made. Beside each one, select the statement that most closely relates to your situation.

Decisions I Made	My Parents' Influence
	<i>a. I desired/sought my parents' advice</i> <i>b. I thought briefly about what my parents would say or do</i> <i>c. I didn't think to ask them</i> <i>d. They wouldn't have understood</i> <i>e. I didn't desire their opinion on the matter</i>
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