

Things My Daughter Said We Did Right

By Cora Lee Pless

A few months ago, our 23-year-old daughter suddenly stated nonchalantly, "Mom, I think there were some things you and Dad did that helped Chip and me growing up." I was speechless. Could it be that this young lady, who only a few years ago often criticized us, was now offering a compliment? I was both surprised and pleased at what she had to say.

We had family devotions.

As I was growing up at home, my parents had devotions every night. As I grew older, I took my turn reading the Scripture and praying. Talking to God seemed as normal as talking to each other.

When Chuck and I married, we also had family devotions. Finding time for devotions sometimes proved difficult, especially as the children became involved in a flurry of activities. Sometimes we missed a night or two. But we endeavored to set aside a few minutes each night for family devotions.



We modeled abstinence from alcohol.

One of the biggest problems in our local high school was underage drinking. Both of our children knew kids who drank. We heard of parties where parents even furnished alcohol for teenagers. Yet neither of our children became involved in the drinking scene. Carey felt that not seeing her parents drink at home helped her stay away from alcohol.

We had high expectations and expected our children to live up to them.

This statement surprised me. I have struggled with perfectionism and therefore consciously tried not to saddle my children with high expectations in many areas of life. I assured them they did not have to be perfect, that it was okay to fail.

Yet in the area of moral behavior, we probably did have high expectations. Even with high expectations, we encouraged our children to come to us if they made mistakes and found themselves in trouble. Our children evidently did not want to disappoint us.

We gave our children responsibilities.

I often thought we gave our children too few responsibilities. With both teenagers having the pressures of extracurricular activities and heavy course loads, we tried to lighten their responsibilities at home.

However, we did ask the kids to work around the house, telling them they were to help not to earn money, but because they were part of the family. Evidently, this gave Carey a feeling of responsibility and belonging.

Gratefully, both of our children have successfully maneuvered the teenage years and grown toward being responsible young adults.

We prayed.

I have added this final point to Carey's list. I have surrounded my children with prayer and continue to do so. We cannot always be with our children, and we cannot always solve their problems. But we can always turn to our heavenly parent, assured that God loves our children even more than we do. ■

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