



activated

CHANGE YOUR LIFE | CHANGE YOUR WORLD

THINGS EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW

(but shouldn't have to learn the hard way)

TIGHTROPE TANDEM

Decision making in the teen years

STILL YOUNG

You may just be getting started

SPECIAL ISSUE FOR PARENTS

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PERSONALLY SPEAKING

I read an article recently in which CEO Jonatha Holland explained her job this way: “I do not have a special parking place. I do not get bonuses. As a matter of fact, I haven’t had a paycheck in 12 years. My job-critical tasks are teaching, counseling, nurturing, and disciplining. I am not always popular. But that’s OK because it is not part of my job to be popular. I am my Children’s Executive Officer. I’ve been entrusted with raising three children to be adults. It’s not vitally important that they become successful in the way that we often define success—lots of money, fame, a specific career. But I do want them to succeed in the way *Webster’s Dictionary* describes it, “to turn out well.”

Being the father of six grown children, I could relate immediately. Her article also caused me to take stock of my parenting years in terms of her definition of success. Had my children turned out well? Yes, I told myself, rather tentatively at first, still a bit too preoccupied by some of our low points and my own shortcomings as a father. But when I thought more about it in terms of who my children are now, I was very encouraged. They are works in progress, like the rest of us, but they are “turning out well” indeed.

Of course, most of the credit for that goes to their mother, who never ceases to amaze me with her love, patience, dedication, and tenacity. But above all, I think we did as well at parenting as we did because we tried to do it God’s way. We were also fortunate to have been surrounded by likeminded friends, many of whom had more experience than we did. Not only did we benefit from their experience, encouragement, and even hands-on help, but they also pointed us to a wealth of godly counsel in various publications.

And that’s one of the aims of this issue of *Activated*—to pass on some of that experience, encouragement, and counsel. May yours “turn out well”!

Keith Phillips

Keith Phillips
FOR ACTIVATED

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MAKE IT MAGICAL



THEY SAY IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE THAT OFTEN BRING THE GREATEST JOY. This is true of the hour I spend first thing each morning with three toddlers so their mothers, all fellow volunteers from the Family International with whom I live and work, can get on top of their day. I must admit, though, that this hasn't always been the case.

It was a great plan in theory, but with all three still in diapers, one or the other of them usually had a smelly "surprise" for me upon arrival, while another would be a bucket of tears, crying over the fact that her mother was leaving her with me for a while. "Believe me," I often found myself muttering, "I wish this wasn't happening more than you do!"

In those early days of this venture, I would greet them with a cup of coffee in hand, and as soon as I could I would plop myself down in my beanbag chair and prepare to wait out the next hour. Of course that state of affairs usually came to an abrupt end when a toddler fight would break out with screams that could be heard within a five-mile radius. What was I supposed to do with the three of them for a *whole hour*?

After a few days of this, one morning one of them picked up a book from the floor, walked over, and sat herself down in my lap. "Book?" she said, looking at me with her big round eyes.

"Okay, why not?" As I began reading, the other two waddled over and sat down beside us.

BY STEPHANIE PAONE

As I read to them, I was surprised at how much they already knew. Each would point to something familiar on the page and identify it using their baby language, or try to imitate the sound of one of the animals.

We read book after book, and I discovered anew that toddlers are like sponges, absorbing everything. They were learning just by me reading to them, and I found myself enjoying it as well. I decided then to put my heart into my times with them and to come up with other activities to do together.

Now that hour with them is one of my favorite times of the day. Whatever it is we're doing, without fail one of them will shout out "Den!" ("Again," in their baby language) each time the activity ends, and they all break out in fits of laughter when I start it up again.

Being able to help them learn and discover new things and hearing them laugh in delight is far more rewarding than anything I expected in the beginning. There are still some smelly surprises and the occasional toddler tantrum, but I've learned that my times with them are what I make them, and they can be magical!

STEPHANIE PAONE IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN MEXICO. ■

START EARLY

The Need for Loving, Consistent Discipline

BY MARIA FONTAINE

PARENTING IS MORE THAN COMFORTING CHILDREN WHEN THEY FALL DOWN, or making sure they get proper nutrition, and brush their teeth, and so on. Parents are responsible for their children's *spiritual* training as well, and the foundation stone of that training is loving and consistent discipline—and when I say “loving,” I mean reasonable, even-tempered, and nonviolent. Children begin forming behavior patterns and their ideas of right and wrong very early in life, so the earlier you can start teaching them, the better.

Discipline means training your children to lead a disciplined life, and eventually to discipline themselves. If discipline is something that you only do “to” children, the end result will be that as soon as they get out from under your control, they will go wild. But if you discipline them in the sense of consistently trying to teach them to lead disciplined lives, eventually

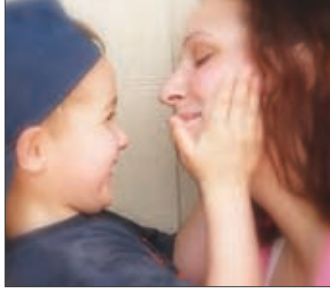
they will be able to discipline themselves.

Discipline is not only about correction or the consequences for unacceptable behavior, although those are each a very important part of it. Discipline starts with step-by-step teaching, setting clear boundaries and guidelines, setting a good example in your own behavior, and being consistent.

If you're like most parents, it was initially difficult for you to administer correction, and perhaps it still is. You love your children and don't want to see them unhappy. You wish with all your heart that there was some way around it, that they could learn the lesson some easier way, but because you do love them, you correct them because you know it's what they need and what will keep them from being hurt worse later. As the Bible says, discipline “yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11).

You can't expect children to learn good behavior on their own; it's a long-term process that requires consistency, love, and fairness. It's probably the biggest challenge and the hardest job you'll ever face as a parent. It's easier in some ways to just let them run wild and entertain themselves, but in the long run you'll find that it's much more worthwhile





to do the hard work that is needed to discipline your kids. In fact, you're in for a lot of heartache if you don't.

Until children learn the simple, basic lessons of obedience, respect, concern for others, self-control, and discipline, they won't mature or reach their full potential. They'll also be less happy and fulfilled in life, and they'll probably make those around them less than happy too. And if you don't give children loving, consistent discipline when they're young, then when they get older they'll be much harder to handle. You'll wind up having to really crack down on them to keep them from hurting themselves or others—and it won't be their fault. It will be your fault for not teaching them earlier, when the stakes weren't as high.

When you look at it that way, you'll see that the loving thing to do is to teach your kids from the beginning, gently, lovingly, and consistently showing them how to make the right decisions, laying the boundaries for acceptable behavior, and administering some form of consequence when they cross those boundaries.

So the first step is to believe that discipline is

necessary, that your children not only need it in order to grow up to be productive and useful members of society, but also to be happy and secure in their relationship with you, their parent. Deep down inside, children know they need boundaries and want their boundaries to be defined, and they're happier and more secure when they receive consistent, loving discipline.

Once you make the commitment to be faithful in the training and discipline of your children, there's another hurdle to cross, which is consistency. There will be times when you're busy with other responsibilities, times when disciplining would be inconvenient or you will worry about what others would think, times when you don't want to "spoil the moment," and times when your children will try every trick in the book to talk you out of it. Unless you're careful, situations and your own mood or energy level will have a greater bearing than they should on how you mete out discipline; you will either ignore misbehavior because you feel that would be more expedient, or you will resort to sharp words or nagging. But inconsistent discipline,

for whatever reason, is confusing and even damaging for children and will only make it harder on you and them. By disciplining consistently, you will need to discipline less, because your children will learn their lessons quicker.

If you're going to discipline your kids, you have to be involved in what they're doing. When you make the commitment to train your children to lead disciplined lives, you're also making a commitment to spend more time with them, because it does take being with them and tuning in to them. You might not enjoy the moments when you have to correct them or discipline them, and at the time it will seem like a lot more work to teach them the right way to do something rather than just letting them do what they want to do. But in the long run, you'll find that you've saved yourself a lot of work, and you'll enjoy your times with your children much more.

Consistently administering loving discipline has great rewards. In the end, not only will your children love, respect, and enjoy being with you more, but you will feel the same way about them, because you will have helped bring out the best in them. ■



ONE OF A KIND

BY ELISABETH SICHROVSKY

ALMOST ANYONE’S LIST OF “PEOPLE WHO HAVE INFLUENCED MY LIFE” includes at least one teacher. What kind of teachers are these?—The kind who use their talents to help develop their students’ talents, the kind who strive to shape not just the mind but the heart. For me, it was a teacher we students came to affectionately call Auntie Marina.

At the time, my family was living in Japan, where my parents were involved in administrative work for our international Christian fellowship. Auntie Marina was my first- and second-grade teacher.

She was level headed and stricter than most of our other teachers and caretakers, firm in her sense of right and wrong, and at first we kids grumbled about that. Before long, however, we learned to trust her because we sensed that she cared about what kind of people we would become. We felt secure with Auntie Marina because she clearly defined our boundaries.

While she set limits and enforced the rules, she demonstrated equal amounts of positivity and love, and she also had an appropriate sense of fun. School with her wasn’t limited to worksheets and textbooks. She took us on excursions and trips to the park, and used her artistic talent in order to get us interested in arts and crafts. One day we children asked, “Can we have coffee like you and the other adults?” and the next day for snack we were delighted when she served us “kid coffee”—milk that she had turned coffee color with molasses.

She also had a knack for making each of us feel special, and one way she did this was by speaking positively about us to others, often even when we were within earshot. I can still recall the pride I felt upon overhearing her tell another teacher how well I was doing in spelling. It was satisfying to know that my efforts had not gone unnoticed.

Auntie Marina’s care and love extended beyond the school years. For quite some time after our family moved to Taiwan, she sent me notes and cards. Ten years later, I still have several of them. When I reread one of those notes recently, I marveled at the concern and interest she had shown in corresponding with an eight-year-old: “Yesterday I came across your picture as I was preparing a photo album of ‘the children in my life’—those I’ve cared for and taught over the years—and I was reminded of how much I love you, my dear young friend.”

On my ninth birthday she wrote: “A very happy birthday to you. I pray that it will be a wonderful, special day for you, and a great new year of your life, full of good surprises and love-filled experiences. I’m happy to know you!”

On June 9, 2005, after a prolonged struggle with cancer, Auntie Marina passed on to Heaven. I know I am only one of many who are better for having experienced her love, which she always reminded us was *God’s* love poured through her.

ELISABETH SICHROVSKY IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN TAIWAN. ■



What to do when you feel **frazzled**

BY DEREK AND MICHELLE BROOKES

THERE ARE GOING TO BE TIMES IN THE DAY-TO-DAY ROUTINE OF PARENTING when you feel overwhelmed by situations and circumstances. You've had an especially trying day at work, your eight-year-old won't do her homework, your teenager's stereo is shaking the house, your toddler didn't make it to the potty in time—and your dinner guests will be here any minute! You feel pushed to the brink.

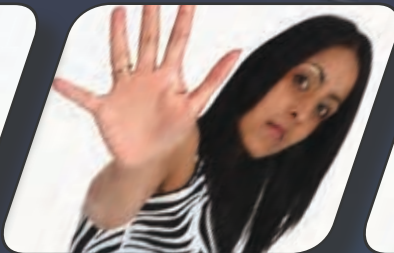
Every parent faces days like this. You're not alone. And you're not alone in a greater sense: Jesus is right there with you. He understands, and He waits with encouragement and solutions. If you have the opportunity, talking with someone else—maybe your spouse or a friend—can help you see things differently, calm your spirit, and give you a chance to pray together for the Lord's help. You can even ask your children to pray with you. Their faith and simple prayers can be a wonderful encouragement.

Whatever you do, don't give in to feelings of frustration and discouragement. Shoot up a prayer and ask Jesus to give you power for the hour and grace for the space, and He will. Ask Him to help you see your children as He sees them, to see what they are going to become. He will help you view the situation optimistically and with hope. The outlook may be bleak, but the "uplook" (looking up to Jesus) is always bright.

Because children are often a reflection of their parents, it's very easy to get discouraged and feel that you have failed when one or more of your children isn't doing well in some area. But remember they're also God's children, and they are a work in progress, just like you are. "It is God who works in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

All He expects is that you try your best, give them your love, and leave the rest up to Him. Now that doesn't mean you should just throw up your hands in despair, let "God take care of it," and quit when the going gets rough. He probably intends for you to be part of His solution. You need to find out from Him what He wants you to do, and do it; then put the rest in His hands and let Him do what you can't do.

"WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FEEL FRAZZLED" IS EXCERPTED FROM THE BOOKLET *POWER FOR PARENTING* BY AURORA PRODUCTION. ORDER YOUR COPY FROM ONE OF THE ADDRESSES ON PAGE 2. ■



TIGHTROPE TANDEM

Decision Making in the Teen Years

BY DAVID BRANDT BERG, ADAPTED

BY THE TIME CHILDREN REACH THEIR EARLY TEENS, they have grown to nearly the physical stature of adults, but often still think and behave like children. That's the age when a lot of young people do wild, crazy things and get into trouble, and of course if they start going that direction and no one is there to help turn them around, things are likely to go from bad to worse.

Teens are at the age of decision, and that's a troubling, perilous time. They're trying to find their place in life, where they fit, and it worries them. They can be pretty difficult to live with, and they even find it difficult to live with themselves, because they are in a quandary, in a state of flux. They can be very idealistic, and at the same time very critical of their parents and other adults who aren't perfect.

Making the transition from childhood to adulthood can be like walking a tightrope, a high wire, and teens need someone there, a parent or other strong role model, to help them find their footing and steady them as they cross over.

Teenagers may not act like it, but they actually *want* leadership, they want direction, and they know they need it. They want help,

but you've got to win their confidence. They've got to know that you love them and are trying to help them.

When children become young teenagers, they start wanting to make their own decisions and run their own lives. That's a natural part of coming into adulthood. Of course, by that time their parents should have taught them how to make *right* decisions, and if they haven't, things are likely to go haywire. When that happens it may seem like it's too late, but better to start late than not at all—and it's never too late, with God's help.

When my first four reached their teens, I tried to guide them through the decision-making process, but then I'd get them to make their own decisions. I'd say, "*You* know what's right and what's wrong. What do *you* think you ought to do?"

They'd often try to get me or their mother to make the decision for them, so they wouldn't have to take the blame if things went wrong. Or they'd try to persuade us to say yes to them doing something that they knew they shouldn't do, so we'd be guilty and not them.

But I would tell them, "Don't ask me. You know what's right and wrong. What do *you* think you should do?" Afterwards they were usually glad that we made them decide, because they knew that was the way it was supposed to be and it helped them feel trusted and respected, which is a very important thing at that age.

Most of the time they knew what was right, and they wound up making the right choices. Even after they had made a wrong choice or two, they usually turned around and made the right one after a little wisely presented advice. I believe that most teens will do the same, if shown enough love and patience and understanding.

Parenting or mentoring teens is a difficult, sacrificial, and sometimes scary job, but it also has thrills and rewards that are all its own. ■



THE GREATEST DISCOVERY THAT ANY OF US CAN MAKE IN LIFE is that we can have a close personal relationship with our heavenly Father through His Son, Jesus, because that connection puts us in touch with every other good thing we need.

Such a relationship is not only possible, it's only a short prayer away. "Jesus, I need You. Come into my heart and life. Forgive me for my sins, and be my Savior, my ever-present companion and counselor, my unfailing help. Amen."

Making that connection is instantaneous, but that is only the start. Like any other meaningful relationship, it develops and matures over time, and it grows the quickest through daily interaction. As you learn to turn to Him in prayer and get to know Him and His plan better through reading His Word, you will come to understand how deeply He loves you personally, how much He wants to see you happy, fulfilled, and living up to your full potential, and how directly He wants to be involved in your life. You will be amazed at how ready, willing, and able He is

to supply not only love and understanding in trying times, but also practical solutions to the problems you face.

For parents, the only thing more wonderful than having that kind of personal relationship with God themselves is knowing that it's just as freely available to their children. "For the promise is to you and to your children" (Acts 2:39).

Families that share that common connection with God, whom the Bible calls love itself (1 John 4:8), are closer, more loving, more unified, and have far fewer serious problems among themselves than families that don't. Why?—Because they have the most important things in common, besides a clear standard of right and wrong—the spiritual guidance and support they need to make the right decisions and stick to them. When problems and irritations arise, real solutions and heavenly help are only a prayer away.

If you want more for your family and haven't yet discovered Jesus, connect with Him and start growing together.

KEITH PHILLIPS IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN THE UNITED STATES. ■

GROWING TOGETHER

BY KEITH PHILLIPS



Things every parent should know

(But shouldn't have to learn the hard way)

We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today.—*Stacia Tauscher*

You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance.—*Franklin P. Jones*

Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.—*Rabindranath Tagore*

There's nothing that can help you understand your beliefs more than trying to explain them to an inquisitive child.—*Frank A. Clark*

There are no seven wonders of the world in the eyes of a child. There are seven million.—*Walt Streightiff*

Making the decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body.—*Elizabeth Stone*

Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children, and no theories.—*John Wilmot*

To bring up a child in the way he should go, travel that way yourself.—*Josh Billings*

It's not only children who grow. Parents do too. As much as we watch to see what our children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours. I can't tell my children to reach for the sun. All I can do is reach for it myself.—*Joyce Maynard*

Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you.—*Robert Fulghum*

If there is anything that we wish to change in the child, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could better be changed in ourselves.—*C.G. Jung*

Children have more need of models than of critics.—*Carolyn Coats*

Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children.—*Charles R. Swindoll*

What a child doesn't receive he can seldom later give.—*P.D. James*

If you want your children to improve, let them overhear the nice things you say about them to others.—*Haim Ginott*

In bringing up children, spend on them half as much money and twice as much time.—*Author unknown*

What's done to children, they will do to society.—*Karl Menninger*

You have a lifetime to work, but children are only young once.—*Polish proverb*

Kids spell love T-I-M-E.—*John Crudele*

The guys who fear becoming fathers don't understand that fathering is not something perfect men do, but something that perfects the man. The end product of child raising is not the child but the parent.—*Frank Pittman*

If I Had My Child to Raise Over Again

If I had my child to raise all over again,
I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.
I'd finger-paint more, and point the finger less.
I would do less correcting and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.
I'd do more hugging and less tugging.
—*Diane Loomans*

THE IMPORTANCE OF USING BOTH HANDS

BY HÉCTOR MEDINA

MY GRANDPA USED TO SAY, “If you see well-behaved children, you can be sure that someone is using both hands in bringing them up—the right hand of love and the left hand of discipline.” In the 25 years that I have been a teacher, that maxim has been a cornerstone of my daily interactions with my students.

Perhaps you’ve heard the analogy that likens youngsters to small plants. Plants need water and sunshine, but they also need attention in the form of fertilizing, pruning, fumigating, transplanting to larger pots, etc.—attention that requires work on the part of the gardener and can be a temporary shock for the plant. In the case of young people, that means giving them tender loving care first and foremost, while not neglecting the other things that are necessary parts of character building, like providing a healthy environment for their social development and emotional and spiritual growth, setting limits, teaching them to take responsibility for their actions, and allowing them to learn through suffering the consequences of their own poor decisions, if necessary. These more difficult aspects of parenting and mentoring are usually also the ones that are the most difficult for young people to accept, especially in the beginning, but we owe it to them and to God, to

whom they and we will ultimately need to give account of our lives.

There is a lot of talk these days about troubled teenagers and the exponential impact they have on society as their influence spreads to their peers, younger children, and eventually their own children. And the same questions keep being asked: How did we get in this state? And how do we get out? Can we steer our ship back on a godlier course, or is it too late?

I believe there is always hope, with God’s help, because all things are possible for Him (Matthew 19:26). But He can’t and won’t do it alone. He needs us parents, teachers, and other adults to be mentors and role models for our young people. Our part is to buck the trends of passiveness, permissiveness, and a general lack of definite moral standards that sadly have become norms in parenting and education today. But if we will each do what we can, God will do what we can’t. He will bring about the inward changes that our children need and help them *want* to do their part, to do the right things with the right motivation. With time, they can become forces for positive change themselves, but it starts with us adults. We need to take the reins—with *both hands*.

HÉCTOR MEDINA IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN COLOMBIA. ■

THE EVOLUTION OF A MOTHER

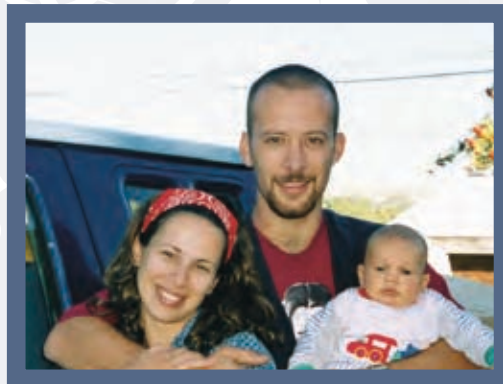
BY MARIA DOEHLER

WHEN MY HUSBAND SAM AND I HAD ONLY ONE CHILD, I thought I had a handle on parenting. I needed to adapt and bend and give up some of my independence, but not too much. I was absolutely on top of Cade's appearance, and he never wore dirty, stained, or soiled clothes. Cade was very "portable," and we toted him with us wherever we went. When something needed to get done, we calmly set out to do it and got it done. I knew things would get harder as we had more children, but I wasn't worried; I was pretty good at this.

Brooke arrived next. Brooke was an angel of a baby, waking only to gurgle and coo, and putting herself back to sleep. I had gained less weight during that pregnancy, so I was back in shape in no time. If I could ace it with two, I reasoned, I could handle anything. I was at the top of my game.

Enter Zara. Exit all parenting confidence. It's not that Zara was difficult on her own, but suddenly "spontaneous" meant 45 minutes later. I often had kids crying in three different parts of the house. Doing anything as a family required the painstaking planning and execution of a mission to the moon. We began hearing comments like "Just watching you wears me out!" But babies aren't babies forever (before you can brace yourself, they're toddlers!), and we learned to work with it. We learned that we didn't have to be perfect. Neither did our kids.

At this point I think I started to better understand that being a mother goes far beyond giving birth and caring for my children physically; it means living my life through my children—not by imposing my



FEEDING READING

PARENTING GOD'S WAY: LOVE, UNDERSTANDING, INSTRUCTION, AND DISCIPLINE

Children are to respect and obey their parents.

Exodus 20:12
Ephesians 6:1-2
Colossians 3:20

Pray for God's guidance and help in raising your children.

Judges 13:12
Proverbs 3:5-6
James 1:5

Treat children gently and in love.

Luke 1:17
Ephesians 4:32
Colossians 3:21
1 Peter 4:8

Patience, mercy, and reasoning are the most effective.

Proverbs 16:6
Romans 2:4
1 Thessalonians 2:11

Parents are responsible to both teach and set a good example for their children.

Deuteronomy 4:9
Deuteronomy 6:6-7
Ephesians 6:4

Parents are responsible to correct their children when necessary.

Proverbs 3:12
Proverbs 19:18
Proverbs 29:17

Godly parenting will guide children all through life.

Psalms 37:31
Proverbs 6:20, 22-23
Proverbs 22:6
John 10:27-28
2 Timothy 3:15



ideas and dreams on them, but by rejoicing at and taking pride in their triumphs. Everywhere we went, people would tell us “Enjoy them while you have them. They will grow up so quickly!” That truth started to sink in.

Four kids. Emma is every bit as special as her brother and sisters. Spontaneous now means at least an hour. We still have to plan everything, of course, but we only plan one activity a day, max. We have lots of play clothes and just a few “special” clothes. Once when Zara got blue marker on Cade’s shirt just as we were finally ready to go out, I found myself thinking, *Well, at least it’s on a blue shirt. It almost matches.* We are a spectacle, but a *happy* spectacle that people seem to enjoy watching.

I’m continuing to learn about love in ways that are slowly changing the most stubborn parts of my nature. Each child and each day reshapes me a little more, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. It’s fun to be a family!

MARIA DOEHLER IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN MEXICO. ■

NEVER OUT OF STYLE

—A Message from Jesus for Mothers

OLD-FASHIONED MOTHERHOOD NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE BECAUSE IT’S ALL ABOUT LOVE. I made people to need love, and I intended for them to first experience that love through their mothers. Mothers are the embodiment of love and care and tenderness—love that even the tiniest baby can feel and respond to.

So if you think you’re missing out on life because you’re stuck at home “just” caring for a baby or raising small children when you could be furthering your career, think again. Love is the best thing in life! To be able to love to the full is the most important lesson anyone can ever learn, and love is the greatest gift anyone can ever receive—and mothers teach love and give love like no one else. Life would go on fine without many things, but not without mothers. “Old-fashioned” motherhood is here to stay! ■

ACTION

THROUGH PRAYER

A Spiritual Exercise

PRAYING FOR OTHERS IS A POWERFUL WAY OF PUTTING LOVE INTO ACTION. You're not only thinking of them and wanting to help, but you're doing something about it. Prayer, as millions of people worldwide will attest, *does* change things. Prayer moves God's hand and heart to do the things we ask. It doesn't always happen right away, but eventually those prayers are answered in the way God knows is best for everyone involved.

Praying for others not only benefits those people, but you too. It brings a spirit of faith, a positive spirit, because you're focusing on God's goodness and power and expecting Him to answer. When you manifest faith by praying, it pleases God and He goes to work in the situation or in the person's life. He loves you and the one you're praying for, and He wants to effect positive change. Your prayers set His power in motion.

Start by writing a list of people you're concerned about, who need God's help. Perhaps they're sick or have had an accident, or are lonely, or are in a financial bind, or are in danger, or have suffered loss. Include both those you know personally and those who you have heard about in the news or from others.

Say a prayer for each in turn, claiming an appropriate promise of God from the Bible (see examples below). Work your way down your list for 10 or 15 minutes daily, spending a minute or so praying for each person.

Add people to your list as their needs come to your attention. As your list grows, you probably won't be able to pray for every person each day in the time you have allotted. Pray for the most serious and urgent situations first, and as many of the others as you have time for. Whenever you reach the bottom of your list, start again at the top.

When God answers one of your prayers, thank Him for doing so, and then drop that entry from your daily prayer list. You may want to keep a separate list of answered prayers and take a moment to review it at the beginning of your prayer time to boost your faith that He will also meet the needs still on your list.

Make praying for others a daily habit, and you will not only help make their lives better, but your faith will grow and your spiritual life will be enriched as you see God work. ■

GOD'S PROMISES...

...for those who need healing:

"I will restore health to you," says the Lord" (Jeremiah 30:17).

"The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up" (James 5:15).

...for those in danger:

"God is a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

"The Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble" (Nahum 1:7).

...for those suffering loss and hardship:

"I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you'" (Isaiah 41:13).

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you" (John 14:27).



Still Young

BY CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER

WHEN I WAS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL, I wrote a report about Juan Ponce de León, the Spanish conquistador who in 1513 went looking for the legendary fountain of youth but found Florida instead. The story fascinated me, though I couldn't quite grasp why people would search so arduously for a cure for aging. Growing old was something I saw happening to only a few folks, most notably my grandparents. Back then, old age was something far, far away. But now that I'm in my mid-50s, that port of call is on my horizon and gets closer with every passing year.

While I was recovering from a recent ankle operation, I had plenty of time to think about what my twilight years might be like. I also had more time to read, and I came across an article about the Portuguese film maker Manoel de Oliveira, who at the age of 98 entered a film in the Venice Film Festival. Oliveira's Egyptian colleague Youssef Chahine said, "I am young. I am only 81. First of all, I never look at myself in the mirror. I think it's silly to do that and tell oneself that you are getting older, especially when I look at Manoel still going strong."

This set me off on a search for other old-timers who are still burning

brightly. I soon found an abundance of venerable role models.

The Swiss mountaineer Ulrich Inderbinen recently passed away at 103. He climbed the Matterhorn 370 times. He made his last ascent when he was 90, and he climbed other mountains until he was 95. In one of his last interviews he said, "I have no idea how I got to be 100 years of age, but I no longer know any stress. For sure I have no fear of death. I have lived a full and happy life. Why should I be afraid?"

At 95, Olivia Neubauer still teaches reading five days a week to eager kindergarten students. One of her fellow teachers said the children get excited whenever they're around her. "It's a fascinating thing to watch." Her principal added, "She comes in every morning, willing and ready to work, and she does a fantastic job."

The legendary Cuban bassist Israel "Cachao" Lopez, known as the "father of the mambo," set off on a three-week whirlwind concert tour of Europe at age 88. When asked how he has so much energy, he says simply, "I don't smoke or drink."

Despite being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease at age 72, Pope John Paul II continued his rigorous schedule of world travels into his 80s.

When media giants CBS and Viacom split in 2005, Sumner Redstone, who was 82 at the time, remained chairman of both companies.

Mother Teresa continued ministering to the poor of India well into her 90s.

After reading these and other seniors' stories, I am feeling younger than ever.

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HOME OF

hearts

Love has creative power, and in the home love does its magic by engendering unselfish acts and helping each family member see the others in a positive light. Everyone wants to be understood, accepted, and loved for who he or she is, and the home is a God-created environment where these things can thrive.

There are also things that work against love in the home—enemies of love, if you will. Disagreements between children and parents and sibling rivalries are a couple of the obvious ones, but there are other problems that are more subtle and therefore even more dangerous—selfishness, laziness, indifference, criticalness, nagging, taking one another for granted, and thinking and talking negatively about one another, to name a few. These usually begin with small, seemingly innocent incidents—finding excuses to not help out, squabbles over petty issues, little putdowns and sarcastic remarks—but unless you recognize these as attacks on your family's love and unity, they will develop into bad habits that will take a terrible toll on your family.

The root problem is a lack of love. The only thing that will cure a lack of love is love itself, so ask Me to bring more love into your home, and then work with Me on it. If you ask Me to give each of you genuine respect and appreciation for the others, I will put that kind of love in your hearts, but then it's up to you to cultivate that love through loving thoughts, words, and actions.