

A Dad's Challenge



during your kid(s) times of growth.

OMR & *

= A "Being a Dad for Dummies" FREebook.

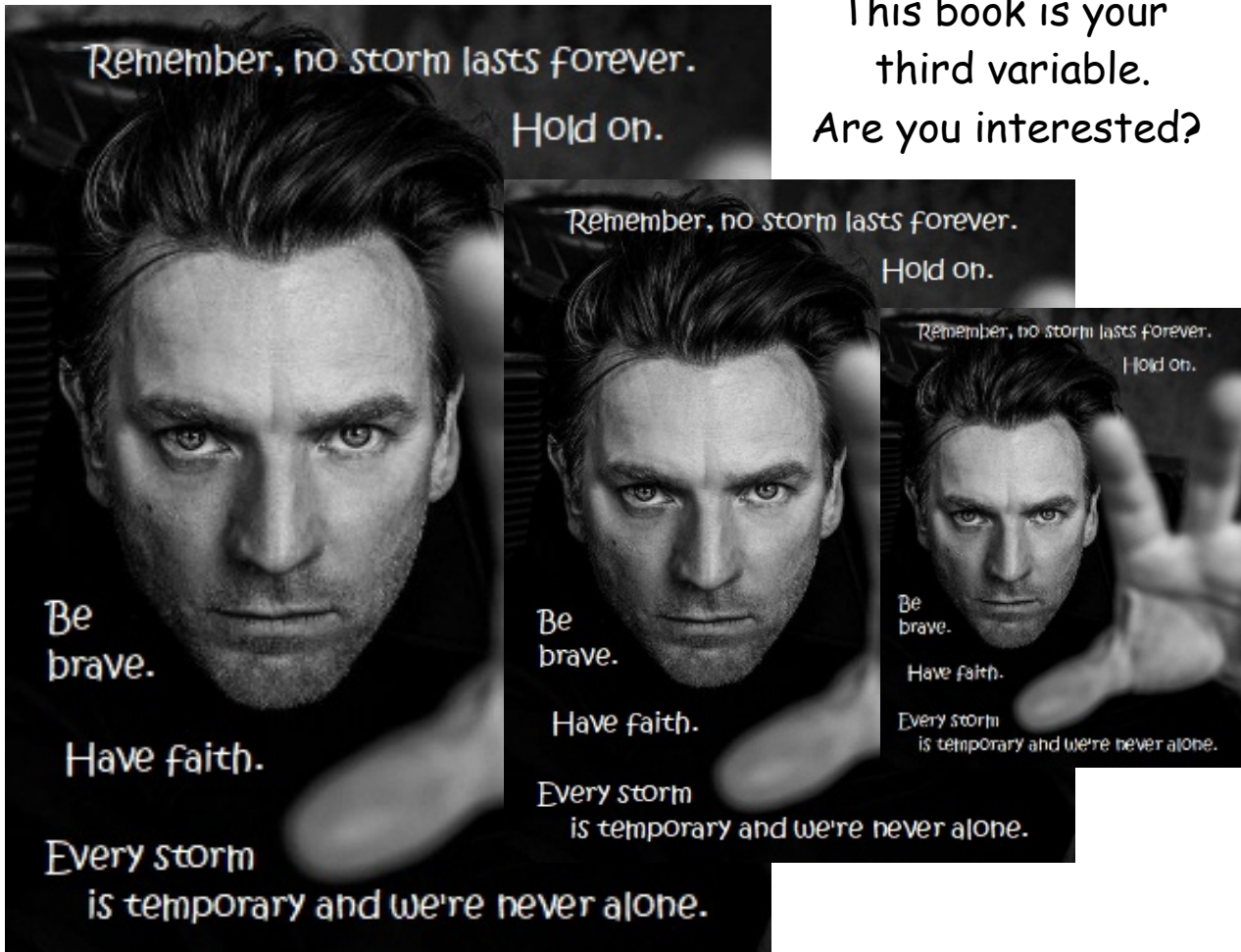
Cabinright 2022 - Old Man River (OMR)

Prologue

Have you ever wondered about how much time you have to help teach your kids what you would like them to know?

That also assumes you know what you want to teach them, how best to do it and when. Unfortunately, most dads (and I was a part of that group) have only two things available to help them when they become a dad. That being the example their Dad was and their own good intentions.

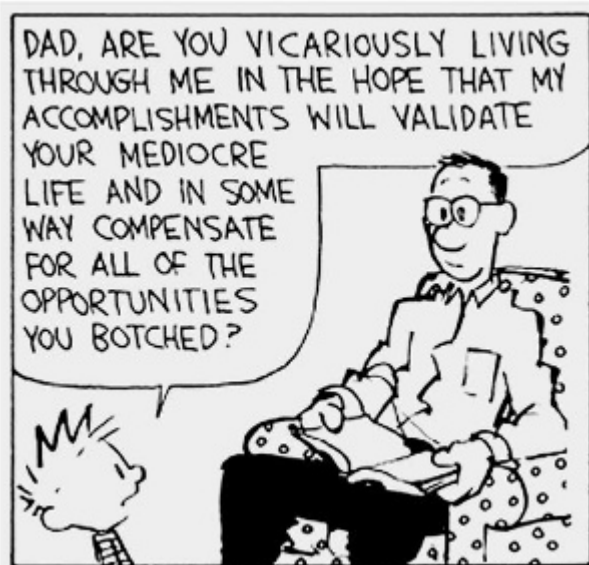
This book is your third variable.
Are you interested?



And yes, different images, quotes and why are these here type thoughts are what you'll get mixed in with the following. Now, for the why? Because every dad in this world that we have today has a lot going on. Finding the time to gain some added insights is easier said than done. Which got me to thinking on how to possibly pull together some good info for new Dads to consider, and how to make it easy to read? It was in that pursuit that this book was created (and mainly because the download movie version is still years away).

Now, all kidding aside, there is no guarantee that anything created for new Dads will be read by them. So, what is in the following is for your consideration. It's broken down into three sections - each corresponding with the three stages of kids growth (90% fun, 3% terror and 7% what was that?).

And remember, the clock is ticking. For new dads, you only get around 15 years before your kid(s) know more than you and for you dads that have kids rolling into their teen years, you're close to being too late.



But know this. There are teaching times for kids, for teens and for adults. All of the following is for this simple action. It is for you to help get your thinking started. The big Q is - do you want to start?

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TOC (aka Table of Contents)

The First stage.

Starting Out.

2 through 4.

5 and 6.

The Second stage.

Where to begin.

You're a Role Model.

Calm is Critical.

Remember - Before . . .

Poison Awareness.

Strong People.

Striving for what?

The Third stage.

A look at failure.

A look at negative people.

A look at challenge.

A look at impact.

A look at raising the bar.

A look at honesty.

A look at wisdom.

And please know this:

What you will find over the pages that follow are some words to ponder and a bunch of images that just may give you some added ideas. Most of those images, I've made available to click and get via this website:

[A Father's Challenge](https://good2know4us.weebly.com/family-friends/a-fathers-challenge)

aka . . .

[https://good2know4us.weebly.com/family--friends/a-fathers-challenge](https://good2know4us.weebly.com/family-friends/a-fathers-challenge)

And yes, all of those images are found via the pages that follow.

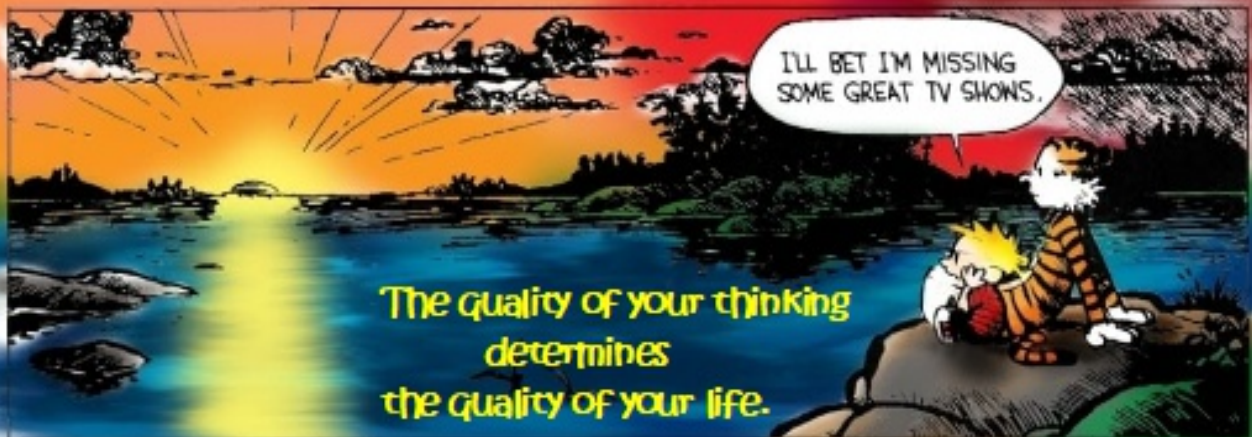
Thanks for you consideration.

Let us get on then with this book.

The First stage.

This unfolds during your kid's first 6 years of life (and please know that your first kid is like the first pancake you make . . . they're not practice ones but you do learn a lot).

Which brings us to those in this stage. Are you ready? Do you know what you need to do and what you need to avoid?



calvin and hobbes
BY WATSON

Well, if you so - that is great, but if you're not sure, please consider what you'll find over the pages that follow.

And an FYI . . . This section is dedicated to son Alex who with Anni, have their two kids in this age of life.

Starting Out . . .

This page is for those dads who have a baby on their hands. Since time is scarce, these pictures are a great start for you (and just a few words to help you).

Lesson One:



Knowing when you are in over your head is good and knowing when you are burying your child in the grocery cart . . . is even better.

So, watch over the weeks to come as our own Outing Expert (Chip Monk), shares his insight on how best to be a better 1st time Dad.

His insights will help all new Dads to be smarter, to be prepared and to be loved by their wife and kids because they are better dads than others.

Lesson Two:

So let's start with the basics - **how do you know there is a messy diaper to deal with?**

The smell is awful? There is a noticeable 'lump in the trunk'? You are clueless but your wife says 'Change his diaper Sweetie'. Yes, yes, yes. Or, if you are like Chip and do it the old fashion way - you 'check the package' [hence our visual conveniently provided].



And if you want lessons Three through Sixteen, please get that booklet via: <https://outingmnfun.weebly.com/misc> Look there for **Chip Monk's "First Time Dad"** and you can download the pdf for that great 'easy to read' insight.

Ages 2 through 4 . . .

Where the 'Starting Out' was a simple cover for the first 18 months or so, you'll find out quickly that getting through those 2nd, 3rd & 4th years of age, will cover the range of some of the most fun times, as well as some horribly trying times.

So know this. First, what your 2 year old can or can not do will most likely be different than other 2 year olds and that is okay. As long as they are growing, learning and happy . . . you are on the right parental track (enjoy those good days).

Oops, and before I forget. I alluded to this in the above but please note that you will see a lot of comics and chuckles to help get a point or two across. I really appreciate all of the humor and insights to life that Bill Watterson shares via his Calvin & Hobbes comics - so you will see a bunch of those sprinkled throughout this book (which means a big thank you to Bill for your talent).



Second, for the 3 & 4 year olds, this is where you'll see a huge shift in their abilities.

The key for this time, make sure they build up their self-confidence and they know that you love them.



Take life day by day and be grateful for the little things. And don't get stressed over what you can't control.

Ages 5 and 6 . . .

By this time, the years are flying by (so learning is going fast).



Remember Gramps... when wrestling with a gorilla, you don't stop when you get tired, you stop when the gorilla gets tired.

What you need to determine is what is going well and what needs work (school is start'n).

For the good stuff, always be grateful, and for the not so good - now is the time to focus on what is needed (focus on reading or listening or whatever . . . every kid is different as to what they've got grasped & what they struggle a bit with.

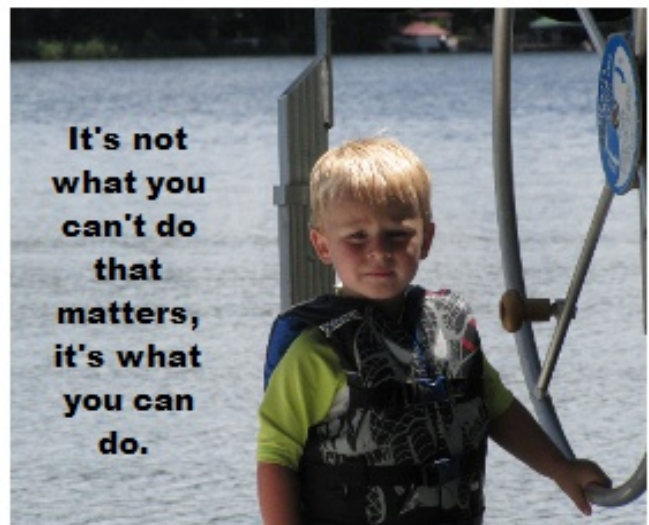


Do not only be good in life,

But be amazed by life as well.

your little ones interact with others. The more they are self-confident, the better and easier things will go.

And don't forget, mixed in with all of this is how well



It's not what you can't do that matters, it's what you can do.



Next time you're stressed, take a step back, inhale and laugh. Remember who you are and why you're here. You're never given anything in this world that you can't handle. Be strong, be flexible, love yourself, and love others. Always remember, just keep moving forward.

And in closing . . . don't forget that at this age, your young one(s) are now pretty good at talking and in how they can

express how things are going for them. Make the time to have fun talks with them. You'll be amazed with what they tell you (so listen well).

Now, is there anything else? Most likely - just be prepared for the unexpected & you'll be okay.



What's next?

Okay, if you have read the pages ahead, you have completed the easiest actions in being a Dad of 'young children'.

The big question now is the 'What's next?'

To help on this, I know that the above is just a start to all the things that new dads need to consider so I asked three other Dads (and they have young kids now) what are



some examples of what they would offer up? Here are their responses to my question: *"What would you recommend as an example or two for Dads of preschool age kids?"*

Alex shared: His boys have a mailbox outside their bedroom door. He says he can either leave them a note, give them a task, or have a scavenger hunt for them to do. It's a way to connect each morning with them, even though he is off to work when they get up.

JJ shared: Although it may seem simple but be involved with them as much as you can when you can. If you can, help coach your kids while you have the opportunity, limit the

pressure on them and know when it's time to step away. I have learned from my coaching my older boys, they need a different approach now which is a good thing because I get to start again with youngest as he now starts sports. And last of all, although your busy, eat dinner as a family every night that you can.

And Zach shared: I like to do something independently specific with each of our kids that matches to their interests. And one thing I am really glad we do with the kids is read to them every night before bed.

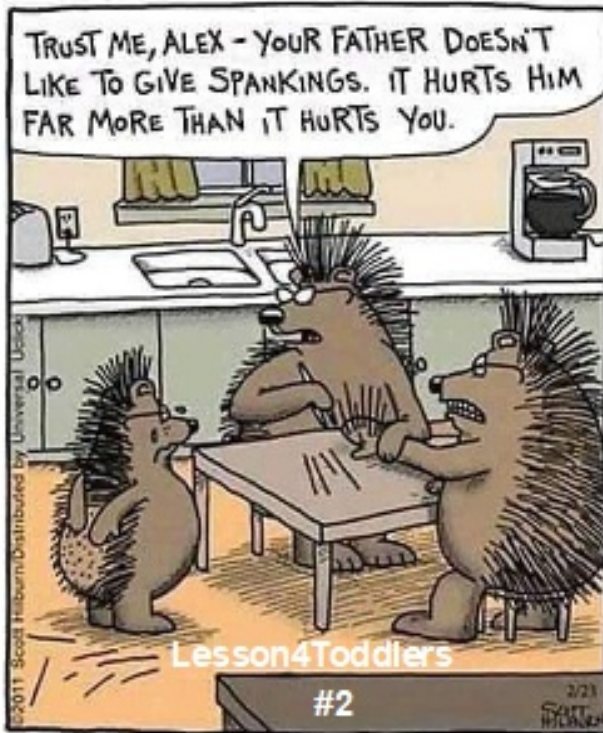
Thanks guys for those comments. And before I get too far down on the 'Dad path' . . . please remember that all of the information shared - are good ideas to consider. And if you



are a smart Dad, you will also know that there are a lot of Moms out there who can probably give you some great insights to be aware of as well (because I think there have been too many wives that ended up being married to guys that they thought would be great Dads, but ended up to be

disappointing duds aka the classic 'Pull my finger' dad). So, if you don't want to be a dud, keep reading and embrace as many of these insights shared that you can (you'll be glad that you did). Why? Because learning from others helps you.

For example, consider these words that were attributed to teachers - who have a ton of experience 'with kids' (and yes, they are good words to keep in mind, and to go with all of the above as you prepare your kids for their school years).



Parents, if you let your child argue with you, they will argue with me. If you let your child speak to you in a disrespectful tone, they will also take that tone with me. If you allow your child to break rules without consequences, they will not do what I say as well. You see, you are your child's first and most important teacher. We can only build upon the foundation you've laid at

home. Thank you for doing what is needed so that your child is ready for school and **not prepared for prison down the road.**

[signed] Your child's teachers

Now, those last words 'not prepared for . . . ' I had added because at the time of this all being created - more and more kids are getting pulled into bullying actions, too many 'dumb' social media challenges, and car-jackings. **So, the stakes are high but thankfully - this section is targeted for the real young ones - the preschool age kids and their Dads.**

Therefore, lets go . . .

First, if you have not thought about what you want your little one(s) to learn, to experience, to become during these first critical years of their life - you need to do so now. I know when I was in this status, I did not pause to think about this or even talk in depth with my wife as to what we were trying to achieve at that time when our kids were little. It was basically provide a home, feed & care for the family and work to do what was needed, when needed, as best can.

Second, with that said, you have me as an example. Is what I did back then, sufficient for you? I hope not. I hope you do have ongoing talks with your wife about the type of things that have been shared above. Not that all of this is to guilt you into action, it is to encourage you to think on what others have learned, and you pick and choose those things that make sense for you and your family.

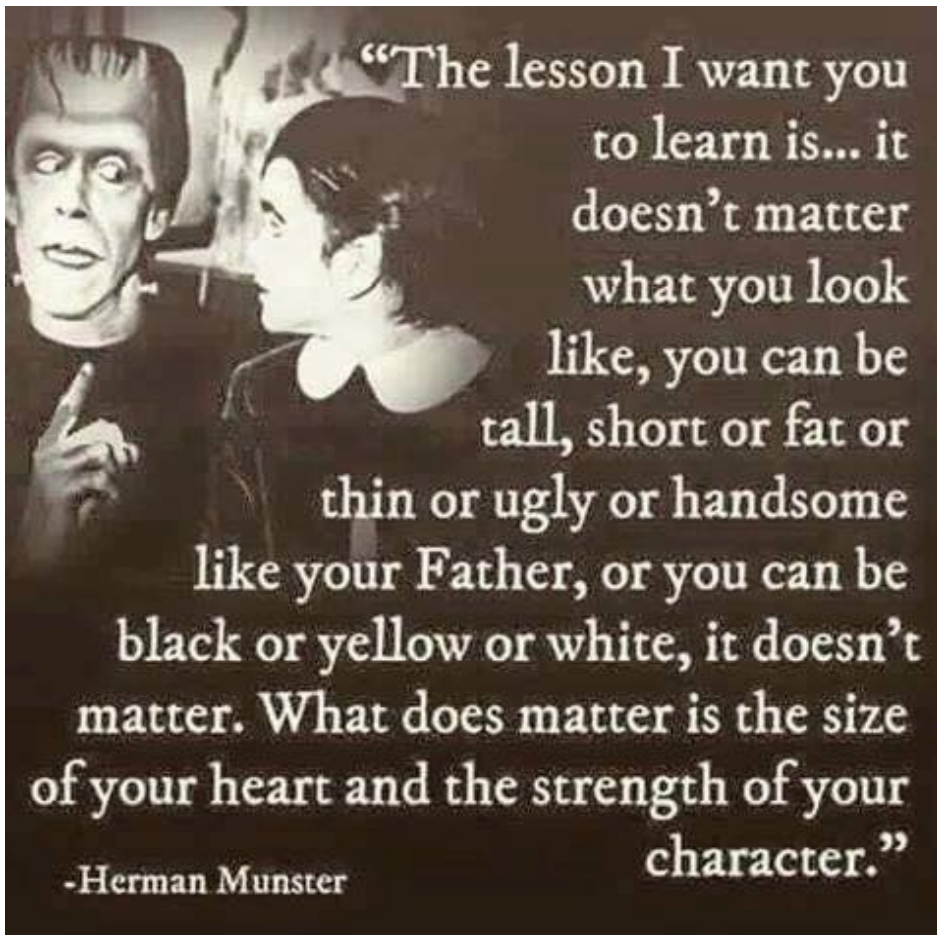
And third, is to build upon the first two. Please know that these preschool years will go by fast. Think about all of this, decide what makes sense to you and pursue as best you can, those actions that show your love for your young ones. Because once these first 6 years go by, you don't get to do a 'do over'.



The Second stage.

This unfolds during your kid's years of ages 7 through 12. The time when the volume and activities can really go up.

Which brings us to those in this stage. Are you ready? Did **stage one** teach you a lot or did you stumble, fumble and mumble as you worked through it? Now, some do better in that stage and some not so well, but that is okay as long as you appreciated the good times and learned from the tough times. It is where you go from here - in this stage - that sets the tone for potentially the toughest time, and that is



the for those teen years.

And FYI . . . This section is dedicated to son-in-law JJ who he and Wendy have their three kids hitting this age of life.

Where to begin?

One thing that is for sure - is that nothing is as simple as black and white. Everything unfolding in your life, is for the most part "blowing up all over in your kids life."

Well, for the first part, you need to remember that what you focus on, is what will do best. So if it is your job, or your family, or your health . . . there is a good chance you may do pretty well on that focus. But in reality,

you need to focus on so many things. For example . . . your family, your finances, your fitness, your friends and your faith - all will need your focus from time to time if the are to do well. That means you are in a non-stop juggling act of your time and talent. Easy no but a reality that you need to understand and then put plans & actions in place to rotate through those as you move from day to day, week to week, month to month, and year to year. Which means this. It is the focus that you pursue, not the good intentions.

Focus more on the people who inspire you than the ones who annoy you.



For when you do, you will get much further in your life.

You're a Role Model.

Don't forget . . . that as you work your way through each day, your kid(s) are watching you. And if you pause a minute or two, you'll probably see that you are like me . . . I watched my Dad & my Mom and most of my actions as an adult and as a parent have been significantly different than their actions.

Which ties in with these images and the words they each contain. At a minimum, they are ones you could possible use



or share in some way with your kid(s). Remember, they have been growing up watching TV and movies that have one agenda . . . and that is to get

their attention and to influence them. Now, remember that they probably see those more throughout the day than they see you. So it is a battle for the hearts and minds of your kids. You and your wife are outnumbered. Which means your time with your kids is precious. Don't waste it, use it (and to use it best, your kids should enjoy it as well).

Calm is critical.

One of the things we don't think much on is the value of staying calm. But when we pause to ponder this, we see that the world creates a lot of stress on us. And as dads, we also need to realize that our kid(s) can get stressed as well.

Which starts with you and then leads to them. Those being your wife, your kid(s) and if you are up for the full challenge . . . your friends and your co-workers.

Train your mind to stay calm in every situation. Easy? No, but ever so critical.



Stress and worry take no break from anyone. So ask yourself this: 'Am I stressed?' If you are, there is a good chance that everyone around you can see it as well. The challenge then is how do you deal with stress, with worry, with frustrations? Are you one who explodes or one who finds a way to vent carefully and if at all possible . . . positively? It is never easy but remember - you are always a role model so don't necessarily hide it, but deal with it and help show others on how to deal with tough things well verses being a great example of handling things poorly.

Remember - Before . . .

As an adult and as a Dad, we often find ourselves reacting versus slowing down, sorting things out & then taking action.

Which in many cases is 'you have to do what you have to do.' But what if before you took action (on what you said or did), you cause pause a moment, size things up better and then do what you have to do . . . which you are glad . . . verses doing something and then be mad (as in - why did I do that)?

And yes I know this is one of those 'easier said than done' but it is doable, or at least making some progress on. So, if you can, think about this for yourself and find a way to help your kid(s) to learn this as best they can.



Poison awareness . . .

A lot of us understand the impact of a poison our a body. But where we struggle is in viewing . . . what are the poisons to stay away from or to deal carefully with?

This is where a refresher for each of us is good. So let us assume first that the poisons we can ingest or be exposed



*What is Poison?
Anything beyond
what we need
is poison.
It can be power,
food, laziness,
ego, ambition,
fear, vanity,
anger or
whatever.*

to are easy to know (don't take many Tylenol, don't drink gasoline, bleach, etc. etc.).

But what about those listed in this image shared? Have you opened

your mindset to all the types of poisons that can derail you and or worse . . . kill you? And then, once you have thought through all of those, have you ever made the time to talk with your kid(s) about how they need to be aware and how best to avoid the poisons that can come into their lives?

Remember, too late is too late. Please help yourself and your loved ones to not underestimate the poisons in life.

Strong people . . .

If someone asked you what makes a person strong? How would you answer that?

I'm pretty sure would not respond that it is strength of body . . . but that it is strength

of character that is so critical (at least I would hope that your response would be down that path). Which then leads to the question, what are the aspects of character that you see as critical or at least as beneficial? Would kindness, respect, integrity, courage, perseverance or other things as well or different come to mind?

But then, what about those who look up to you and or are dependent on you for critical guidance? Have you thought of when, where, how and why you would ever talk about these things with your kid(s)? If yes, great - I hope your plan is unfolding. But if no, why not? Are you assuming they will figure those out on their own?

Strong people don't put others down, they lift them up.



Striving for what?

I'll now close out this stage 2 with a 'pointer'. And that is to point out that there is so much that your young kid(s) need to learn as their grade school years unfold. The big Q is in who and where will they learn what will impact their years ahead (and remember, they could be your grand-kids parent some years down the ways).



It starts with remembering that the world you grew up in is not the world that your kid(s) live in. Now the pages above were intended to give you some ideas that you could run with or least help to trigger some good thinking.

Now it all comes back to you and if you are blessed, you have your good wife to partner with. Don't let these kid years fly by and you did nothing but fill their time in one way or another. Make the time to help them to learn and to be better prepared for the years ahead (it is so critical).

Any other thoughts?

Like Stage One, this Stage Two is intended to give you some ideas to think about, to see if they trigger ideas and actions that you may want to pursue for when your kids are in this preteen age. For me, I thought I was doing pretty good as a Dad of kids.

I was trying to talk with my kids, coach them when I could, attend their games, events, etc when they happened, etc. etc.

But you know what I didn't do? I didn't realize I should be finding ways to talk with my kids on how they were doing.



Like . . . How is school going, anything not going well? Or, how are things going with your friends? The intent is not to be nosy but to have good talks, fun talks and when needed, that hard talks with your kids.

None of us are perfect and your kids are not either. They will have fun, they will make

mistakes and they will get in trouble in one way or another. And along the way, they will have things that frustrate them, just like things can frustrate you (aka Lesson4Kids #1). So then, in knowing this, wouldn't it be great if your kids knew that they can talk with you, that you'll be fair, and that they know you are engaged in their lives?

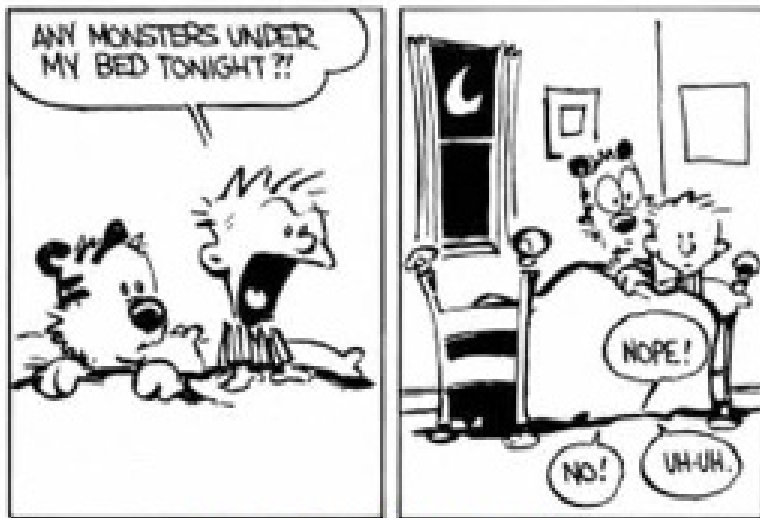
And with that, keep in mind that as your kids grow through their kid years - they will get some not so good ideas in their heads (aka the famous Lesson4Kids #2). So, consider these ideas from 'the Dads' ...

JJ shared: Spend time with them studying for a spelling test or school activity. Limit electronics even though other friends may use, especially needed

nowadays. Let your kids find their way and try not to social engineer. *(and this reminded me of how fast things are now changing – what electronics, social media type uses and or influence will keep changing, so be flexible and careful).*



Zach shared: I mentioned before the 'doing unique things' with each of our kids. Well, as they grow through the years, those actions can change. For example, with Geoffrey, I may play Roblox or we will watch the Mandalorian. With Addy it's playing Sims4 or doing something artsy and talking about it.



Lesson4Kids #3



And Alex shared:
I don't know what I would add to this one because our boys are not in this age group yet. I would say that I enjoyed you as a coach and I probably will not want the kids to run with scissors.

Oops, I actually added those last few words (on scissors) to Alex's comment because as I read what Alex, Zach and JJ shared, all their words began to trigger so many

thoughts as to what else all dads should consider when their kids are going through these 'kid years'? So, if you will allow me, let me add the following for your consideration.

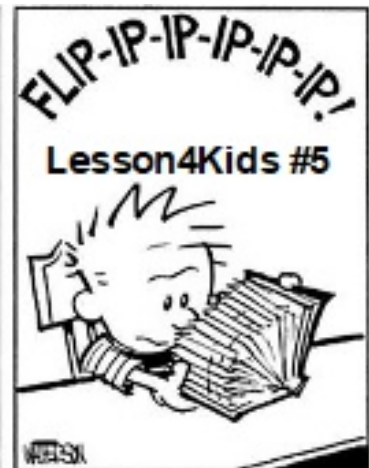
And as you think about this, one of the most beneficial things is to know (aka keep in mind) is that the better your relationship is with your kids in this preteen time, the better you and they will be positioned for what is coming in their

teen years. It's a great time, so do your best to be the type of Dad you want to be and hopefully you'll be the Dad that your kids were glad that you were (and don't forget - there are no 'do overs'). Which then brings us to this L4K recap.

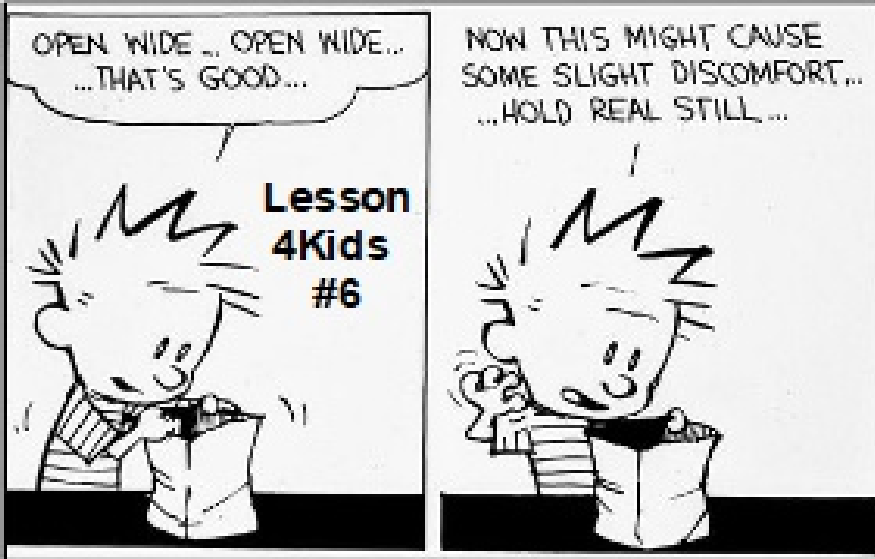


L4K#1: It doesn't matter if it's Superman, Spider Man, or Wonder Woman underwear, or some favorite clothes that your kids like. Let them wear them when they can - it all will work out as needed.

L4K#2: Kids will try things - that is all a part of learning lessons.



L4K#3: Kids will lie from time to time. Try to teach as best you can why it is not the good thing to do (and yes, the sooner this gets addressed, the better for everyone).



L4K#4: Kids will have so many things that they will not like doing (kid just wanna have fun).

Don't get mad when this pops up from time, help them to work through these... "I don't want to" times.



L4K#5: Yes school may not be fun but it is critical.

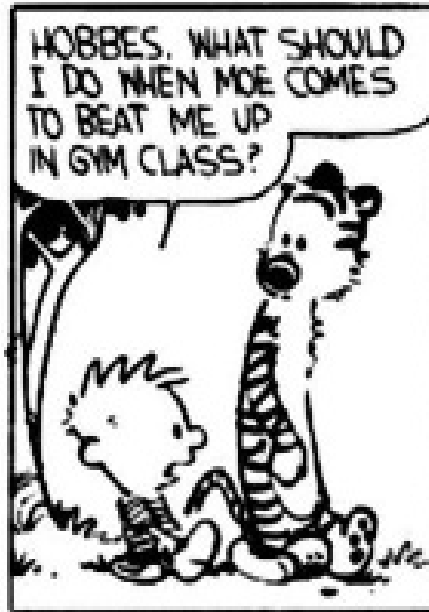
Don't be a Dad

who is clueless. Be aware and be engaged with your kids on their school work (and yes, this is one that I am sorry that I fell short on). Help them to appreciate the challenge and that the better they do in school, the easier life will become.

L4K#6: A kids imagination is their fuel for greater things, and possibly for danger. So help them to channel it for good.

And last of all, **L4K#7**: Kids know that Dad and Mom are going to talk with them from time to time. Sometimes they may not seem like they are listening . . . so do yourself and then a favor.

Keep your talks focused and as best can - short. Make sure the important things are covered and everything else are seeds that you're planting.



And all of the above, boils down to this.

Look at what is available for you to learn and to leverage. For example, the Marvel Rising Secret Warriors



images I used above - I had never seen before. That means there is a lot to leverage as you figure out what works best to teach and motivate your kids for the path they should take.

The Third stage.

This unfolds during your teen's ages of 13 through 18 and yes - some have called these the 'wonder years' . . . as in 'I wonder if that kid is ever going to learn, listen or leave?'

These are the years that will solidify the projection in life that your kid(s) will first pursue. Any alteration to that will pretty much be out of your hands because once they move out and on their own - it will be their experiences and the decisions they then make - that will push them up or down.



So know this. The considerations over the pages that follow are just that, considerations. It is a time for course corrections or fine tuning. It all depends on your desires.

And FYI . . . This section is dedicated to son Zach who he and Caitlin have their two kids racing toward this age of life.

A look at failure

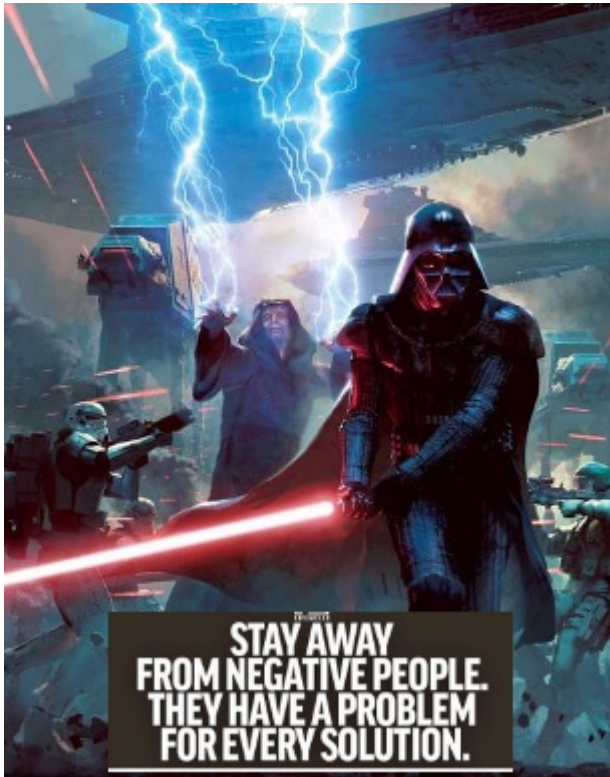
By the time your kid starts their teen years, there is a good chance they have already had a stumble of two unfold in their lives. If you know of those and have helped them through those - great, consider yourself fortunate. But you also need to assume that they may have had things happen to them that they dealt with as best they could and they are keeping those to themselves.

The opportunity is for you to find a way to talk about failure, so that your teen can add your wisdom to theirs. Things that would help them are: failures, stumbles, setbacks, etc happen and if we view them as learning lessons, they become stepping stones and not pits. Also, to have empathy to the struggles of another, presents opportunity.

We dads cannot prevent our kids, teens, from having any failures in their lives . . . but we can help them to not fear failure and to know they can work their way through it. The challenge for you is to cover this one earlier in their years, than later. Best prepared and confident to take on is always better than waiting too long and trying to pick up the pieces.



A look at negative people



As we all grow up, we most likely have seen a mix of people; quiet, out-spoken, good, bad, etc. etc. But what about the ones that tend to not really catch our eye? Those could be lumped together in a group that we might call the negative people (they are the ones that never say anything good, and they always seem to fight against what most want).

Which brings up your opportunity. Have you thought about the different types of people that you want your teens to be aware of? How would you describe them, what would you warn them of or encourage them about?

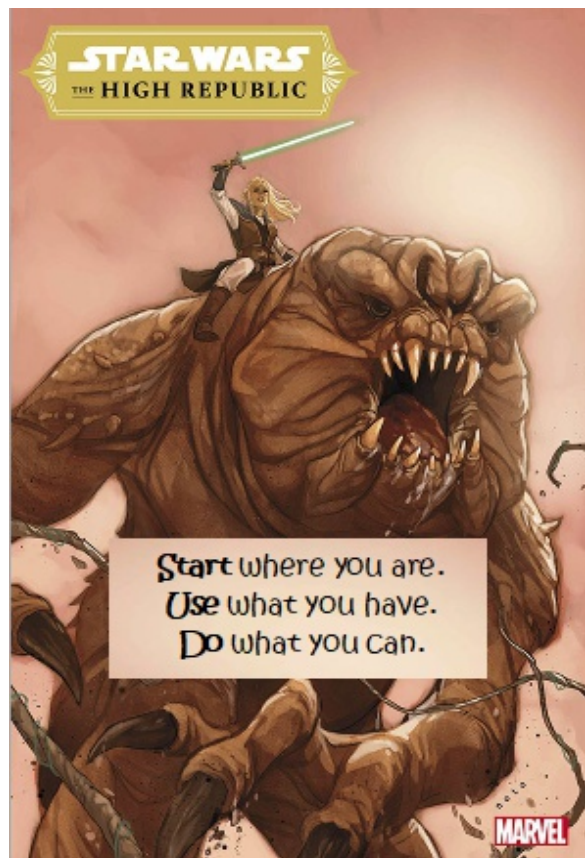
And once you've figure out what types of people you would talk about, don't forget the broader issues that could easily be linked in (peer pressure, diversity, discrimination, etc). Also, don't forget that the best talks are conversations and ones that they and you will be glad that you had (and even on the real tough subjects).

A look at Challenge

We all understand what challenge means but what each of us has experienced in our lives, that would be our challenges, probably differs greatly across all of us. Which presents a great opportunity for multiple talks on this with your teen(s).

So the variety of topics that are wrapped around this are many - what then can you do? Maybe if you don't know how, when or where best to bring this up, you may wait to see if there is something in your teen's life that is going a bit sideways and you use that as a pathway into a good talk on challenges. Now, be careful - your teen may only want to vent so you are in listen mode. This may be step one.

Step two could be to discuss options. Like: what can they do, what help can they get, and should they do something or do nothing or wait are all insights that you can help your teen to be aware. And at a minimum, just some talking is a good. Step three may be when they want your advice aka "Dad, what would you do?" If they ask tell them what and why but caution them that they need to



decide what they will and or will not do. And the key - no matter what is done - if their actions don't work out, to remember - the world won't end.

It comes down to . . . are actions pursued honorable?

A look at impact



To understand this challenge, think back to your teen years and of all the 'personalities' that you dealt with. To use an old movie title . . . you could say . . . a mix of The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Your teen has it no different. They are seeing the good kids and all the rest. What's probably not happening is in their look at the impact that all of these people are having on them.

Which also means - have they thought of the impact that they are having on others? Have you talked with them on the aspects of accountability, of respect, and of compassion? These types of characteristics tie into the old saying . . . we are judged by the company we keep and your teen(s) are a part of the company that their friends keep. So know this.

Talking about, teaching and encouraging a growing character is an easier said than done challenge. What makes it easier is if you are a good role model of this. And if not, why?

A look at raising the bar

Once we all understand the impact that others have on us and we on others, we next need to look at the types of impact that we can have.

If it is good, that is great. But what if it is not as good as we can do? That then is the challenge for you to talk with your teen on . . . the 'Are you doing the best that you can?'

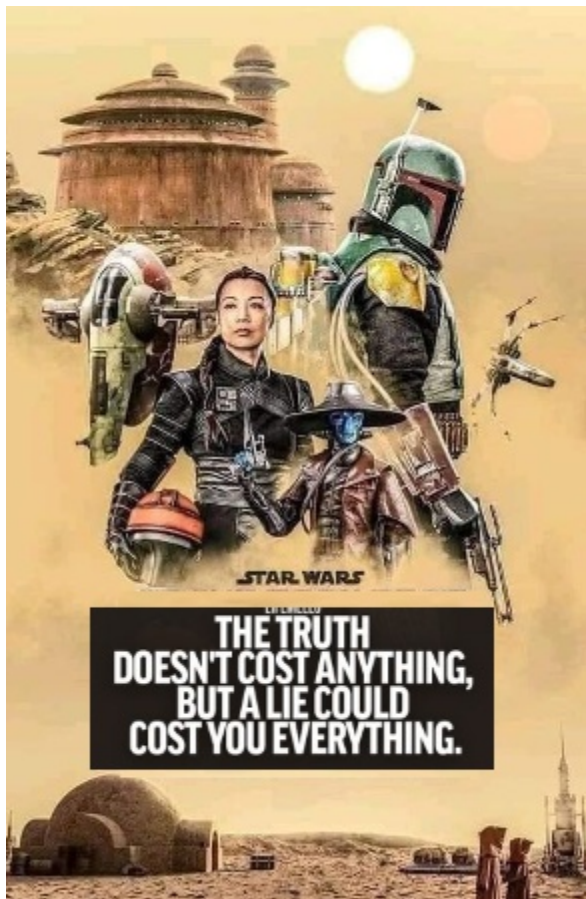


Here is another of the opportunities for you to share your experiences, your lessons learned and your warnings (aka what to do and when).

Remember that teens most often want to be with their friends and usually want to do what they do. Peer pressure and peer acceptance are two major influences in their teen lives. So think about how best for them to understand that going above and beyond is a great goal and that doing less or

doing negatives are on the path to regrets. And another thing to consider - that being incentives for them. For the more they see the positives have benefits = motivation.

A look at honesty



Now here is a challenge that gets its tone set in the teen years - that being how much truth is honored vs lies (and this includes the little lies) are leveraged. And it comes down to those questions like:
Where are you going?
Who will you be with?
Why are you so late?

This is where you have to decide how firm you will be. Consider this - if teens feel they can lie and there are

never any ramifications, there will be no reason to change.

And know this. Once someone gets into the habit of lies, it becomes harder over time to break that habit. So this is where you need to figure out . . . how best, when and where to discuss honesty and why it is critical for relationships between family members and friends to be honest ones for your teen(s) and for yourself.

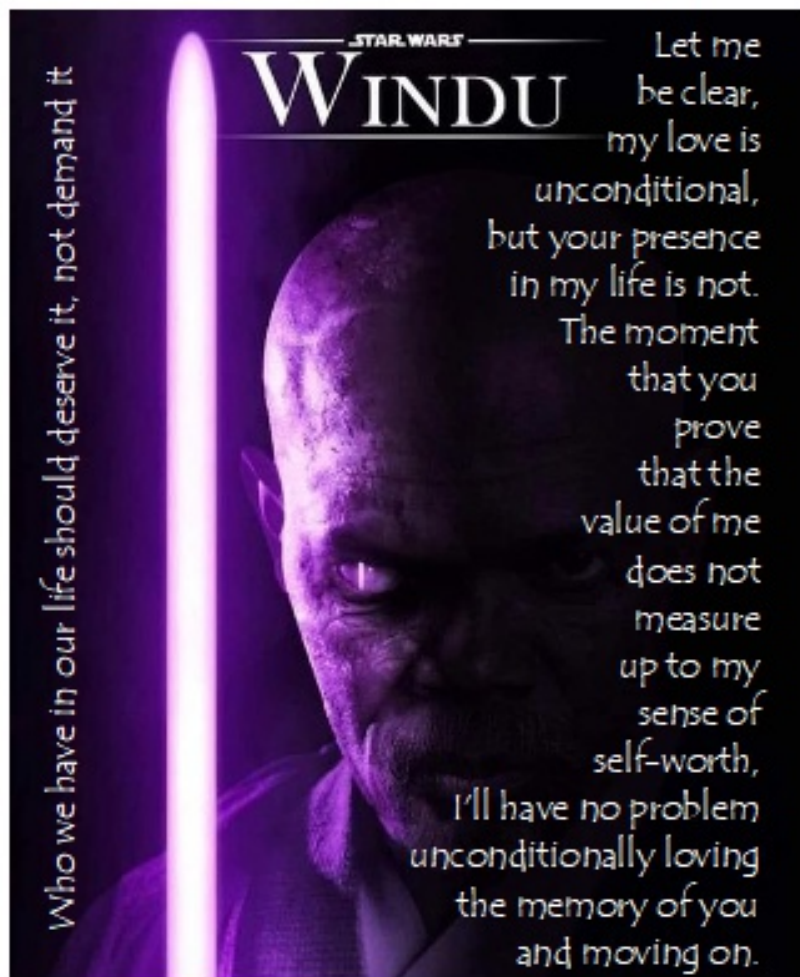
A look at wisdom

Here is our 7th and final challenge - that being how best to share the remaining critical aspects of wisdom that you want your teen(s) to learn and as best can - to embrace? Are they insights on relationships, on experiences, or what best to consider as the teen years roll by and of the post high school years that will be unfolding?

Just remember this. The teen years may be of some big challenges and of a busyness that you, your wife and or they may not expect.

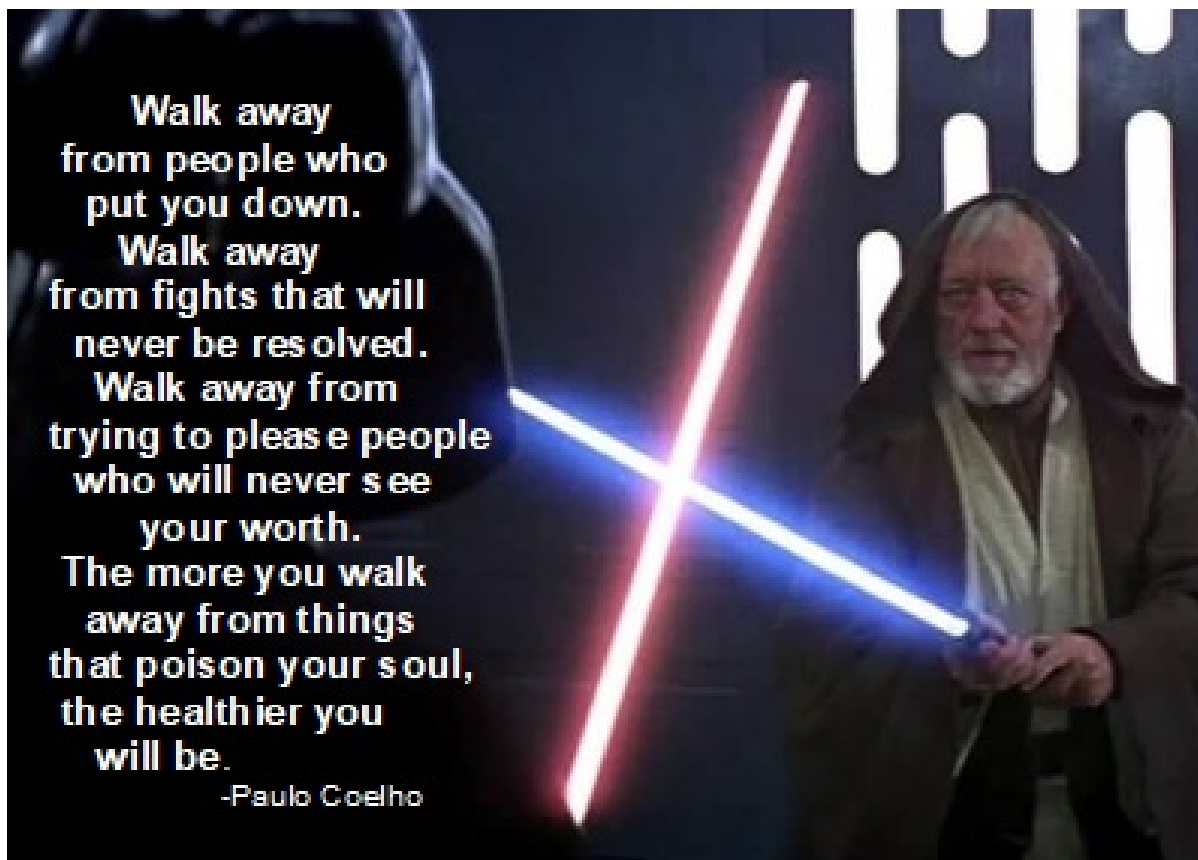
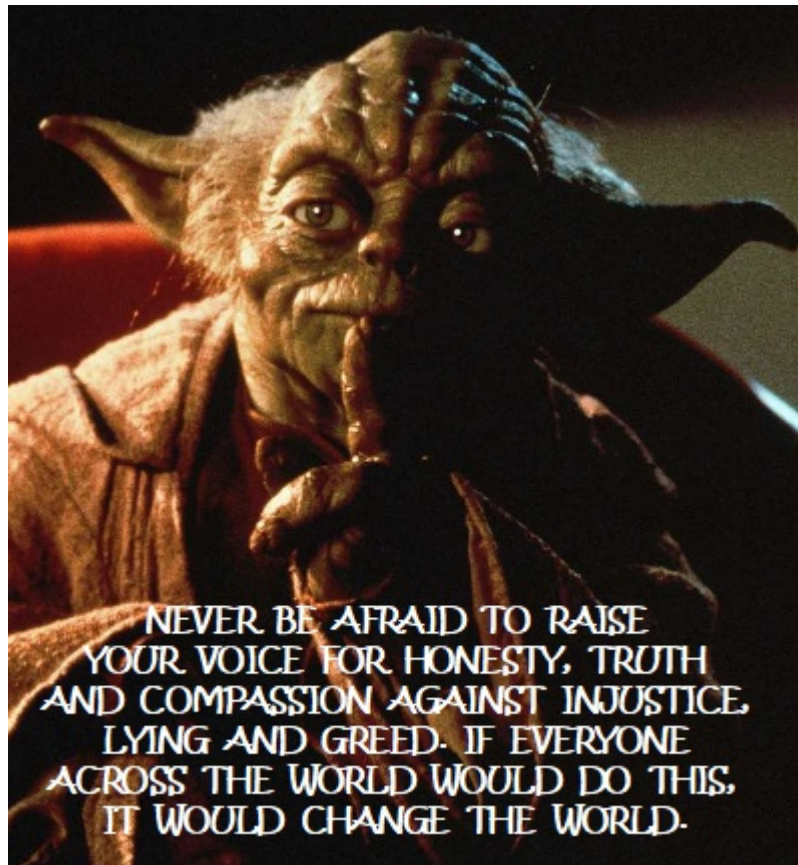
If you don't plan to have the talks that you believe will be

needed, they for sure will not happen. And that is the challenge. Do you want regrets or do you want to start now on creating a plan for things that you want to pursue ?



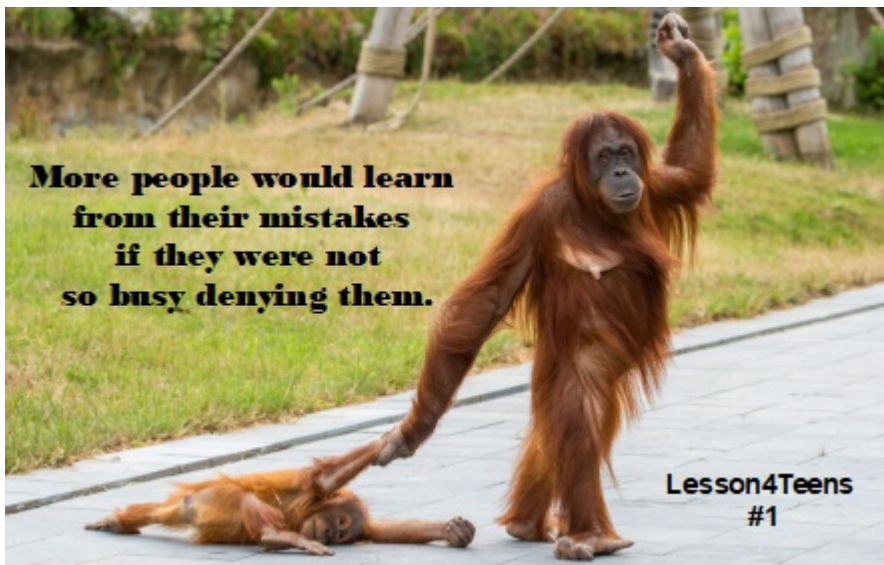
I would assume 'no' on the regrets . . . but that is a question that everyone needs to ask of themselves.

So then in closing on this, I thank you for considering all that was shared. I hope at least some of it was helpful as you pursue what you deem is needed next.



Stage Three – Any questions?

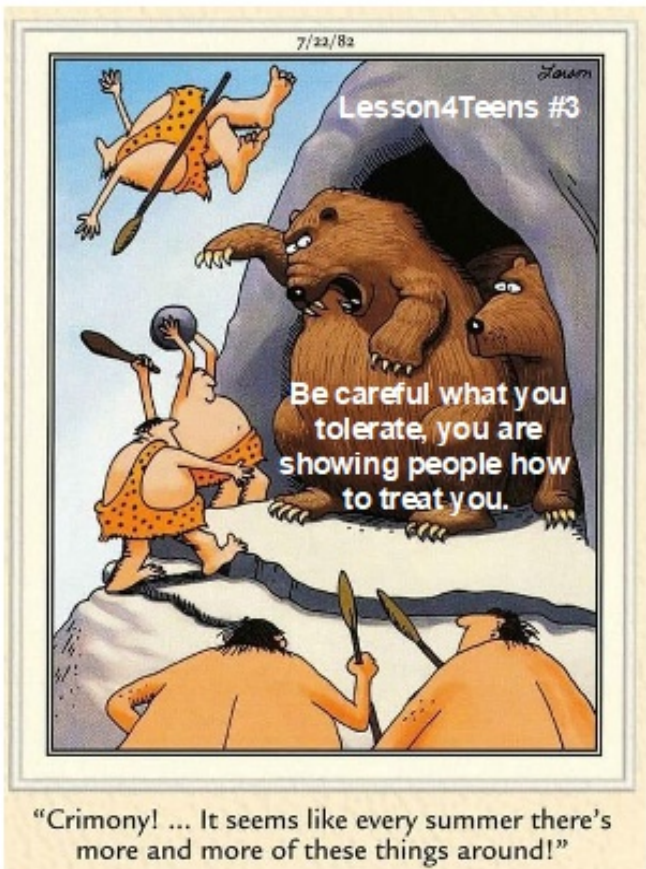
Now, by the time you read this and have kids coming into or are already in the teen years . . . know that you have my prayers and best wishes. As to why? This is time where you have multiple competitors for influence on your teen(s). Depending on how well you and your wife have done as parents of your kids through their earlier years, now you have your kids friends, as well as those who want to manipulate them . . . competing with your for 'the minds of your kids'. And yes, this includes what social media is enabling, what advertising is doing and what 'those who want to prey upon kids' are doing. So, don't forget the above & below.



For me, what I have learned over the years . . . is true for all parents, as well as kids, teens and adults. **You don't know what you don't know.**

That is why the never ending pursuit of knowledge is critical for teens as they prepare for their adult years ahead. And yes, having good intentions will get you way down the path of life. What they won't do is to help ensure you and or who you care for, are on the right path. So, please understand this. Once your kid(s) reach their teen years, your countdown clock for them is ticking away.

I like Andy Andrews words when he states that **the goal of all parents is to raise good kids who become responsible adults**. That then is every parent's challenge. I know, you're thinking I'm going to remind you of that as your kids teen years roll by, you don't get any 'do overs'. You know that by now. Just remember, at this stage, it is not just you, your wife and your kids - it is a 'me first' world mentality out there wanting their agendas embraced. I pray that all parents of teens, help their kids to navigate through this challenging set of years so they they



develop the skills they need, to be ready for adulthood. And to help you to get your mind wrapped around the things, you need to consider for your kid's teen years, I'll close out with the following recommendations.

First, the 7 "a look at . . ." considerations shared via the above, is just a warm up.

Don't make the mistakes that I did as a young Dad. At the time, I looked back on what my parents did and did not do, and I adjusted my thoughts, words and actions as a Dad, to what I thought was to be a better job at being a Dad. Now, what I did in my Dad years was at least a bit better than what my Dad had done, but what is good for us dads, is also good for our kids. That is, we need to learn from our past and we also need to learn from others in the here and now as we work to be the best dads that we can be, to help our kids to become the best that they can be.

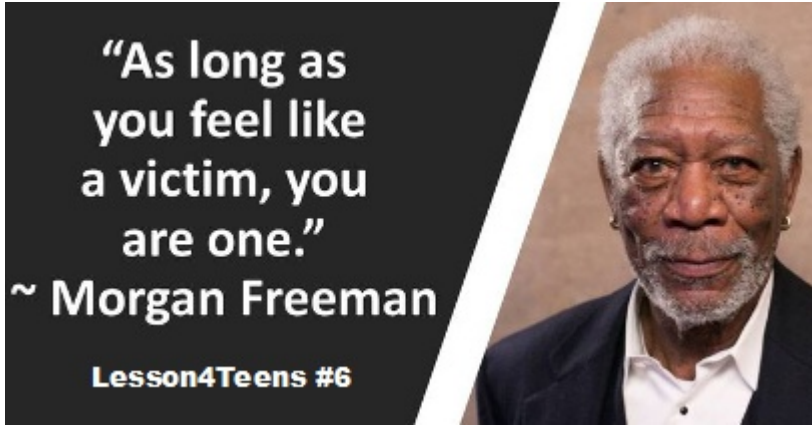


And with those we share and all of the above pages, let me close with these words and considerations. First, please know

Lesson4Teens #5
**People do not
decide their
futures; they
decide their
habits and their
habits decide
their futures.**

that the 7 topics shared for when you have teens - are some good topics (dealing with failure, awareness to negative people, challenges come in so many ways, the personal impacts to understand, raising the bar - stepping up, honesty and wisdom). Now, what

was contained within each of those, may not be exactly how you would view those topics - but they are a prod to help you to think . . . is there anything on these that I can leverage?



Second, then the **Lessons4Teens** that are spread across the above and below, are shared to help open the aperture of what you may want

to share in some way at some time with your teen(s), and yes, the timing of everything is always critical (and the tone too).

And third, the 'what else?' is up to you and your wife to decide. I just ask that you consider the following as well. (and these are not in a most important order - they are just listed so you don't overlook them in your teen game plan).

[here goes . . .]

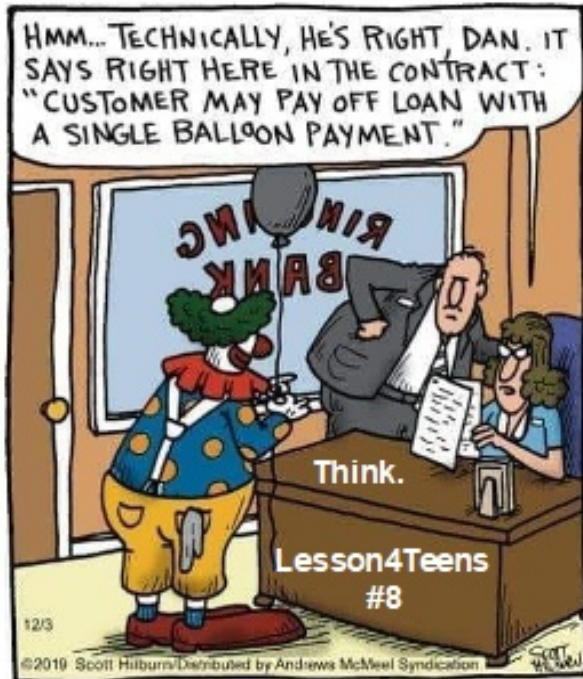
Stupidity: which relates well to the example hinted at in L4T #7. And this means you should at some point, have a discussion as to whatever it takes to help your teen(s) to understand that stupidity can unfold when you're not thinking. And yes, if you're a little bit like me, you probably did something a bit not as smart as you would have liked back in the day - so leverage that.

Hangovers are temporary.
Drunk stories are forever.



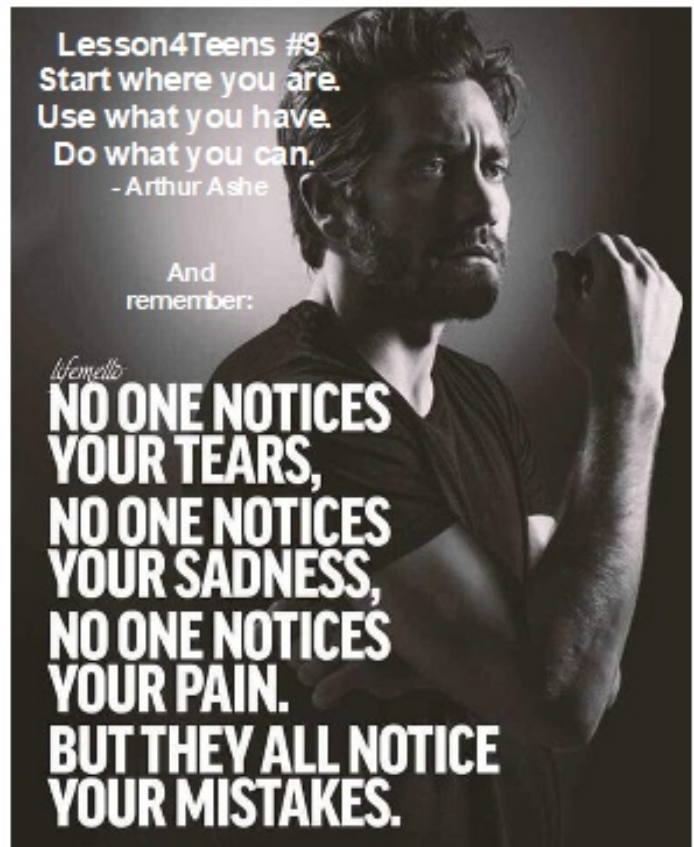
Sex: notice how I just put that out there? That's because I did a poor job of it back in the day - so do a better job on talking about this . . . when, where and how you deem best

(and yes, there can be some major ramifications from fun).



Money management: thanks L4T#8 for that reminder . . . and that requires that your teen(s) need to learn how to manage their money and they may even need a job so they can earn it in some way.

Accountability: this ties in well with anything you may have already shared around the topics of honesty and wisdom. And now is the time to not only teach and to encourage accountability, but to make sure that you are a role-model on this as well. And remember, with the teen years, you need to make sure everything is done as age appropriate requires.



Diversity: now this is one with so many aspects to it, like gender identity, discrimination and how those tie in with the need for equality and fairness. And remember, if you started to address this in the kid years, you build upon it in the teen years (it helps when we link an awareness and appreciation of diversity with compassion, respect and honor).

Faith: this is one that really depends on what you've done in the pre-school and kid years. It starts with where you and your wife are at in regards to faith pursuits. Do

you role-model a commitment to faith or are you possibly a hypocrite as your teen would possibly see? Also remember

LEARN FROM YESTERDAY,
LIVE FOR TODAY, LOOK TO
TOMORROW,
REST THIS
AFTERNOON

- Charles M. Schulz

Lesson4Teens
#10

Have a longer view of time.



Be strong, but not
rude. Be kind, but not
weak. Be humble,
but not timid. Be
proud, but not
arrogant.

Zig Ziglar
(Thoughts Wonder)

Lesson4Teens
#11

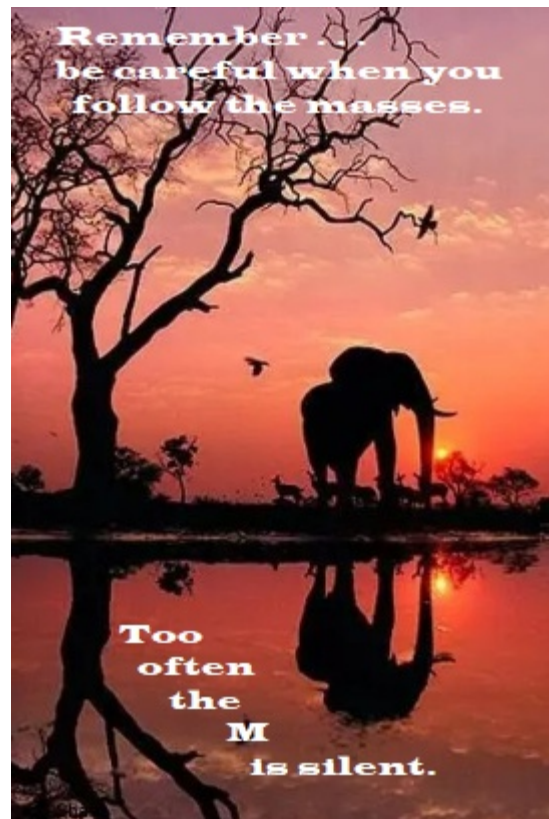
that your teen(s) and their peers more likely are in the impatient (I deserve it now) and in the invincible (I can do this and won't get hurt) mindsets.

Social media: this is all over the place because it is changing quickly over time.

Remember your teen(s) would rather fit in than be viewed as weird or different. Peer pressure on how they look, what they are seen as doing or not, can be a huge challenge. You need to give them some freedoms but please - don't forget that you are the parent. Rules, boundaries, expectations and penalties are things that you and your family need to be on the same page (and yes, easier said than done).

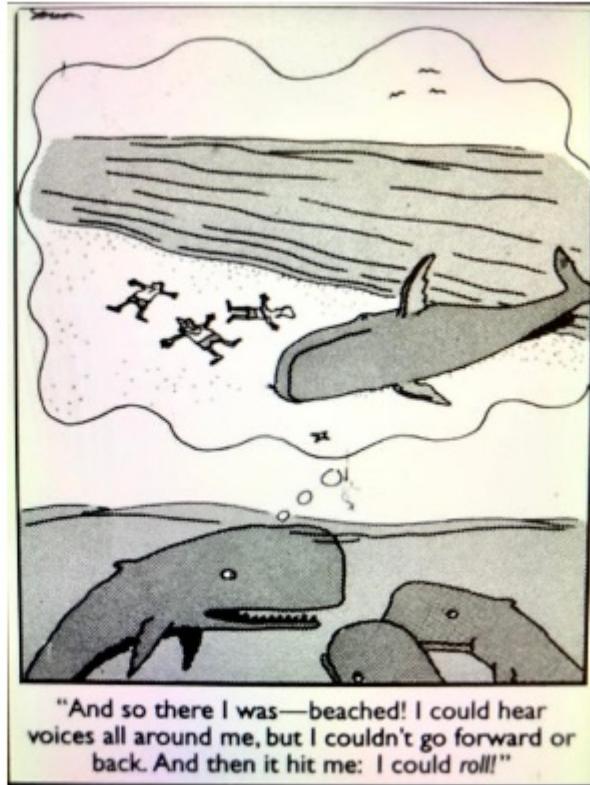
Life skills: I listed this one last because it is the catch-all for everything. I remember seeing some words once and I'm pretty sure I put them on an image or a comic in one way or another. They basically challenged the parent to not give your kids everything they want, but to teach them everything that you wish that you would have learned. Kind of like, **help them to prepare for being an adult, so they don't go through the same painful things that you**

experienced. So, here are just some examples and I ask that you think to see - what else would you add? Like physical fitness (eating well, being active and establishing good habits early, rather than trying to fix or correct bad actions later); knowing how to do the everyday type things (how to wash their own clothes, knowing how to check their oil and how to change a tire, change a light bulb, where the water shut off



is, etc. etc). And please - don't go down this path of trying to teach to your teen(s) and they view it as a negative, but to have some fun times doing things with them and in talking with them. Why? Because what I have learned over all my

Remember, most of your stress comes from the way you respond to challenges, not the way life is. Adjust your attitude and all that extra stress is gone.



years is that the challenge of life and in living it well, is not in just surviving it, but in having the right attitude. For if you can help to instill in your teen(s) the 'I can do this' attitude, you

have prepared them to win at least half of the challenges that they will come up against. And how do I know this? In all my work years, I found that I and or others could teach people skills, but it was so much harder to teach people to have a positive or a 'can do' attitude. These are so critical for everyone's happiness and success. Which prompts my final questions. Do you want your young kids, your teens, to be happy and successful? If you do, then what are you doing over their years when they are growing up in your home?

The clock is ticking. Learn, try, adjust, live, laugh and love.

Epilogue

Now I know you are wondering . . . is that it, just 18 years?

The answer to that is - possibly yes. For if you do a poor job of being a Dad over those years, there is a strong chance that your 19 year old (or older) may just decide it is easier and better to just leave and to put you in their rear-view mirror. But, if you try and at least do your best, you may see that rapport between you and your kids as they move into their adult years - continues to unfold and to grow. For when there is relationship, there is growth.

Consider this. For you to be the best Dad possible, you will have to have thought of everything and to have pulled it off flawlessly. Unfortunately, that is not going to happen. But what you can achieve is a pretty good foundation of learning, laughing and loving that has your soon to be adult kid(s) on a track where they are confident and optimistic for what is in their years ahead. What is most difficult though is in trying to anticipate the challenges that will be ahead for them.

Our society is really struggling with many tough issues and sadly, there are more mob mindsets demanding acceptance of their agendas than masses of realists who can stand up and counter-balance the wild pendulum swings of emotion. All I ask . . . please just be the best Dad you can be.

P.S. And don't forget ...



A great Dad always needs a great Mom
to be their partner for helping
their kids to become great adults.

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(a great space for jotting down notes if desired).