

ParentsCare

By Jim R. Rogers

The dictionary defines a “parent” as “a father or mother”. That’s it. No more than that. No details, no embellishments, no explanations. We sure know better, don’t we? There are as many ways to define a “parent” as there are parents almost, since every one who calls him or herself “parent” is unique in that no one else “parents” exactly the way another does.

We all have our reasons for being a parent, and we all have our own ideas about what kind of a parent we want to be. We are from the start either ready, willing and able to handle the job, eagerly looking forward to every frustrating and joyful day in the lives of our children, or we look at the little ones as being necessary only to carry on the lineage and they are most often more trouble than they are worth and keep us from doing the things we had planned to do with our lives before they came. Either we do not look forward to that day when they say “good-bye” and move to some far distant state on their own building their own futures, or we do look forward to that day when they finally get out of the house, give us back some peace of mind and leave us to our own selfish pursuits. Then, of course, there are all of those other combinations of being a parent that I can’t possibly mention here. Heck, I can’t even think of them all.

Here’s one possibility that I do hope for. I hope when parents think of themselves, they do so with pride, knowing that they are engaged in the most important job, no, make that “profession”, that they will ever have and that they are doing it to the best of their ability, and their ability is constantly being upgraded with new ideas and new ways to be a parent and new ways to help their children grow up to be the people we all want them to be. I hope parents remind themselves every day that their roles are vital to the future of their children. I hope daily that they rededicate themselves to their role and giving of the best of themselves to the health and welfare of their children.

This expectation on my part is too much pressure I have been told. I have read where some people are writing and saying that parent educators, like myself, are being too tough on parents today, what with all the other stuff they have to do, like work, and work, and work, and do stuff, and make lists, and stay busy, and do more stuff, and take on more stuff. No one knows more than I how true that is. Parents today are indeed leading hectic lives. And, they do need to do a lot of other things that don’t concern the children directly. But, the fact remains that the children exist and they are in the lives of the parents and these parents have the awesome responsibility of performing the second most important role in life and that is to take good care of their children. (The first most important thing is to take care of one’s self, creatively and in a healthy way). This is not to say that parents should strive to be perfect. Not possible. Nor should parents make themselves nuts over “what to do” at just the “right time” when working with the children. We are going to make mistakes, and we are going to cause some conflict and problems.

So, we don’t have to go around second guessing ourselves all the time. When we have a confident sense of self and that natural or developed confidence is fueled and enhanced by additional knowledge, we then will be more comfortable with almost all of the decisions that we make regarding our children.

I like the physician’s oath which paraphrased says “do no harm”. Most “real” parents have a sense of when they are doing harm. They can feel it deep down inside themselves somewhere. If they feel it there, then they can be pretty sure that the child involved feels it too.

The way parents are as human beings, as women and men, will teach the children who they should be and how they should behave in the world into which they are moving. We parents can’t take that responsibility too lightly. The day-to-day boo boos are not the stuff of which failure is made, rather it is the attitude, the philosophy, the environment, the actually being in the world (role modeling) in relationship with the children that make the difference toward finding the best chance of parental success.

Examine how you truly “feel” about your children and about yourself as parent. Feel OK? Wouldn’t it be nice if all parents could truly “be in love” with their children and actually cherish every single moment of that journey together called sharing a life? Keep trying, and
Don’t lose heart!