

Some Words to Consider

This week's column will be a bit different from previous ones. Instead of my words, I thought I would share with you some quotations that I find have something to say about children and the people who spend time caring for them. Perhaps some of these words will resonate with you as well.

- "What's it like to be a parent: It's one of the hardest things you'll ever do but in exchange it teaches you the meaning of unconditional love." (Nicholas Sparks, author)
- "I don't remember who said this, but there really are places in the heart that you don't even know exist until you love a child." (Anne Lamott, author)
- "The child is a gift of nature, but the image of the child is mankind's creation." (David Elkind, psychologist)
- "Before I got married I had six theories about raising children; now, I have six children and no theories." (John Wilmot, 17th century poet)
- "Looking for strengths is an act of love." (Herbert Kohl, educator)
- "A child's goal is not to become a successful adult...A child's goal is to be a successful child." (Judith Rich Harris, author)
- "We spend the first 12 months of our children's lives teaching them to walk and talk and the next 12 months teaching them to sit down and shut up." (Phyllis Diller, comedienne)
- "Being a mother is an attitude, not a biological relation." (Robert Heinlein, author)
- "Sometimes you have to watch it when you're a grown-up. It's hard not to be a bother." (Marc Parent, author)
- "To bring up a child in the way he should go, travel that way yourself once in a while." (Josh Billings, 19th century writer)
- "Since for better or worse human nature is contagious, the children are pretty apt to catch it." (Leotie Young, author)
- "It goes without saying that you should never have more children than you have car windows." (Erma Bombeck, humorist)
- "Good parents have no magic key to dealing with children beyond this almost foolishly simple one: to try to imagine each situation from the child's point of view. Some people do it by instinct, but it is a technique that one can learn - to turn in upon oneself at need and ask, 'What would I feel like if?' " (Clara Claiborne Park, author)

- “Two nice things about young children are that, unlike babies, they can tell you what’s on their minds, and, unlike older children, they do.” (Melvin Konner, author)
- “If I had to make a general rule for living and working with children, it might be this: be wary of saying or doing anything to a child that you would not to another adult, whose good opinion and affection you valued.” (John Holt, educator)
- “Grownups never understand anything by themselves and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.” (Antoine de St. Exupery, author)
- “Parents are meant to enjoy parenting. If you are not enjoying it, maybe you’re working too hard.” (Judith Rich Harris, author)
- “It’s a jarring moment in life when it’s time for you to be the Grown-up.” (Jon Katz, author)
- “This is our human problem, one common to parents, sons, daughters, too - how to let go while holding tight, how to simultaneously cherish the closeness and intricacy of the bond while at the same time letting out the raveling string, the red yarn that ties our hearts.” (Louise Erdrich, author)

And the last quotation is one from Dr. Benjamin Spock, whose book, *Baby and Child Care*, helped many parents cope with the challenges of parenting. The very first words of the book are as true now as they were when first published in 1946:

- “Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do.”

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