



The "Oh Yeah!"

Letter

Relationship

by Ami Loper

Eleven years ago, Tim and I sat in a Growing Families International Conference. We'd been teaching Growing Kids God's Way for just short of a year and we'd known the material ourselves only a year or so more than that. At that conference, we felt excitement for the new things we were learning, we felt privileged that God had chosen us to pass it on, but we also had nagging worries about our oldest daughter, then eight years old. We just didn't seem to be able to reach her or bring about compliance.

As the workshop we were in drew to a close, Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo opened the floor to questions. Sitting on the front row, I raised my hand quickly and explained the concerns on my heart. Gary leaned forward on the podium and took a deep breath. I held mine as I waited expectantly for the key to all our problems that I was sure would come from his mouth. After an interminable pause, he looked me squarely in the eye and with a grave seriousness said, "Relationship. Relationship. Relationship."

My heart sank. I wanted something quick, or at least something tangible, something I could take home, do with (or to) my daughter and see results! I didn't understand this answer. How could I build a relationship with a person who I was in conflict with? Unfortunately, I tucked this key away, not recognizing its worth and I worked on the tangibles. (Sorry, Ash.)

Years later, as Ashley started the seventh grade, a new teacher came to her school. Though we initially hit it off with this teacher, reports began to come home of things said or done by the teacher in class that were entirely inappropriate. After trying to appeal and work with the teacher, it became evident that we were getting nowhere with her and Ashley was becoming more rebellious and morally contaminated. Tim and I decided that I would bring her home and homeschool her. Little did I know that the Lord was at work.

For the next 20 months, it was just me and Ashley all day, every day. I had planned a long four day school schedule with every Friday being our errand and fun day. At night, Tim would spend 15-30 minutes talking and/or wrestling with Ashley. Before ninth grade arrived, we had unwittingly followed Gary's advice. We had developed a relationship. Though things weren't perfect and we still had "those moments" in the

LEARN MORE ABOUT BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILDREN BY RE-READING "THE FATHER'S MANDATE." MOMS, YOU TOO!

*** IF YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH PREP FOR ADOLESCENCE, IT IS TIME ONCE AGAIN TO CHECK THOSE 7 WARNING FLAGS!**

*** DON'T FORGET TO WRITE YOUR CHILDREN LETTERS & DROP THEM IN THE MAIL BEFORE THEY HEAD OFF TO SCHOOL THIS FALL!**

high school years, we had something to fall back on, something to undergird the family, something to reassure us that it was going to be all right: Relationship.

Although your child may only be eight, don't discard this need as I did. Relationship unifies when the world is trying to pull you apart at every turn. Relationship is what enables parents to transition from using authority to leading by influence. I'm not saying that everyone needs to homeschool their children, but you must find a way to build relationship. For us, homeschooling was the answer and I wouldn't trade those years for anything. It was the best thing I've ever done for my kids.

The keys that make real relationship possible are time, talking, openness and fun.

Time is a crucial element to the construction of relationship with children. If you're too busy to spend enough time with your children to be actively building relationship, you are too busy. We've been there ourselves, suddenly finding ourselves busy several nights a week. We had to quit nearly everything to regain what we'd lost and begin moving forward again.

Talking is a key that can be more fatiguing than any other! Much mental energy is required after a long day to ask your child heart probing, open ended questions, listen patiently while your child tells of the cafeteria drama that was basically the same yesterday, or try to ply a clammed up kid who doesn't have anything to say. However, learning to know, really know, your child is your assignment and you can't do that without deep conversations and being willing to listen.

Openness is the third element needed for building a trusting relationship. You can trust a person who knows they have faults and is willing to admit them. If you try to build a relationship with a child without openness, you are asking your child to have a one sided relationship. Nothing could feel more



A Parenting Treasure From The Word

Pr 17:6 "Children's children are a crown to the aged and parents are the pride of their children." Do you have the kind of relationship with your children that would cause them to be proud of you?



FUN Idea OF the Quarter

SUMMER IS GENERALLY A TIME OF FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES, LONG BREAKS FOR THE KIDS IN SCHOOL, BUT ONLY SHORT BREAKS FOR PARENTS WHO ARE WORKING. LOOK FOR FUN WAYS TO CREATE SOME SPECIAL TIMES WITH WORKING PARENTS. PERHAPS HAVE A SPECIAL LUNCH TOGETHER AT THE MALL WITH DAD AFTER A MORNING OF BACK TO SCHOOL SHOPPING WITH MOM. MAYBE TAKE AN AFTERNOON OFF TO CATCH A MATINEE SHOWING OF A NEW FAMILY MOVIE. THREE DAY WEEKENDS ARE ALSO GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE SOME FUN TOGETHER AT A LOCAL WATER PARK OR A QUICK TRIP TO THE MOUNTAINS OR BEACH. MAKE SURE THESE LONG SUMMER EVENINGS DON'T SIMPLY TRANSLATE INTO MORE TV TIME! PLAY GAMES TOGETHER! TAKE ADVANTAGE, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OF THIS RARE OPPORTUNITY WHEN YOUR KIDS HAVE NO HOMEWORK AND BLESS THEM WITH THE ULTIMATE GIFT - TIME WITH YOU!

Quotes Worth Remembering

"There is never much trouble in a family where the children hope someday to resemble their parents."

~William Lyon

CONTACT US



timami@cox.net




1026 W. Woodman Dr. Tempe, AZ 85283



480.491.9331

insecure to them or turn them off quicker. It is hypocritical. I recently realized that when my kids were upset I would ask them what was wrong and strongly urge them to tell me. After praying about it however, God showed me that when my kids saw that I was upset and they'd ask me what was wrong, I'd say, "Nothing." I was exhibiting the same behavior I hated to see in them! I understand that sometimes we can't tell them everything, that may be too much of a burden. But when I'm irritated at Tim and the girls ask me what's wrong, I simply say, "I'm irritated with Dad, but you know we always work things out." A simple, but satisfying answer. If I'm asked why, I tell them they don't need to know.

FUN!! The old adage, "The family that plays together, stays together," may have

(cont next column) 

been a bit simplistic, but it wasn't too far off. When you can laugh together, have fun together, plan exciting adventures together, it builds those ties that bind. Laughing with my kids has provided some of the most relationship building, memorable experiences of my parenting. God created fun and laughter and rest! It behooves us to spend the best, most fun part of ourselves on those we care about most.

Time is of the essence when it comes to having a happy healthy relationship with your kids. Don't waste another day without taking a step forward. Then the next day take another step. Then another and another. Before long, you'll look upon a thing of true beauty. A lasting relationship with the children God gave you.



Marriage

In all this talk about building a healthy relationship with your children, don't forget the most important person in your life other than Jesus Christ is your spouse! Don't neglect to do those things which build that relationship! Have couchtime at least five times a week. Be faithful with your date night. Sow into one another's lives so that when the day comes that all your children have left the nest, you don't look across the dinner table at a stranger. Keep that fire and love for one another alive and flourishing. All those keys that lead to a strong parent-child relationship work in this one too: Time, Talking, Openness, Fun! Try to do each one every day!

Tim & Ami Loper
1026 West Woodman Drive
Tempe, AZ 85283