



**2nd Parenting  
Workshop  
Coming Soon!**

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Specializing in Marriage and  
Family Therapy, Parenting So-  
lutions, Depression, Anger, and  
Anxiety Issues, Sexual Addic-  
tions.

**Parenting Workshop #1  
was a great success. We  
had a great turnout and  
a fun evening. Next  
One: Friday, May 19th**

**Quotable** “In terms of your happiness, in terms of the matters that make you proud or sad, nothing—I repeat, nothing—will have so profound an effect on you as the way your children turn out. You will either rejoice and boast of their accomplishments or you will weep, head in hands, bereft and forlorn, if they become a disappointment or an embarrassment to you” —President Gordon B. Hinckley

# Family Times

## Rearing Strong Families

Consider the following story from a boy scout to his parents from Scout Camp:

*Dear Mom and Dad:*

*Our camp counselor told us to write our parents in case you heard about the flood and got worried. Don't worry, we're fine. I got out of the cabin just before it floated away, and I still have my toothbrush. Nobody got drowned because most of the kids were out in the woods looking for Isaac. Luckily black bears aren't as fierce as grizzlies, so Isaac is okay. Please call his mom and tell her. He can't write because of the cast. We never would have found him in the dark if it hadn't been for the lightning.*

*Did you know that if you put a gas can on a fire, it will blow up? Wet wood doesn't burn so good, but tents do. And clothes. Billy is going to look weird until his hair grows back. We'll be home Saturday if Mr. Chadwick gets the van fixed. It wasn't his fault about the accident. The brakes worked fine when we left. It's a neat van. He doesn't need insurance on it. And we can get it dirty or ride on the roof. It gets pretty crowded up there with 15 kids.*

*Mr. Chadwick is cool. He's gonna teach me how to drive. Don't worry, he only lets me drive on Mountain Roads were*

*there isn't much traffic. Just logging trucks and moose. Tonight he's gonna teach me to swim. And dive off the rocks.*

*I threw up this morning. Our speaker, Mr. Gibbs, said it was just the leftover potato salad. He says he used to get sick like that on the food in prison. I'm so glad he got out and came to teach us about the Bible. Well, I better go. We're going to town to mail these letters and buy bullets. Don't worry about a thing.*

*Love, Jimmy*

*PS: How long since I had a tetanus shot? (As cited in Phil Callaway, *I Used to Have Answers, Now I Have Kids* [Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, Oregon, 2000], p. 10).*

We worry about our children. The world is becoming an increasingly hostile and sinful place, and certainly that splashes onto our children, and even us. President Gordon B. Hinckley has stated: “In terms of your happiness, in terms of the matters that make you proud or sad, nothing—I repeat, nothing—will have so profound an effect on you as the way your children turn out. You will either rejoice and boast of their accomplishments or you will weep, head in hands, bereft and forlorn, if they become a disappointment or an embarrassment

to you.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children*, *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 50).

I don't know about you, but this parenting thing can be overwhelming at times. There is so much to do, and so little time. We are bombarded by information coming at us from every direction—and that's just on parenting topics. There are always ten keys to raising successful kids—you can read about these ten keys in almost every parenting book, on the internet, and in professional lectures. The irony is—no matter where you look—the ten keys are always different.

You know what... I don't care about ten keys anyway. Ten is just way too much for me. Imagine a keychain with ten keys on it? Such a chain would weigh so much, I would barely be able to walk by the end of the day. No, what I need are three or four keys at the most.

And that is the message today—three simple keys for turning out successful children.

Brian Barber, a Family Science professor at Brigham Young University has suggested there are three key essentials for turning out successful children:

**1. Connection:** children need consistent, stable, positive, emotional connections with their parents and siblings. Such connections appear to equip children with important social



Relationships Cannot Be Built While Running A Stopwatch

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skills and a sense that the world is safe, secure, and predictable. In order to do this well, parents need to spend individual time with their children. It will make a world of difference. Psychologist Urie Brofenbrenner has stated that:

“Every child should spend a substantial amount of time with somebody who’s crazy about him or her....There has to be at least one person who has an irrational involvement with that child, someone who thinks that kid is more important than other people’s kids, someone who’s in love with him or her, and whom he or she loves in return....You can’t pay a [person] to do what a [parent] will do for free” (Urie Brofenbrenner, “Nobody Home: The Erosion of the American Family,” *Psychology Today*, May 1977).

Colleague and associate Wally Goddard has written:

“Children need more than love. They need continuing relationships with the people who love them. People use to talk a lot about quality time with their children. But they seemed to mean, ‘I’m going to do something very nice and maybe even spend some money on you. But I only have half an hour, so enjoy it!’ That is no way to build a relationship....Relationships include taking time to be with each other. They are also about sensing the other person’s unique hopes and wishes....Relationships are not built while running a stopwatch. They grow when people take time to be together. But there is more at issue than time. We need to be in tune with the other person’s needs, feelings, preferences. Sometimes the opportunity to show our love

comes at inopportune times and in unexpected ways....For each person there is a different pattern of hopes, dreams, needs, and preferences” (H. Wallace Goddard, *The Frightful and Joyous Journey of Family Life: Applying Gospel Insights in the Home*, [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], pp. 96-97).

What Can Parents Do to Foster Family Connectedness?

1. Spend one-on-one time with teenagers. A ride in the car, a special meal at a restaurant, or a friendly discussion late at night are good opportunities for parents to strengthen ties with youth.
2. Express love often. Assurances of love and acceptance are crucial for healthy development. A kindly touch, a hug, or a warm smile are easy ways to express love. Many youth in the survey wished their parents would have expressed their love more often.
3. Spend time together as a family. Family dinnertime, family home evening, and family outings develop feelings of connectedness. Don’t mistake time in the same room as time together. Also, there cannot be “quality time” without “quantity time.”
4. Be liberal with praise and generous with forgiveness. Teens thrive on recognition and acceptance, especially from parents. Focus more on your children’s strengths than their weaknesses, and remember that everyone makes mistakes. A spirit of love, forgiveness, and acceptance are vital in maintaining connectedness as you help

children correct poor choices.

5. Develop family traditions. Family traditions connect people in warm and winning ways. Long after youth grow up and leave home, they will recall with nostalgia family vacations, birthday parties, holiday observances, and other special times” (Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, “Helping Teens Stay Strong,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1999, 32).

**2. Regulation:** Children need rules, chores, and responsibilities. Adequate regulation of adolescents, in terms of supervision, monitoring, rule-setting, and other forms of behavioral control are necessary and eventually lead to self-regulation. Children will never be able to regulate themselves if they are not first regulated by you. Children who do not experience regulation tend to be impulsive, prone to risk-taking, and more susceptible to other influences. Remember that there is nothing wrong with having rules; there is nothing wrong with setting up fences and boundaries. I continue to meet many members of the church who do not believe in telling their children “no.” I’m not sure where this notion comes from. The Savior’s teachings found in the scriptures are complete with “no’s” and “Thou shalt not’s.” Let’s take a lesson there.

BYU Professors Brent Top and Bruce Chadwick have written:

“Parental monitoring and regulation of teenagers’ activities can require considerable effort on the part of parents. Parents need to talk to and listen to teenagers to obtain up-to-date information about who

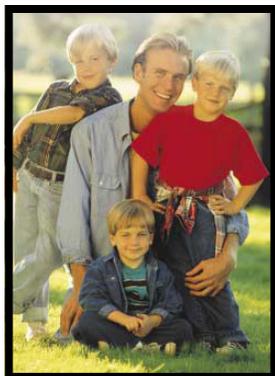
## Rearing Strong Families



Assign all family members household chores. This helps teenagers develop a sense of responsibility and helps them see their behavior has consequences for others.



Show increased love following reprimands. Teens sometimes perceive punishment as rejection, so it is important to express love after an incident.



their friends are, where they are going, and how they spend their money. Family rules need to be established. When teenagers violate parental trust, they need appropriate consequences followed by a show of love so as to maintain family connectedness. "We didn't have many strict rules," wrote one youth, "but my parents knew what I was doing, how I was spending my allowance, and who my friends were." (Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, "Helping Teens Stay Strong," *Ensign*, Mar. 1999, 32).

### What Can Parents Do to Foster Family Regulation?

1. Establish family rules. Teens need the structure provided by family rules. Build family, Church, and school expectations into the rules, and allow youth significant input in the development of them. Rules can be reviewed during family councils or family home evening, and appropriate consequences can be discussed.
2. Assign all family members household chores. This helps teenagers develop a sense of responsibility and helps them see their behavior has consequences for others.
3. Monitor behavior. Talk with your teens and ask about what they are doing, where they are going, whom they will be with, and what money they have. If you doubt the answers, check with teachers or parents of friends. Watch for signs of trouble, such as a decline in school performance, complaints from teachers or other authority figures, sudden personality changes, or staying out too late at night.
4. Enforce the rules. This may seem hard since you wish to keep the relationship positive, but it is critical that teens learn their behavior brings consequences. Quietly but firmly discuss any violation of a rule and explain the impact such behavior has on the teen and others. Parents must stand together in enforcement of family rules.
5. Show increased love following reprimands. Teens sometimes perceive punishment as rejection, so it is important to express love after an incident (see D&C 121:43). (Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, "Helping Teens Stay Strong," *Ensign*, Mar. 1999, 33).

own perceptions or feelings and may look to their peers for a sense of personal worth or withdraw inside themselves and develop emotional problems, such as depression. "When I tried to talk to my parents," one young lady reported, "they made me feel like my ideas and desires were stupid." (Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, "Helping Teens Stay Strong," *Ensign*, Mar. 1999, 33).

Consider the following experience Shared by Sandra Covey. "When I turned eleven, my parents gave me a beautiful edition of a great classic. I read those pages lovingly, and when I turned the last one, I wept. I had lived through them. Carefully, I kept the book for years, waiting to give it to my own daughter. When Cathy was eleven, I presented the book to her. Very pleased by her gift, she struggled through the first two chapters, then deposited it on her shelf where it remained unopened for months. I was deeply disappointed. For some reason I had always supposed that my daughter would be like me, that she would like to read the same books I read as a girl, that she would have a temperament somewhat similar to mine, and that she would like what I liked. 'Cathy is a charming, bubbly, quick-to-laugh, slightly mischievous girl,' her teachers told me. 'She's fun to be around,' said her friends. 'She's excited about life, quick to seek humor everywhere, a sensitive soul,' said her father.





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*‘This is really hard for me,’ I said to my husband one day. ‘Her interminable zest for activities, her insatiable desire to ‘play,’ her ever-bubbling laughing and joking, are overwhelming to me. I’ve never been like that.’*

*“Reading had been the singular joy of my preteen years. In my mind I knew I was wrong to be disappointed in the differences between us, but in the recesses of my heart I was. Cathy was something of an enigma to me, and I resented it.*

*“Those unspoken feelings pass quickly to a child. I knew she would sense them and they would hurt her, if they hadn’t already. I agonized that I could be so uncharitable. I knew my disappointment was senseless, but as dearly as I loved this child, it did not change my heart.*

*“Night after night when all were sleeping and the house was dark and quiet, I prayed for understanding. Then, as I lay in bed one morning, very early, something happened. Quickly passing through my mind, in just seconds, I saw a picture of Cathy as an adult. We were two adult women, arms linked, smiling at each other. I thought of mine own sister and how different we were. Yet I would never have wished that she be like me. I realized that Cathy and I would both be adults someday, just like my sister and me. And dearest friends do not have to be alike.*

*“The words came to my mind, ‘How dare you try to impose your personality on her. Rejoice in your differences!’ Although it lasted but seconds, this flash, this reawakening, changed my heart when nothing else*

*could.*

*“My thankfulness, my gratitude was renewed. And my relationship with my daughter took on a whole new dimension of richness and joy” (Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families*, 251-252).*

One of the great discoveries of my life has been to celebrate my children’s differences, not to be put off by them. I’m grateful that I have a son who spends time each morning reading the newspaper and his scriptures—I would have never done that at his age. I’m grateful for a daughter who is not afraid to express herself; and who is a leader where ever she goes—I could have never done those things at her age. I’m thankful for children who do chores differently than I do—I’m just glad they do them. So, my son doesn’t mow the lawn diagonally—the only true way to mow. At least it gets done each week, and I never even have to ask.

Top and Chadwick suggest ways that we can help our children develop autonomy:

### **What Can Parents Do to Foster Psychological Autonomy?**

1. Encourage teenagers to share their feelings. Listen with interest to their opinions, hopes, and desires. Ask them what they think about a specific gospel principle, a family rule, an event that happened at school or in the community, a television program, or the actions of a respected Church leader.
2. Accept their freedom to express their

views even if you disagree with them. Confidence to express ideas is critical in the development of a competent young adult.

3. Help teenagers explore the sources of their attitudes and the consequences of them. Don’t overreact to “off-the-wall” ideas or opinions. Rather, acknowledge the idea as important, then explore the origins of it. Subtle guidance and sharing of your views often help a teen develop attitudes consistent with gospel principles.
4. Allow teenagers the opportunity to develop their own avenues of worth. While participation on a basketball or debate team may have been important to a parent, a teen may not have the same interest or ability.
5. Don’t resort to withdrawal of love as a means of correcting behavior. Teens experiencing this type of control from their parents withdraw themselves and experience a loss of self-worth. Instead of moving toward independence, they often become more [page 34] dependent on parents or peer groups. (Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, “Helping Teens Stay Strong,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1999, 33).

Ok, so there they are, three large keys, with a bunch of really small ones attached. Good luck!

### **May Workshop**

Our seminar last month was great! We met at the Holiday Inn in Plano and had a wonderful experience. The room was full, and the feedback was excellent. We plan on continuing the experience. Although May is a busy month with school activities, Father-Son outings, graduations, baccalaureates, and a host of other activities, we are going to shoot for Friday, May 19th, at 7:00 p.m. We have not zeroed in on a location yet, but we will finalize that this week. The cost will be \$25 per couple, and \$20 per individual. Our topic and location will be announced soon, so stay close to your email. Don’t really do that—you have a life! Thanks for your interest and participation.