

10 Things You Can Teach Your Kids That College Can't

I'll never forget when I received the news. A teenager I had befriended while he was in high school had been arrested in his college town for selling drugs. It didn't make sense to me. He always struck me as such a good kid. He was rarely in trouble at all, let alone the trouble he was now facing with the law. I wondered how this kid, who seemed so great, could go off to college and start selling drugs. Somehow during the preparation for life, he missed something. What did he miss while growing up?

College teaches a lot of things, but there is plenty it won't teach you. There are things we need to prepare kids for before they go to give them the framework they need to thrive, not only in college but beyond. Here are 10 important ones.

1. Strong Morals and Common Decency

It is imperative to our future that we give our children the most basic understanding of right and wrong. That we apply the Golden Rule to our own lives and instill it in our children as well. Our kids need to know that without honesty and integrity they have nothing.

2. Perseverance and Stamina

One of the most difficult things to teach a young person is that disappointment is not the end of the road. Their limited experience makes it hard for them to understand that something new and amazing is potentially around the corner. Troubles will always come and go. Perseverance to never give up sees us through the most difficult times. There always has been and always will be a light at the end of the tunnel. Teach them how to find it.

3. Developing Self-Confidence

Everyone has insecurities. If we allow our feelings of insecurity to dominate our lives, we will miss great opportunities. Confidence grows when we understand our limitations, while also determining and developing what our strengths are. Even our weaknesses can become strengths when we are able to see them clearly. Make sure your child feels worthy of love and belonging.

4. Money Management

The simplest way to teach this is having them learn the true value of their dollars. Put them on a budget and force them to live within it. Without a true appreciation of how difficult it is to earn and keep wealth, they may wind up in debt. Give them chores around the house to earn money and then teach them to share, save and spend.

5. Making and Keeping Friends

The most important part is to be yourself and expect the same from your friend. If you are not being accepted for who you are, or vice versa, then the friendship is not real. They are an acquaintance. Friends come in all sizes, shapes and colors. An open mind is needed to find them, and a loving heart is needed to keep them.

6. Developing Self-Discipline

Later in life, will your son or daughter have the ability to say no under pressure because it's the right thing to do? Eventually, each person becomes solely responsible for their own actions, successes and failures. Self-discipline and the ability to apply it will largely determine how well it all goes. As is usually the case, leading by example as a parent will set the tone for your child.

7. Courage and Faith

Most times, the easiest way out is the wrong way. The right way is usually a lonely, dark, bumpy road that leaves us unsure and afraid at first sight. Courage and faith allow us to place our feet on that narrow path and only then do we realize that we took the right road. Teaching a child to be courageous and faithful is a long process of example, discussion and experience.

8. Generosity and Loyalty

If you want your child to think only of himself, then just sit back and let culture do the work. However, if you want to raise the bar, then take every opportunity to teach the opposite. Generosity is the ability to sacrifice for the happiness or benefit of another. As for loyalty, it is summed up well in a quote from Bobby Bowden, "The starting point for any great relationship is loyalty." No loyalty, no great relationships.

9. Unique Identity

If not for unique, free-thinking individuals throughout history, we would have never moved past the cave. We all have gifts that are special and needed in the world. Discovering and developing those talents is essential not only for our own fulfillment but for society as a whole.

10. Finding and Keeping a Spouse

Respect plays an extremely important role in a successful marriage. Teach your children to choose a spouse that they not only love but respect as a human being. Someone of common values that they enjoy spending time with. With a foundation of respect and love, they will be able to weather the storms of life together.

What do you think is most important to teach kids before they go to college? {eoa}

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