

Healthy Parents Lead Healthy Families

Having worked with kids for over a decade, I have discovered what may seem to be a shocking truth to many parents ... you actually influence your kids! Even the teens!

And not just to the opposite of what you ask. After years running weight loss camps for teens, and a life in summer camps, what I've discovered is that healthy parents influence and lead healthy families.

Now, before you begin rebuttals, I want to clarify what I mean by healthy. By healthy I encompass healthy minds, bodies, and spirits and thus healthy relationships. Even "fit" people can have unhealthy relationships with food or exercise or family and friends.

With everyone, from the First Lady to network television taking a stance on childhood obesity, isn't it amazing and empowering to know that you, as a parent, have an incredible opportunity to make a change in the lives of your kids?

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."- (Prov. 22:6)

I view health as three key components: mind, body, and spirit. Experience has shown me over the years that all three of those are linked. In turn, I've seen firsthand that being healthy in this three-part way brings about healthy relationships and decision making as well.

3 Ways to Build Healthy Kids

Be an active family. As a family, take up rock climbing at a local gym, go for walks, go on active vacations, throw a ball, join a soccer league. Move as a family! At the end of a long

day sometimes the last thing my wife and I want to do is get out and be active.

However, we find that going for a walk, though not overly physically taxing, helps us feel better, gives us more energy, burns some calories, and we talk. We talk far more walking than we do watching TV or doing almost anything else at the house after a long day. It physically builds our health and builds our relationship.

Take out the trash. Garbage in, garbage out. I am a firm believer that you live at the level at which you speak, and you speak at the level at which you hear. This to say that the words that come out of your mouth and float around in your mind all day, set the stage with how you live your life.

Those words often come from what you watch on TV, what you listen to on the radio, and what you hear from those you surround yourself with. Be mindful what you surround your family with. I know you can't control every aspect of your kid's life outside of the home, but you can take control of what happens at home and what you do, say, watch, and listen to as a family.

"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."
(Psalm 18:2)

Connect the mind, body and spirit for your family. I read a question in Kimberly Taylor's blog one time, "Does God love you if you're overweight?" Of course he does! Does the Bible tell us what God wants our body mass index (BMI) to be? No, it doesn't. As a Christian what is our motivation to be healthy and what does that have to do with God's purpose for us?

We understand that treating people well, loving others, ministering to others, and spreading the word of God is what we are called to. What does that have to do with our weight or physical health? To further the kingdom of God, I need to be

healthy, to the amount that is within my power. My health, your health for that matter, can help or hinder your ability to live the life God has called you to.

No one ever had that conversation with me as a kid. Thankfully I was an active kid, but it never crossed my mind that my physical health had anything to do with my spiritual health, and living the life God called me to. Have those conversations. I knew to be kind one to another and respect my parents, because I was taught that those things were pleasing in the sight of God. Talk about God's desire and purpose for your life, your family, and your kids.

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (III John 2)

Be An Empowered Parent

You, as a parent, have an awesome opportunity to impact the health of your child in mind, body, and spirit. Know that you have influence, be empowered and lead a healthy household. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

The preceding is an article by Jeremy Whitworth of . Whitworth and his wife Caitlin are the owners and directors of Renew camps, the world's first *Christian weight loss camps* for teens. The Whitworths can be contacted at: Jeremy@.

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