

Parenting: A Beautiful Mess

We all want to be great parents. As a parent of five grown children, I can tell you it takes hard work. And, it's sometimes messy. Parenting is a beautiful mess!

The new movie, *Moms' Night Out*, captures this idea perfectly. I've seen it several times and can tell you the message it delivers isn't just for moms, it's for dads too. It shows us what it means to get rid of all the expectations and pressures of parenting, and, instead, learn the basics of parenting and how to love your kids well.

So, as you learn more about this beautiful mess we call parenting, here are five questions you should ask yourself:

1. When was the last time your nails were painted by your daughter? One way to know you're parenting well at a basic level is if you immerse yourself in their world. The best way to connect with your kids is to spend time doing what they like to do. So, I encourage you to create a world out of Legos, climb up into the treehouse with them, and let your daughter paint your nails (even you, Dad!). For more ways to spend time with your kids, check out [How to Spend More One-on-One Time with Your Children](#).

2. When was the last time you taught your son about being a gentleman? Being a role model is such an important foundation to lay in your relationship with your kids. As I mentioned in [8 Things Every Father Must Teach His Son](#), one of the best things you can do is teach your son how to be a gentleman. This basic concept is something that all parents should work to instill in their sons.

3. When was the last time you were in a different room than your phone? Are you constantly checking texts, emails, Twitter or Facebook? If so, choose to leave your phone behind sometimes and fully focus on your kids—without distractions.

You can parent well by being there for your kids, physically and mentally.

4. When was the last time you were affectionate with your spouse in front of the kids? Your kids desire to see a loving relationship between their parents. They crave that stability and security. This is why making your marriage a priority is part of the basics of parenting.

5. When was the last time you told your kids you love them? Ultimately, your job as a parent comes down to one thing: loving your kids well. Sometimes we assume our kids understand our love for them because of the way we provide a home, food and so many other things for them. But it's still very important to *tell* your kids you love them. Say "I love you," and say it often.

I hope you'll see *Moms' Night Out* and enjoy the beautiful mess of parenting.

Have you found parenting to be a bit messy? Is it still beautiful to you? Please share your comments below.

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