

The Secret to Raising Selfless Kids

Raising kids who grow up to make a difference is not going to be done by accident. You have got to be deliberate about this.

I applaud you for wanting to see kids that have more going for them than what's in it for them. But the fact is that we live in a culture that worships the individual, worships self, worships all the stuff that we can have, and we celebrate the people that glitter and shine in the media.

But the fact is that the stuff of the heart, the deeper stuff of the heart, is what you want to build into your kids.

My wife and I, as we observed life and observed others, we found out that there are some things you have got to put down in the core of your kids' hearts—I mean, the stuff that they are not going to negotiate on. We call them convictions. You have got to build convictions into your kids' hearts.

Let me define a conviction. I define a conviction as what you are willing to die for.

Now, if that is how we are defining conviction, I don't think people today have a lot of convictions. See, life is precious. You don't just give it up for anything. But the problem with the average person today is not that their list of convictions is too long, it's that there is nothing on their list.

You see, until your kids have something worth dying for, they really don't have anything worth living for.

Now, let me just suggest four things that I think are worth dying for. You can make your own list, but as we tried to embed these into our kids by the way we lived our life and

showed them how we lived our life, I think it just gave them far more excitement about taking on each day.

I think our friends are worth dying for. I think our family is worth dying for. I think our faith is worth dying for. And I think our freedom is worth dying for.

I mean, when it comes to freedom, if you know anything about the history of the United States, the cost of freedom has been high. There are people always out there on the front lines, ready to lay everything on the line for us.

And you see, when you build some core convictions into your kids, that they say, "I believe these are so important, I would be willing to give my life for them," well, now you are setting up a kid to be far more altruistic.

Here's the good news: most likely, your kids will never have to die for their friends, for their family, for their faith, or their freedom. But there is something that you can demonstrate for them as you go through your life as a parent, that can show them that if it ever came down to it, you wouldn't hesitate to give your life for those four things, and that is: are you willing to *live* for them? Are you willing to live for your friends, and your family, and your faith, and your freedom?

Are you willing to inconvenience your own life to pay a great price in your day-to-day life to invest in these very four things?

Then your kids will know that this is a conviction, a core conviction of your heart. It will take the focus off themselves. They won't be spending so much time with a mirror in front of them. They will be looking outwards, and they will be living a life that makes a real difference.

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