

## Now That They're Grown: Loving and Parenting Adult Children

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Parenting is tricky business. For the first twenty or so years of your child's life, your job is to teach and guide him or her. Often, we give our children unsolicited advice or even override their choices. Then comes the day when they are all grown up, ready to move out and live on their own. We must loosen our grip and begin a new level of relationship with them as young adults. If you are like me, this is not easy.

"Parents have such a hard time letting go of their control," says Dr. Jennifer Freed, a psychotherapist and licensed marriage and family counselor. "It's not that parents are trying to butt in because they think their child is incapable; it's because they're concerned about their child's welfare and think they can help by sharing their experiences."

The reality is that our concern often doesn't come across this way. Our adult children feel like we are still treating them as a child. And everyone needs to make their own mistakes and learn from them – that is a necessary part of the ongoing growth process.

So how do we help guide our grown kids without coming across as a bossy or nagging? To begin with, we need to learn to treat our child more like an adult friend instead of a kid. Lowering our expectations on how often they call us, biting our tongues when we want to give them advice, and being careful about

rescuing them from their mistakes are all important.

Remember, you raised them for this. You raised them to be adults, to embrace the world, to take risks, to be themselves and to be who God designed them to be. They'll explore and make mistakes just like you did.