

Parenting is an Inside Job

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The world that parents are raising children today has changed tremendously over the past twenty-to-thirty years. People are living longer which means that grandparents can be more a part of their grandchildren's lives.

We see a large increase of three and four-generation families. Yet, we are a global community and often live far from our extended family. Most often, both parents work outside of the home. There are many children being raised by single parents and by grandparents.

Technology has changed our world forever. Children and youth today do not know a world without cellphones and tablets. Communication is instantaneous and we can connect with those halfway around the globe.

Among all those advances and changes, the fact is that family is important and is the most basic social unit. It has been said that family is the only institution created by God. I believe that regardless of all the technological and societal advances, parents will always be the most important source of information and values for their growing children.

I would like to ask you to think for a moment about your goals in raising your children. For many parents, one of their goals is to teach them to obey. However, I would propose that having this at the most important goal is an inferior one because it creates a family culture based on rules and compliance instead of relationship, choice, freedom, and love.

Parenting is an inside job. We guide our children through our relationship with them. Through our connection with our children, we build trust, respect and love. This allows them to make choices, learn from their mistakes and develop their own moral compass. As parents, when we remain calm and ask guiding questions to help our child sort out problems and emotions, our relationship is strengthened and the poor choice remains "the bad guy."

Brene Brown said, "Connection is the energy that is created between people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive judgment." As we parent our children, we are creating the inner workings of our future adult children. Connection is key. Relationship is the heart of the matter!