

# Thoughts on Parenting

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As we come to the end of another year, I want to share some thoughts on parenting. These are my truths about parenting, which I have learned through trial and error over the years.

## Lead with Love

The most important thing our kids need to know about their parents is that we love them. Love is the basis of our relationships with our kids. Communication, discipline, mutual respect and all the tasks of parenting flow from love. If love is not the basis, the relationships will not last.

Love starts with us loving our kids even when our love is not returned. We need to tell our children we love them every day and give them affection every day. If we don't tell them and show them, they will not know.

## Teach through Example

Our children will do what we do, not what we say. Being a parent gives us the opportunity to reflect on and identify our values. Does our behavior reflect our

values? If we want our children to learn values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, hard work, we need to exhibit those values ourselves. We are the most important people to our children. They look at our behavior to show them how they should be.

As our children grow, they will need to develop their own system of values. Sometimes, in that process, they will challenge us, what we do, and what we believe. We will make that journey easier for them if our values are clear and consistent, and if our behavior reflects our values.

## Listen to Understand

Our children's behavior means something. It is not random. When our children have problems, we need to seek to understand their perspectives before we can offer ours. Sometimes we think we know why they are responding a certain way, but we cannot assume we know. They need to tell us.

If our children are not talking to us, they may feel afraid of our judgement. Love can overcome fear. If they know we love them, that we are there to support them, they will open up. If we listen, we will get to know our children better. Then our support will be true and will have their interest at heart.

In the end, love is the key to our relationships with our children. Love is the key to being an effective parent.

Wishing you happy holidays and a new year full of love  
and joyful moments.

With love and affection,

Rosemarie

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