

One size fits all

Only One Answer

By Maureen St Germain



My mother taught me something by example that I think is the most profound thing I ever learned regarding human interaction. I passed this nugget on to my children the same way she taught me: by example. What is this magic thing? It is the only answer.

It is the only answer to give to your adult children, especially between the ages of 18 to 33. It is the only answer to give to any adult seeking your opinion. "I am sure you will do the right thing, honey." The honey part is optional. If the other person really wants to know, they will ask a second time. My own mother did this for the first time the day after my wedding. I was in shock that she didn't give me her opinion when I asked. She turned on her "I'm sure you will make the right decision" button that day!

When my own children were young I practiced parenting which included saying no and responding to opinion questions. Parenting can make one weary. I remember asking my inner guides one time, How long do I have to remind my sons to use a dinner napkin when they eat? I heard the voice in my head say, "Until they are 18." In hindsight, I think this is pretty funny, but with four sons, you would think I would not have to say it every night-for almost 28 years, till the youngest turned 18-as yet I did!

Dale Carnegie teaches us that there is only one person we can change. Sometimes we do have to say no to our children, set limits, and more. What if they are 15 or 16 and old enough to do what they want anyway? What if you are afraid they will make a bad decision? Once again, you have to trust them and act like it. Nothing stirs rebellion as fast as a lack of trust. This article is about after that work is done.

I turned on the "I am sure you will make the right decision" button when my own sons turned 18. I tell everyone in my classes to memorize this phrase, and say it any time their adult children ask a question. You have done the best parenting job with your children that you could. There is no need to continue to tell them what to do because they will do what they want anyway. Why not trust that all the training you gave them will pay off and offer your blessing? Your blessing is what they really desire!

Certainly, this takes some effort after 20-plus years of practice; that is, to stop giving your opinions. Yet amazingly, when you trust your son or daughter to act on the basis of their own thinking, they are very likely to do what you taught them. They will do the right thing. How do you turn off the parenting talk? I learned to adopt the concept of changing hats. I have a mom hat, partner hat, teacher hat, and many other hats. I took off my mom hat which enable me to mentally shift. I recommend memorizing this statement. It will pay off in huge dividends later. For one thing, they will keep talking to you.

One time, my children's father said to me, "The kids tell you everything." I asked how he had arrived at that conclusion. He gave me the example of how I knew our youngest son was going to live in another city and co-op a job. He had asked our son about a summer job, and got no response. "Maybe it is the way you ask," I said. He told me that all he asked our son was, "Have you gotten a summer job?" On the other hand, I asked him, "Have you made any plans for the summer?" which enabled our son to tell me of his hopes for the summer. Once, he told me about his summer plans, I followed with, "I'm sure you will make the right decision, honey." When your children know they will get your blessing, they will want to get additional blessings and will follow with more about themselves.

In fact, "I'm sure you will make the right decision." is a very good line to use on just about everyone! Can you imagine the easy interchange within your own circle if you said that to everyone who asked your opinion? They would feel your instant approval and smile happily or they would ask a second time and then you would know they really did want your opinion I say it today with the people I work with to encourage ownership in our processes. It is an empowering message. Keep your tone clear and allow yourself to extend this from your heart.

In many organizations, plans exist for emergencies of a political nature. Most of us will react defensively in these situations, unless we are prepared. There are actually written protocols to say who will act and what will be said. Why not add this to your own list of preparedness?

I'm sure you will make the right decision.♥

Maureen can be reached at: www.TransformationalEnterprisesInc.com Maureen's book, *You are the Gemie in the Bottle*, published by Hampton Roads Publishing, will be available in 2006.