

A Vision for Parenting

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Friend of PCNV

Parenting becomes more clear when parents have a vision, a goal for their children. Where do I want my children to be at adulthood (I have arbitrarily selected the age of 23, after college graduation, as the age of adulthood). Defining the goal facilitates the task of parenting in that one can then ask, how can I relate to (parent) my child so that he or she can reach these goals by age 23?

At 23 I want my child to:

1. Manage his or her own money in an appropriate way.
2. Select and buy his or her own clothes and dress effectively.
3. Take reasonable care of his or her own health. This includes proper sleep; selecting a healthy diet, getting enough exercise; and being in charge of medical and dental needs.
4. Relate creatively to both men and women.
5. Have a clear vocational goal and either have a job or to be in training or an educational program toward one.
6. Have a broadening intellectual curiosity.
7. Be capable of age appropriate self-knowledge regarding his or her personal drives, needs, wants, and feelings, and the ability to control and direct them rather than being controlled by them. This self-knowledge includes the ability to put accurate words to his or her own feelings and drives in a self-affirming manner and share them with significant others.
8. Affirm faith in a forgiving and loving God as revealed in Jesus Christ and to be on his or her own spiritual path.
9. Laugh a lot, and to be able to cry.
10. Enjoy being with others and also being alone.
11. Be reasonable and knowledgeable in assessing the ambiguity of human character: the black, white and gray - in others and in his or her self.
12. Be able to say "No", I disagree or refuse and "Yes", and then, Yes and No when it is appropriate to do so.
13. Be socially discreet when appropriate.
14. Speak for his or her self.

Editor's Note: James T. Hall is a United Methodist clergyman, a Diplomate in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, and Founder of Washington Pastoral Associates where he engages in individual, marital and family counseling. He is a valued colleague and we're pleased to share this thought on parenting and Jim's own goals for his child. If you have questions, you can reach him at 703 764-7880. As an aid to your own parenting, we encourage you to consider clarifying what you wish for your child(ren) at age 23.

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