

5 Ways to Help Your Son Right Now

For thousands of years young men were entrusted with the crucial role of providing for and protecting the community. They were supported, required and honored to be seen as capable and trustworthy; a far cry from the current commonly held negative stereotype. Now the opportunities to fulfill this sacred trust have mostly vanished from our everyday society and our son's are showing us this loss through their problems and lack of motivation. With the influence of the media and the addictions of our instant gratification society, parents need more help than ever to educate their sons about how to live a meaningful life and participate in a productive role in the community.

For thousands of years parents had the assistance of their community to raise their son to be responsible and independent. Our mission is to provide the resources and support your son needs to succeed. All of our programs feature **The RIGHT Way™**, a simple method that shows people how to unlock stagnant thinking and implement effective actions to move toward greater personal fulfillment and family unity. The acronym **R.I.G.H.T.** stands for these values: **R**espect, **I**ntelligence, **G**allantry (men) / **G**race (women), **H**umor, **T**rue. This special report provides you with some of the principles and practices that have successfully guided us to help over a thousand young men.

Respect -- Holding Everyone in High Regard

The secret to helping young men is to give them respect by fostering good communication. The first thing you can do is to let them freely voice without interruption. What you may consider rude communication may be the young man's experience of hormonal and psychological intensity that he can't control in the moment. Ideally, the young man would be more respectful while he is communicating, but we have found that by keeping his energy moving forward by not interrupting, establishes respect and trust with him. Focus on the substance, not the style.

When it is your turn to speak, speak with clarity and certainty. Say your words of wisdom while looking him in his eyes, in a way that says, "These are my values and this is how we behave in my house". Do not say your words of wisdom over and over again. It is disrespectful to him as it feels like you are treating him like he's still a boy. When you are done speaking, ask him the following courteous question, "What else do you need?" Keep asking such enlightening questions. As he trusts that you support him in his journey, he will respect your wisdom and your ability to share it.

Intelligence = Making Sound and Wise Decisions

A young man in his teens naturally feels the urge to go out into the world on his own. Parents often continue to care for their adolescent sons by the same methods they used when they were boys; supplying every possible emotional solution and material need. Well intentioned as this may be, it takes away crucial opportunities for their young man to learn responsibility and independence through making his own way in life. The young men we've worked with say they know their parents love them but feel insulted about how they try to help them. Parents and communities must give young men opportunities to prove themselves by hiring them for jobs, encouraging them to volunteer, and creating venues for them to enhance and express their native exuberance, intelligence and creativity freely.

By Richard Platt, LMFT, CPC Teen Solutions & Dr. Mark Schillinger Young Men's Ultimate Weekend www.ymuw.org

Create environments for young men to take chances and allow them to win and lose in their experiences, without being chastised for their mistakes. Teach them by peppering them with the right questions. Let them learn how to develop and synthesize their intuition and experience as the twin sources of their wisdom. When young men feel like you are guiding and creating learning experiences for them, not controlling and giving them the answers, they develop the self-confidence necessary to make the right decisions for themselves.

Gallantry/Grace -- Acting with Courtesy and Courage

Young men love to challenge people for the sake of satisfying competitive impulses. We do not recommend a competition of egos where the parent conveys the message, "I am bigger, better, stronger, or smarter". This just encourages your son to "act out" as a way of winning another "energy" skirmish. You might win the battle but you won't win this war! Therefore, act with courage by continually modeling the values of your home and swiftly enforcing the boundaries you create. When you are implementing a consequence, do not apologize for your courage by asking him, "it this okay sweetie?" or, "do you understand?" Your son needs to experience you acting decisively.

Act with courtesy by allowing him to get his energy out by providing venues where he can run, scream, play sports or music, create art, etc. When you think he has done something wrong, ask him but do not accuse him. You don't have to beat them over their heads with your household standards or you'll find yourself engaged in another ego skirmish. Most importantly, bring a compassionate perspective. Remember that all members of the household are perfectly imperfect humans practicing the art of happiness and you'll have more love and less stress.

Humor -- Celebrating in Easy and Hard Times

One of our society's greatest problems is that we don't teach young people that they are bigger, more important and can successfully coexist with their problems. We don't teach them that emotions, thoughts and circumstances are simply energy in motion that can be influenced through positive intention and effort. We also don't teach them that true happiness is entirely dependent on internal outlook not external causes. The main difference between parents who are mature and their sons is experience. They know that life is either uneventful or dealing with challenges, successes and losses. They appreciate health, material abundance, mental clarity or spiritual well-being because they know how much they have had to go through to gain it. The truly wise know that they can enhance and increase life's hard won gifts through celebration.

It is imperative that parents neither deny nor indulge in the fact that life is often difficult. Most importantly, they must teach their sons to celebrate whether times are easy or hard. This is a crucial life saving skill to bring to your son because young men tend to take life's hardships very personally. Often, they do not know how to release built-up tension and may display symptoms of depression, anxiety, apathy or addiction. Since 80% of all illness is stress related, young men must learn to provide their own relief valve through celebration. Routinely bring humor into your household. This does not mean that you are not handling your responsibilities. It means that, in addition to doing whatever it takes to make life work, you have not forgotten how to create fun and joy. Just the way you and your son did when all of you were toddlers!

True = Living with Integrity to Trust Yourself



By Richard Platt, LMFT, CPC Teen Solutions & Dr. Mark Schillinger Young Men's Ultimate Weekend www.ymuw.org

The parents are responsible for creating a consistent culture, a "Way of Being" in the household. This Way of Being must be firmly rooted in non-negotiable core values that holds true in all circumstances. Young men are adept at using their intuition to determine if their parents are capable of leading them. If your son experiences your leadership as inconsistent and uncertain, he will seek out other authorities, unfortunately looking for answers in the media, or from friends, gangs, or drugs and alcohol. If you do not have a Way, your son will find another way.

Practice the discipline of behaving in ways that are in alignment with what you know are the most important things you can be modeling to your son. Do not negotiate with yourself or others about the principles and practices you hold in the highest regard. When your son consistently observes you being in integrity with yourself, do not expect him to thank you or tell you that he loves you. What you can expect from modeling integrity continually, is a young man who will grow up wanting to be just like you, whether he tells you or not.