



# positive tactics

What you teach your children will not only do them a world of good, but benefit your future grandchildren too

BY DR. ART HISTER



**A**s the proud parent of two terrific boys, I've always taken all the credit for their turning out so well. Although to be fair, I have to concede that my wife did have a wee bit to do with it.

And, I guess, so did my kids, who wisely laughed off some (or most?) of what I tried to tell them. (Neither of them bought Nortel shares, for example.) And, of course, I'm sure luck had something to do with the way my boys turned out.

In fact, to be really honest, I probably had very little to do with our kids turning out so well. That doesn't mean, however, that I, like every other parent out there, don't have lots of theories about how to parent.

Among the numerous parenting principles that I promote and tried to use in bringing up my own boys, the strongest was to use "positive" tactics as much as possible. That means to try to:

- Be as supportive as you can be.
- Be around as much as you

can, especially at family mealtimes (in fact, it's unbelievable what you can learn or at least suspect over dinner, even from the least talkative teenager) and important occasions such as school events.

- Set a positive example for your children: don't smoke (parents should never smoke — period), get regular exercise and walk instead of drive when possible, eat a healthy diet and cook as much as you can, and so on, although

The good news is that these "positive parenting principles" not only work, but they will then last into the next generation.

At least that's the conclusion of a study from Oregon State University in which some "at risk" elementary school-age boys were followed for over 20 years.

Not surprisingly, those kids who experienced what the researchers deemed to be "positive parenting" had better outcomes all around.

*Kids who experienced positive parenting were less likely to develop behavioural problems and had higher self-esteem*

I don't think you should push a glass of wine on the kids every evening.

- Be as honest as you can (but boy, can that be tough with some of the things they're bound to ask, especially when they see a photo of you from the '60s).
- And finally, set rules and limits, be consistent and teach kids responsibility for their actions. In other words, let them learn that there are consequences for everything they do. Some of those consequences won't turn out to be pleasant but they must still be faced.

And you know what?

They were less likely to develop behavioural problems, they performed better in school and they had higher self-esteem.

Most importantly, they tended to use positive parenting techniques on their own children. So, it's pretty much as that old **Crosby, Stills & Nash** song had it: teach your children well.

Because what you teach your children will not only do them a world of good, it will also likely do your grandchildren a lot of good, too. ■

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