

The ripple effect starts with you



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As your children or grandchildren are heading back to school, are you more mindful of your important role in their lives? Are you teaching them what they need to know to be equipped in life? Do you have healthy relationships with them? Do you guide them in loving authority? Do you model actions and behaviors you want them to have?

I find that more and more I need the help of others through this journey of parenting ... especially now that my children are no longer children but teens and young adults. I need other people's guidance, wisdom, ideas, and encouragement.

Where do you go for this kind of help? Recently our church started a short series on wisdom. Pastor Dan Farm delivered an incredible sermon on Wisdom For The Home—for children, parents, husbands, wives, the whole family. He talked about what healthy relationships look like. Speak only positive and encouraging words. Be slow to anger. Get all the counseling you can get. Guard against strife. Have fun together! These are just a few topics of goodness he spoke of for the whole family, and anyone in relationships—all of us!

There were more good nuggets of truth as Dan spoke of our jobs as parents. Model behaviors we want to see in our children. Train them in the

way they should go. If you love your children, discipline them—guide them with authority. As parents we have a job—not to make our children happy, but to make them holy.

With the incredible advances in technology today, I believe our jobs as parents are becoming much more challenging and difficult. We need each other: sharing tips, truth, encouragement, and goodness as we strive to raise great kids. I'd like to break down our jobs when it comes to parenting in the age of technology.

Modeling

How attached to technology are you? Not your kids, but you. How much time do you spend watching TV, surfing the web, scrolling through your Facebook newsfeed, tweeting, watching videos? When you are doing these things, are they pure? Are they pleasing and wholesome to the eyes and ears? Are you modeling the type of usage you want to see in your children either now or even when they are your age and have children of their own?

Let me take a moment and pull the plank out of my eye now that I've asked about a possible speck in yours. I used to spend way too much time on my phone, sometimes only half paying attention to one of my beloved family members talking to me. I used to plan witty things I might post on Facebook to get the most likes, then check to see who was liking or even loving my posts! I wanted to feel important ... until I realized that it was making my family feel unimportant.

I started turning over a new leaf in January—giving myself strict limitations on internet usage while with my family—and using it only for work while I am working. It's opened up a whole new world! All of a sudden I have more time to build healthy

relationships, read, and do things I enjoy, along with slowing down to take part in the important things and be a model to my sweet teens. Give it a try. You'll begin to capture the important moments in your heart memories, but more importantly, you get to share life more deeply with your children's hearts.

Training

We are called to train our children. We should be talking about the pros and cons of the world wide web, how to make good decisions while on it, warning them about things they may be exposed to, talking about the addictions internet usage may cause (either now or later in life), all of it. We also must talk about what they are watching and have discussions about the programs or movies they stream.

Guiding

Modeling and training are simply not enough. We absolutely must guide, protect, and discipline our children with loving authority—for their own good. It is not enough to have a computer in a common place. We must monitor their usage, limit their time, and set restrictions. Having rules and setting expectations are a must.

But how tech-savvy are you? I don't know about your teen (or grand-teens), but mine know more about the internet than I do. I go to them for help! How do we guide and protect them when we don't even know what all there is to protect them from? This summer, I discovered a device to help. It's called "Circle with Disney." I've heard of different subscriptions you can install for parental controls as well as filters, but they seem so complicated! The Circle, for me, has been easy. It's a one-time purchase. You simply hook it up



to your router and install an app on your mobile device. You then set up each family member on your app, assign their devices to them then monitor usage, check history, and set filters, bed times, time limits ... you can even pause it.

This system certainly should not be used to rule over your children but to protect them from things they don't even know they need protection from. It should be used to guide and limit them with loving authority. As they grow, as they become more responsible and display healthy habits, you can slowly start altering limitations.

You may be wondering—what does any of this have to do with the automotive industry? Well, absolutely nothing. But wait, could it?

Perhaps, as we are setting restrictions and limitations, talking to our kids

about all of the pros and cons of the internet, training and guiding them, preparing them for the world and teaching them responsibility, could we also be teaching them to be better drivers? Could our "Circle" limits help them understand the rules/restrictions/limits of being a responsible driver? Could protecting them from things they should not be exposed to also help them make decisions about places they should or should not go to when you are not around? Could gradually opening up more to them as they become more responsible and respectful also reach to the roadways as they are responsible drivers and respectful of other motorists?

By golly, I think it could! Everything we teach our precious small kids, sweet tweens, young adults or our children of any age has the ability to affect every area of their lives ... and likely, the lives of many others.