

# FamilySTYLE

Resourcing Christian Family Advocates

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Fashion magazines, trendy clothing, and even toys that target young girls may be robbing your daughter of her childhood!

## Is Your Daughter Growing Up Too Fast?

“CULTURE’S ‘HOOTCHIE’ FACTOR STEAMS PARENTS OF GIRLS” screamed the headline in large print across the newspaper page. Writer Mary Kaye Ritz had interviewed a mix of parents and social observers on the increasing sexualization of young girls.

No self-respecting parent would withhold self-respect from their kids! Check out the 8 tough questions on page 2.

LOSE YOUR JOB? THERE’S AN ELEVEN POINT STRATEGY ON PAGE 3 THAT WILL HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE AS YOU LOOK FOR A NEW ONE!

*The secular culture wants to have its cake and eat it too! It’s as if human sexuality has no particular mean-ing! See the excerpt from the book: Finding God at Harvard. Page 4. Purchase the book!*

One 16-year-old shopping with her family is quoted as teasing her 7-year-old sister about dressing too “hootchie,” while their mother admired a pair of shorts “no longer than a hand” for her younger daughter. And a father was unconcerned when his 7-year-old daughter pulled a Bratz doll from her McDonald’s Happy Meal. Bratz dolls, “with a passion for fashion,” wear platform heels, tube tops, hip-hugging bottoms, and short skirts.

While boys are allowed to be boys, girls don’t get a childhood. Girls may mature faster, but now we have forced them to mature even faster. We channel them to fit into the image that society wants.

Kay Hymowitz, author of *Ready or Not: What Happens When We Treat Children as Small Adults*, offered sad commentary on the toys and clothes that push children into early maturity. “We have given up the notion that children need to be protected from sex and the gritty realities of life. We express shock and dismay, but there’s a huge market for this. I don’t think there’s enough parental conviction to stop it.”

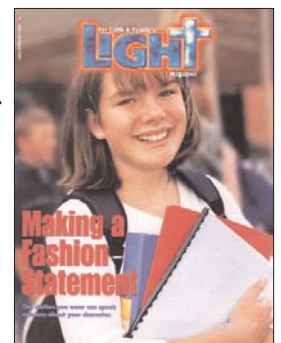
From *For Faith & Family’s Light Magazine*, July/August 2003. Subscribe: <http://www.lightontheweb.org>

### GUARDING HER REPUTATION

Wise moms will help their daughters understand that people will judge them by how they look. A girl needs to know that she invites a host of assumptions about her character when she dresses in a provocative way, and once she is labeled with a poor reputation, it can be difficult to prove otherwise.

### MODESTY

Establish dialogue about modesty with your daughter early, preferably before puberty. If you wait until she develops to address it, she may feel self-conscious and guilty about the beauty that’s growing in her. The issue is not her body. God made it, and it is beautiful. The issue is what her clothes say about her.



# Respect

1. Are you teaching and showing your kids God's standard of respect?
2. Are you setting an example by treating your own parents and siblings with respect?
3. Are you demanding common courtesy and decency from your kids?
4. Do you treat your own kids with respect?
5. Are you teaching them to respect their siblings?
6. Do you seek teachable moments when you observe your kids not showing respect?
7. What about practical manners, are you explaining specific ways to treat others with respect and why?
8. Do you reinforce your teaching with praise?



THIS WHOLE IDEA OF RESPECT HAS FALLEN ON HARD TIMES BECAUSE IT'S AN UPHILL STRUGGLE AGAINST A CULTURE THAT DOESN'T CARE. THE KEY IS HOW MUCH YOUR KIDS RESPECT THEMSELVES. IF THIS CAN BE MASTERED THE CULTURE BECOMES LESS OF AN OBSTACLE. ☺

**In order to help people understand the depth of crisis among American families, about 3,000 people died in the attack on the World Trade Center. As much heartache as people felt in that horrible moment, they should also consider that every day 3,000 families die in America through divorce.** —Tom Elliff

## One Essential in Keeping Your Parenting Balance

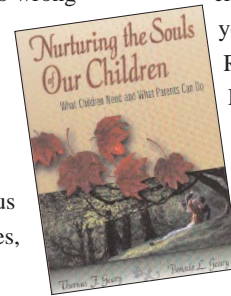
OUR CHILDREN OFFER US AN ABUNDANT MENU OF ACCIDENTS, PROBLEMS, AND MISCALCULATIONS!

The big picture is essential in keeping your parenting balance. Our kids are walking disasters. When they are little, children spill milk and write on freshly-painted walls. As they grow, so does the magnitude of their blunders. It's so easy to concentrate only on what they do wrong because they offer us an abundant menu of accidents, problems, and miscalculations.

It's too easy for us to turn into detectives, searching out our child's tiniest lapses.

Yet, if we concentrate on the negative, we can actually contribute to their making more mistakes. This type of focusing puts the whole family on alert and makes everyone uptight. The result is that our children make avoidable mistakes, as do we. We all perform better if we relax.

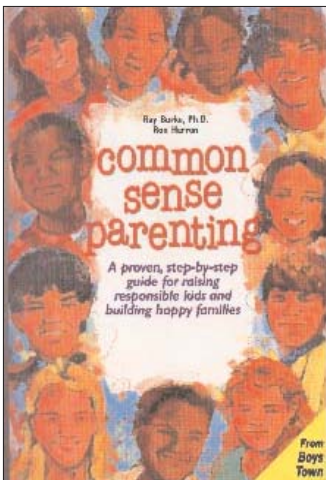
From *Nurturing the Souls of Our Children* by Thomas F. Geary and Bonnie L. Geary, Smyth and Helwys Publishing Inc., Macon, Ga. © Copyright 2002. To purchase the book go to: <http://www.helwys.com>



Take a minute to see if you are keeping the big picture of each of your children. Look at their failings from their point of view. A fuller appreciation of your children will keep you more balanced in dealing with them. It wouldn't hurt to apply the same criterion to your spouse, your friends, and yourself. Remember the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

The big picture helps us keep balanced psychologically and spiritually. We decrease our stress level keeping us emotionally stable, and we are more inclined to accept others for who they are, not what they do. This panoramic frame of mind puts us in a better position to nurture the souls of others, especially our children. ☺

### What you may need to know about the appropriate discipline of your kids:



1. Let your kids know exactly what they did right or wrong.  
DISCIPLINE IS SPECIFIC.
2. Help your kids understand the relationship between what they do and what happens as a result of their actions.  
DISCIPLINE IS RESPONSIVE.
3. Give your kids clear examples of how to improve in the future.  
DISCIPLINE IS CONCRETE.
4. Help your kids be in control of their actions and expressions.  
DISCIPLINE IS POSITIVE.
5. Give your kids a chance to show what they have learned. You are an active part of their learning process.  
DISCIPLINE IS INTERACTIVE.
6. Become your kids' teacher and coach, as you give them information that helps them learn to solve their problems.  
DISCIPLINE IS INFORMATIVE.

Adapted from *Common Sense Parenting* by Ray Burke and Ron Herron. Boys Town Press

To purchase the book go to:  
<http://www.girlsandboystown.org/btpress>

**I POSSESS, THEREFORE I AM**  
The problem is not that we've tried faith and found it wanting, but that we have tried possessions and found them addictive, and as a result find following Christ inconvenient.

— Arthur Simon —

by Jeanette Downs Pettitt M.S.

## How to Lessen the Stress After Losing Your Job —ELEVEN PRACTICAL STEPS!



**Jim and Jeanette Pettitt**

AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK for the last several months, I have listened to people talk about the loss of their employment. Many who are Christians attempt to put a positive spin on what has happened by saying, *God will provide*. This, of course, is true. Yet, as you face the uncertainty of the future, anxiety can grow. *How will I pay my bills? What is going to happen to my family? How do I define myself when people ask, what I do?*

Here are a variety of practical steps, you can take to lighten the stress.

- \* You can seek God's guidance for your future. That's a given.
- \* You can contact at least ten to twenty people a day to network. Each person you meet has the potential of knowing 250 people you don't know. That expands your opportunities to hear about job openings not listed to the public.
- \* You can watch for opportunities to network in all situations.
- \* You can make a schedule for getting in touch with companies and developing a follow-up plan.
- \* You can pursue avenues in order to cultivate a variety of options so when one resource fails, you still have others available.
- \* You can look for a support group that focuses on helping people cope who have lost their jobs.
- \* If a group is not available in your area, you could attempt to rally others around who share your concern.
- \* You will need to get up each day, get dressed, and follow your plan. Your job is finding a job.
- \* You can listen to comments about deficiencies in your experience and try to find a way to address those that will make you more marketable. For instance, you might improve your computer skills or volunteer at an organization where you could expand your skills.
- \* You can take care of your emotional, physical, and spiritual well being by regular exercise (*a known stress reducer*), eating well, avoiding caffeine and sugar (*they aggravate the stress*) and focusing on the positive.
- \* You can trust God's promises. "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). Jeremiah 29:11 informs me that God has a plan for me, one to prosper me and not to harm me. Therefore, you can focus on "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:8). ☺

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Jeanette currently assists students and alumni with their career needs including assessment, planning, employment exploration, and information dissemination.

Jim Pettitt Ph.D, is Coordinator of Family Ministries for the Church of the Nazarene. He holds his doctoral degree from Kansas State University.

He and Jeanette travel across the country facilitating district and local Nazarene Marriage Enrichment retreats.

### How to Help Your Family Feel More Grateful SIX POINTERS

1. Take advantage of the natural opportunities for teachable moments such as bedtime or mealtime.
2. With young children, make a game of saying, *Thank you*.
3. Discipline yourself to quickly write thank you notes before procrastination sets in. Make sure your kids are involved in getting the message out.
4. Remind your child privately ahead of time to thank her host. Avoid prompting her in front of the host. Use code phrases like, *Did you have a good time?*
5. Look for opportunities as a family to serve others.
6. The best way to cultivate a spirit of thankfulness in your children is to be thankful yourself, even when you don't think your children are watching.

### SIX CONSEQUENCES IF YOU FAIL MORALLY

THERE ARE MANY MORE!

1. Your mate will experience betrayal, shame, and rejection, and no amount of repentance will ever take it fully away.
2. Your mate can never say again that you are the model of fidelity. Suspicion will always lurk in the back of his or her mind.
3. Your escapades may introduce something into your marriage you never expected—sexually transmitted disease.
4. The devastation on your children because of your sin will be immeasurable. Their growth, innocence, trust, and healthy outlook on life will be permanently damaged.
5. The heartache you cause your extended family will be indescribable.
6. You will decapitate your family's sense of history and connectedness.

Source: CHUCK SWINDOL and others.

**PEOPLE POST STOP SIGNS ALL THE TIME.** *Stop talking, stop advising, stop rambling, stop criticizing, stop gossiping, stop hogging the spotlight—just stop!* Are you uncertain whether you've talked too much? Watch for these signs: an un-engaged face, crossed arms, or yawns.

When we decide to stop talking, we have the opportunity to engage in the most important intimacy-building skill in the world: listening. One of the most often violated commands in Scripture is found in James 1:19, "Everyone should be quick to hear and slow to speak."

Daniel Coleman suggests that listening is the single most important relational skill a person can develop. "Asking astute questions, being open-minded and understanding, not interrupting, seeking suggestions" are all ways of communicating to other people that they matter.

—John Ortberg in *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them*, Zondervan Publishing. To order the book go to: <http://www.zondervan.com>

**Wealth counselor, MARGO GELLER, of Atlanta, Georgia, says there are four red flags of financial denial:**

1. You repeatedly make the same financial mistakes and you're not sure why. You continually pay late fees, miss payments, or are perpetually short on cash.

2. You behave in inappropriate ways such as buying another suit on your credit card, eating out when you promised yourself you would cook at home, or buy a special toy for your child for no reason.

3. You're financially stuck—unable to reduce your debt load, or if you do, you are soon back where you started.

4. You make rationalizations to explain the above: *Other people do this all the time. Right now, this is more important, or I don't care, I'll figure it out later.*

**To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.** —Theodore Roosevelt

**It doesn't have to be well with our circumstances to be well with our souls.** —Jennifer Rothchild

**You will never be all you ought to be, need to be, or can be, until you get under the authority of Jesus Christ. It is a matter of submission. And that's just the way it is.** —James Merritt

**HOW TO APPLY SCRIPTURE**

**The Application Window: 2 Timothy 3:16**

*Scripture is given to change our beliefs as well as our behavior. When you find answers to these four questions, in the Word, you'll have an application:*

1. **DOCTRINE:** *What should I believe?*
2. **REPROOF:** *How should I not behave?*
3. **CORRECTION:** *What should I not believe?*
4. **INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS:** *How should I behave?*



**Recapturing Civility**

The first manners your kids should learn are the *hellos* and *goodbyes*. Even very young children can be taught to look someone in the eye, put out their hand and say *hello*.

Some children don't understand why this behavior is important. Tell them people like to be recognized and a simple *hello* lets others know you are glad to see them. Goodbyes are handled the same way. It is another way of saying, *It's nice to see you*. Children should be able to initiate hellos and goodbyes by the end of kindergarten with no prompting.

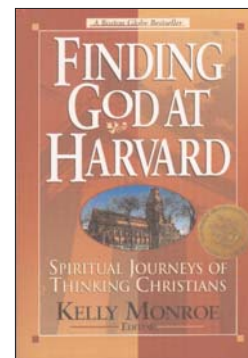
*Raising Respectful Kids in a Rude World*  
Prima Publishing

To order the book go to: <http://www.primalifestyles.com>

**SECULAR CULTURE WANTS TO HAVE ITS CAKE AND EAT IT TOO!**

The secular culture has not stopped talking about meaning, even moral meaning, in areas ranging from sexuality to careers to politics and scholarship. Think of the proper moral indignation voiced against rape, date rape, and sexual abuse. This illustrates the dilemma. Our younger generation has been given a double message. They have been taught that sex is unburdened with meaning. It is only a normal biological function. Just be sure to use a condom. But now those who have been taught this message of "freedom" are outraged when others use it "wrongly" as if human sexuality had no particular meaning. We are told that we are like rabbits, but when we behave like rabbits, we get attacked as morally despicable.

—Richard Keyes, From an essay titled *A Crisis of Meaning*, found in *Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual Journeys of Thinking Christians* by Kelly Monroe. Zondervan Publishing Company.



Purchase the book: <http://www.zondervan.com>

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