



WE'RE TEACHING THIS

Have you ever been around an older person who talks about what it was like to be young? They reminisce about the music they listened to, the lack of responsibility they had, the freedom they experienced. They almost always talk about being young as if it's awesome. And for the most part, they're right. Being young is awesome. You don't pay taxes. You don't have to understand insurance. And someone, someone other than you, buys you snacks. It's a pretty good set up. But just because being young is awesome doesn't mean it's easy. There are some tough parts to being a student. For starters, there's school. Maybe you've heard someone say those are the best years of your life, but it sure doesn't feel that way when you're sitting

in Geometry class. What's worse is when people ignore you or treat you like you don't matter because you're younger—like somehow the date on your birth certificate disqualifies you from having an opinion. In fact, maybe one of the toughest parts of being young is feeling like you don't count yet, like you can't be heard or respected or even helpful until you're older. And it's frustrating because, deep down it feels like that shouldn't be true, like there's something wrong with that system. If you've ever felt that way, you're in good company. As we take a look at two letters from the New Testament written to a young church leader named Timothy, we find not only why but how to keep anyone from looking down on us just because we are young.

THINK ABOUT THIS

By Reggie Joiner

Here's a simple question to start thinking about, "Who are the other adults in your kids' lives?" Personally, I think one of the biggest mistakes a parent can make is to try to parent alone.

You should reject any notion that you are the only adult influence your kids will ever need. Reality suggests that, as your children grow up, they will look for approval and affirmation from someone other than you as a parent. So, the choice is simple. Either you are strategic about who else you will invite into their life, or they will pursue relationships with other adults on their own. But it will happen. It's normal and natural for kids to desire a degree of attention from other adults or parents.

It is also important to realize that most research indicates that kids who have other significant adults investing in their life during their teenage years are better prepared emotionally and spiritually.

So, what will you do? You can resist, cooperate, or compliment your children's transition toward adulthood. Think about it, if your goal is to raise an adult who is independent of you, then you should start now. If you don't like the idea of your children becoming independent from you then you may be parenting with a wrong motive.

But if you hope to unleash your kids to discover their potential, then open doors for your kids to connect to other adults. Why don't you start by making a list of potential adults that could build a short-term or long-term relationship with your children.

Parenting with this in mind can make the difference in whether or not you limit the growth of your children, personally, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. Here are some categories to help you start thinking.

ADULTS WHO SHARE INTERESTS

Find someone who specializes in something your kids are already interested in doing. (Look for a friend who shares their interest in art, guitar, carpentry, birds, baseball, etc.) *Don't limit their experiences to what you enjoy.*

ADULTS WITH SPECIFIC SKILLS

Find someone who can help them develop a critical skill for adulthood. Look for a friend who is good at managing money, health and fitness, cooking, etc. *Don't limit their skill to what you are good at doing.*

ADULTS WHO ARE EDUCATORS

You would be surprised at how many of your friends were teachers or are presently teachers. Who can you invite into your kids' lives to help them in their education? Look for friends who can inspire and temporarily tutor them in math, science, history, etc. *Don't limit their learning to what you know.*

ADULTS WHO BUILD FAITH

Find mentors or coaches who can help them grow spiritually. This is where a good church is important. Look for a church that strives to put consistent leaders in the lives of your kids. Attending church consistently allows your children to bond with other adults who will help shape their faith. *Don't limit their faith to what you have discovered about God.*

ADULTS WITH INTERESTING CAREERS

Other adults can broaden their imagination about the kind of career they can have one day. Look for any opportunity that can expose them to understanding what people who may be wired like them do as a profession. *Don't limit their concept of work to what you do.*

ADULTS FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS

Spending time with other adults who are from a different ethnic background can also play a critical role in how your kids treat and respect others. A significant part of their adult life will be interacting and working with people who are different than they are. *Don't limit their view of the world to what you see.*

ADULTS WHO ARE EXTENDED FAMILY

Something interesting happens to a child's understanding of their family story when they hear your parents or siblings talk about you. It has a way of connecting them to a bigger family dynamic. It is always valuable to recruit key adults in your extended family to build relationships with your kids. They can usually be trusted to definitely have your children's best interests at stake. Who are the adults in your extended family that can give your kids a sense of who they are and where they came from? *Don't limit the connection to their family's story to what you tell them.*

Some of these leaders can be enlisted to help your kids with a specific task or on a short-term basis. Others can and will have long-term influence. Just remember the greatest thing that you do for you child may be what you get another adult to do.

From *TheParentCue.org* by Reggie Joiner.

For more from Reggie Joiner and to connect to a wider community of parents, check out *TheParentCue.org*

TRY THIS

Every kid needs someone they can trust and someone their parents can trust to speak into their lives.

This week... **try brainstorming a list of five people you trust to mentor or advise your kids.**

Then, ask your son or daughter to look at the list and choose someone that he or she would be comfortable talking to.

The goal is for the two of you to decide together on someone that you both trust, someone who can advise your student when he or she doesn't feel comfortable talking to you.

Once you've decided, give that person a phone call or an email and ask if they would mind being involved in your kid's life this way. Chances are, he or she will feel honored that you asked.