

10 Do's and Don'ts on Parenting

By Dr. Gregory Ramey

Some people live their lives looking at the rear-view mirror, regretting the past rather than enjoying the present or anticipating the future.



Here are the most frequently mentioned regrets I've heard from parents in my office.

1. Spent too little time with the kids. Overwhelmed with meeting the expectations of so many people, some parents never just enjoy their children. Relax and appreciate today.
2. Spent too much time with the kids. At the other extreme, overprotective parents who are consumed with their children's lives realise they have neglected themselves, their spouse and other important relationships. Kids are important, but don't let them control your life.
3. Treated all of the children equally. Parents of multiple children often realise too late that it makes more sense to treat each youngster according to their needs, not what was done with other siblings. Don't try to justify your actions with your other children. You know what's best for them, and that is all you need to say.
4. Focused on silly things. What's really important to you? Being a great parent is all about doing those things that foster a superb relationship with your child. It's about trust, communication and respect. When you focus on what matters, it's suddenly easier to avoid overreacting to the minor irritations that are an inevitable part of being a parent.
5. Concerned with planning for tomorrow. Some parents become overly absorbed with only doing things today that will help their children tomorrow. Participation in any sport or hobby is carefully planned out to help their child advance to another goal, rather than enjoyed for its own sake.
6. Too busy. The way you spend your time reflects what matters to you. It's hard for me to understand those parents who complain constantly about being too busy, yet do nothing to take

control of their lives. The result is frenetic and often mindless activities, rather than involvement in things that foster mindful reflection and meaningful relationships.

7. Ignored my spouse. Your spouse needs your time, attention, and love. Your partner should be your highest priority. Good parents generally have great relationships with their partners.

8. Too anxious. Stop being so concerned about being the perfect parent. Do your best, seek help if needed, and then stop worrying. Enjoy your child's giggles, stories, and unique perspectives on life.

9. Made things too complicated. Raising children is about loving abundantly, setting clear rules, implementing consequences consistently and fostering honest communication. It's just not that complicated. Keep it simple.

10. Ignored myself. You can't be a good parent, partner, or person if you don't take good care of yourself.

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