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In Loving Hands, Children Blossom

Sometimes parenting can be so exasperating. Everyone seems to have an extremely hectic life and stress is always the word. How can a parent step out of that mold and become an influential part of a child's life?

Life is too short and precious to waste valuable time by being full of regrets or anger from the past. It's just not productive to grieve about the past. Accept the past and move on.

Parents must remember, though, that relationships are a two-way street and parents should NOT take full responsibility for parent-child relationships. Relationships involve more than one person. Each child, even a two-year-old, is an individual person, with a unique temperament and personality.

Dr. Kathy Bosch, UNL Extension Specialist, encourages parents to ask the question, "When my children are grown-what will they say about my parenting?" What do you want your children to say about you?

Character Counts seems to be the most loving way to bring up your children. The six pillars of character definitely bring out the best in everyone.

Trustworthiness is the first pillar of character. Be honest with your children, don't deceive or cheat or steal. Have the courage to do the right thing. If at any time you choose not to be trustworthy you have given your child permission to follow your footsteps.

Show respect, is the second pillar. Follow the Golden Rule, be tolerant and deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements. Children can see through our façade, our body language and facial expressions show what we really feel.

Do what you're supposed to do. Responsibility is the third pillar. Be self-disciplined and be accountable for your choices. My mother always

said that when you're pointing that one finger at someone to blame, three others are pointing back at you.

Fairness, the fourth pillar is always important, don't take advantage of others. As adults we should have learned that the world does not always treat us fairly. The important thing is how we react to that unfairness. Remember our children are watching us at all times.

Be kind and compassionate not only to your children but to everyone around you. Unfortunately, in our hurried world many have forgotten this fifth pillar of character. Show gratitude and forgive others. It is exhausting to hold a grudge for so long. Life is too short to be angry for too long.

The sixth pillar is citizenship. Respect authority and follow the rules. The rules were made for everyone to follow so the examples parents set definitely makes an impression on their children. Parents and grandparents are the most influential people in their children's lives.

Being a parent is difficult. No one expects you to know how to do it all. Challenges always add tension to the family. If this stress is affecting the way you treat your children, ask for extra support, seek respite care, seek counseling or call the 24 hour hotline (1-800-4-A-Child). Accept help, don't be afraid to ask for help if you feel that you need it.