

**Be the Parent Your Children *Want* to Follow:
Applying the ideas of leadership practice to the most
important places where any of us lead.**

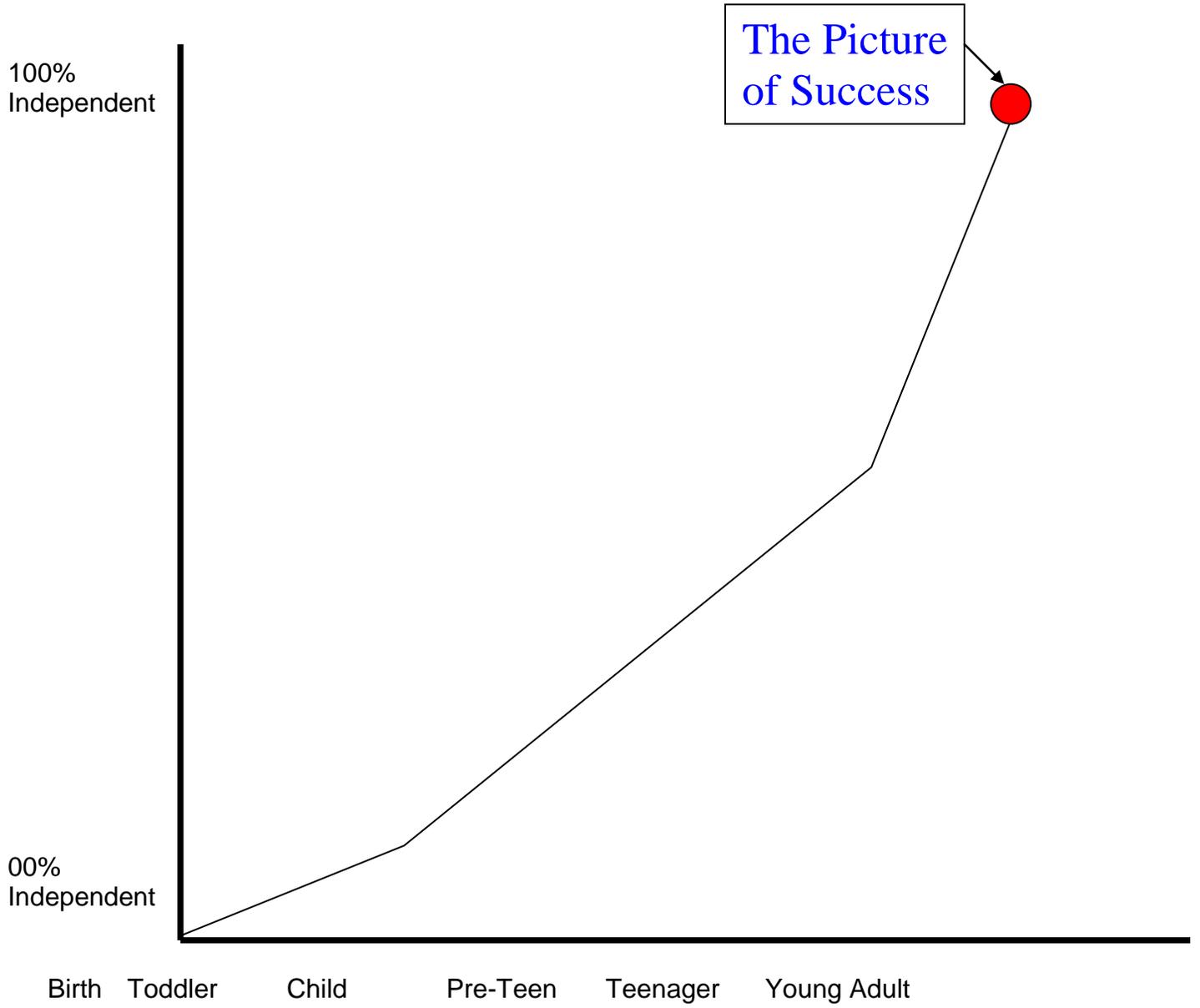
CD Written and Read Dan Mulhern

Ideas and Exercises
To use with the CD

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Working Yourself Out of a Job

(track 2)



Pictures of Success

All parents strive for the independence of their children.

Yet each of us wants something more. We don't often articulate just what it is, but here's a chance.

Imagine your child or children at 25 years old. Imagine that you feel like you have done a **great** job with them. They have grown and changed, learned and stumbled, and now stand on their own.

So what now would you see as their core characteristics? What would they have picked up from your family, your wisdom and your engagement? What aspects about them would make you say, "Thank God they have turned out so wonderfully?"

I invite you to write in free verse here, imaginatively what you would see. Write it **as though you are in that present moment, and finish this thought as vividly as you can:**

My child is now 25 years old, and I see . . .

Clarifying Values and Developing a Picture of Success

(Tracks 2-5)

PERSONAL CORE VALUES:

Core values are those that are with you all the time. They define the “way” you **choose** to live and lead. They are who you **want** to be, the way you want to govern your life, and the guides to making tough decisions and planning.

Step 1: From the list of core values, circle the 10 most important values.

Step 2: From the 10 you circled, identify and write below your three paramount values.

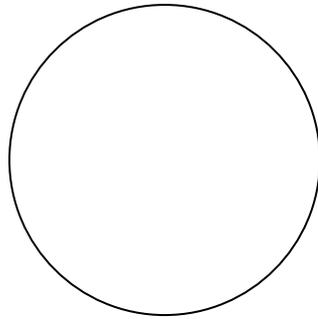
CORE VALUES

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Achievement | <input type="checkbox"/> Helping society |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accountability | <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change and variety | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyalty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competition | <input type="checkbox"/> Privacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Public service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethical practice | <input type="checkbox"/> Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellence | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-respect |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirituality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Stability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Truth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendships | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Growth | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping other people | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Step 2: I would hope that when my children hear me speak and when they watch me act, they would see that the following 3 values are most central to me, and most important for leading a good life:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 3: "Slice" the pie to indicate the relative weight of your top 3 values.



Step 4: How can you communicate those values:

Value	Phrases	Stories
1.		
2.		
3.		

Engaging Your Children in the Vision

Sharing vision. You might want to involve your family in a discussion of what you'd like your family to be like, by throwing out some of the following questions:

- Who seems like the coolest family around? What do you like about the way they are?
- What do you **wish** you could answer if your friends asked you, "What is your family like?"
- If you were in the grocery store and you heard someone talking about our family, what would you **wish** that you would hear them say?
- Who is your favorite TV family, and what do you like about them as a family? Who are the best TV or Movie parents, and why do you think they're good?
- How would you describe our family when we're really at our best?
- If you were a parent with a child or children and you felt like things were going totally great in your family, how would you describe what it was like to be in that family?

Modeling the Way

“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.” -- James Baldwin

A Simple Audit – Doing what we want them to become

Take your core values from page 2 above and list them on the left side of the page below. Next to each value answer either or both of these questions:

If a very hard critic (like a skeptical teenage child) watched the way I lead in my home, what *behaviors* of mine might they say contradict my core values? If you're courageous and have a teenage child available, ***ask them to answer this question!***

If I pushed myself as hard about this value, and if I hoped for as much from myself, as I push and hope for from my child, what new or different things would I do, or what would I stop doing altogether?

My Core Values

What should I do, do more, or stop doing?

1.

2.

3.

Build Them Up

The people at the Gallup organization have articulated twelve questions that indicate whether you work for a great manager. Some of these questions are wonderful to ask of ourselves as parents. Here's their fourth question: "In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?"*

The first step in being a great encourager is to **train your eye to look for them doing good**. If you want to see them doing good, you can help yourself immensely by writing down:

- strengths they have
- good things they have done lately
- good things you want to watch for them doing

In looking for places to recognize and encourage them you might ask: What are their great social behaviors? What do they do well on a team? How do they do some of the things you taught them when they were younger – without your even asking? When are they especially polite? Where are they improving? What do you see them doing – working out, eating well, studying, supporting friends, etc., - that seems important to them and intentional? When do they act with generosity or love, patience or courage, faith or intelligence?

Write your child(ren)'s name(s) and let your mind roam free with some of the great things they do and are. By the way, you can cut and paste your list into a birthday card or just a simple letter of praise and appreciation. It may be the best birthday gift they'll ever get.

* The Gallup Q12 is explained in detail in a marvelous book called *First, Break All the Rules*, by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman.

Time Time Time

How much time have you spent this past week with your child(ren)?

What would be a healthy goal of time spent with your child(ren) each week?

Where are the places or ways that you really enjoy wasting time with your child(ren)?

How could you give a WHOLE DAY to your child(ren)? Where might you go? What might you do?

If you have the means, where could you go for a day or two or more with an individual child of yours?
(Jack and I went to the Grand Canyon for 2 days. Wow! It built a foundation, complete with photos and stories, that will last us years.)

Adolescents, Armor and Energy

Perhaps you strap on your armor in the morning to deal with financial issues at home, to deal with your aging parent, to manage a difficult employees, or to face your own aging.

Take a minute to write down the kinds of challenges your child(ren) face(s) in the morning. You **know** what weighs on your mind. Do you have a sense of what challenges weigh on them?

How might you send them off in the morning with a little more confidence and energy?

Your Job is to Empower

Parenting takes us on quite a ride, from the beginning when we must control **everything** to the child hits their twenties when we hope to **they** will control all their decisions.

Where on this spectrum **should** you be with your child(ren)? Put their name and an S for should. Where are you in the mix of control vs. empowering support



Overall, is your attitude towards the level of freedom, responsibility, and empowerment you offer your child consistent with their age? Or do you spend more time and energy controlling them than you should be?

What are the issues that you **feel** you still need to be controlling?

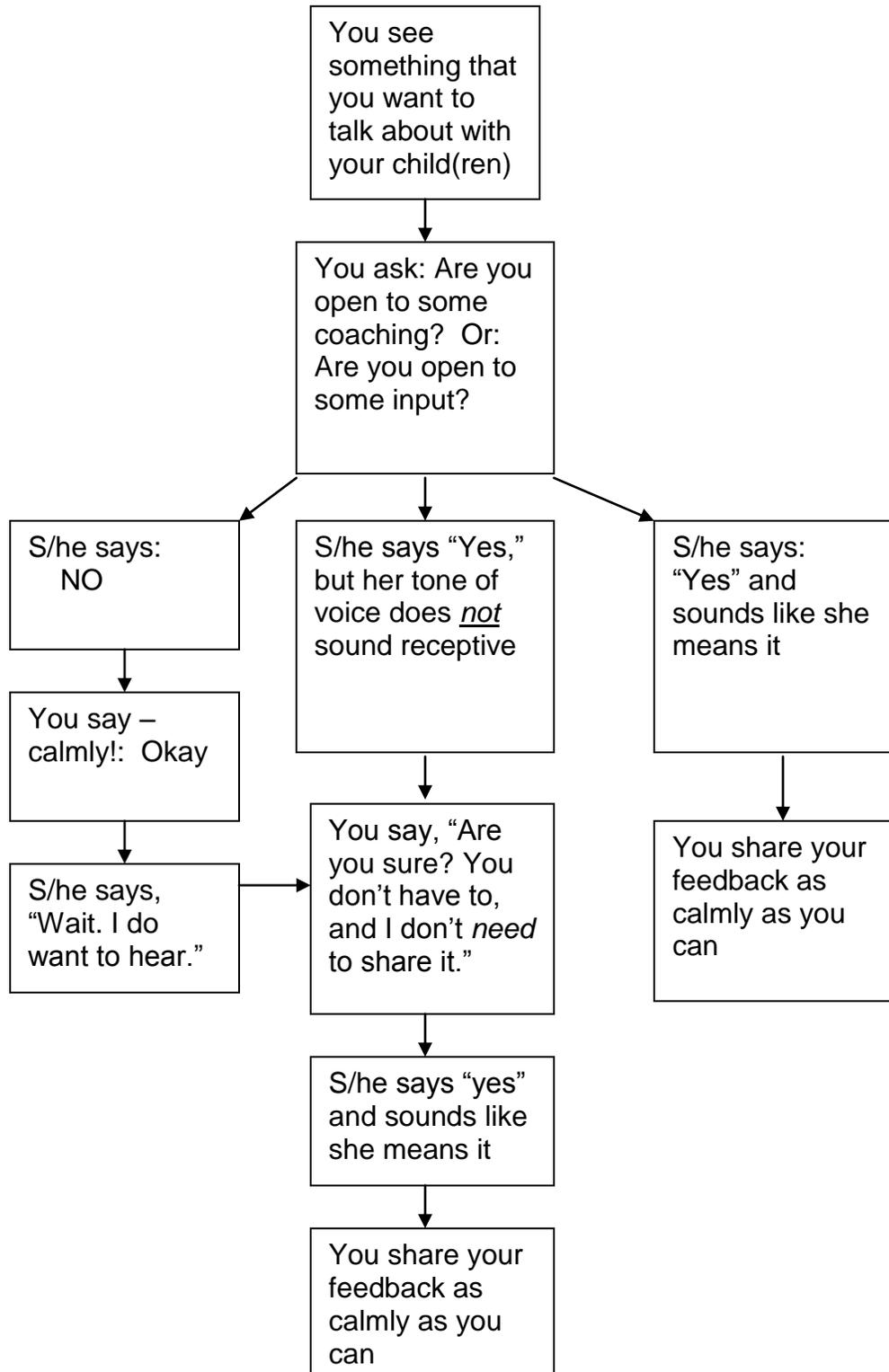
Do you have as much control as you think in these areas? Why (not)?

How might you shift from “protecting and controlling” to assisting, guiding and supporting?

Are You Open to Some Coaching?

We all want to have an impact on our children - to share our learning and protect them from mistakes. As they get older, the best way to do that is through **offering** coaching. This means they get to say whether they want it.

Here's a visual map of how it works:



For more on leadership and parenting, go to www.danmulhern.com

You can sign up for “Reading for Leading,” a Monday morning less-than-a-page email to help you lead.

Look for upcoming CDs and Podcasts, including one on having success with the really tough conversations with teenagers.