

# 22 Stupid Things Parents Do To Mess Up Their Children's Lives

Barrington H. Brennen, June 1, 2010

Parents, before you wonder what stupid things you are doing to mess up your children's lives, I present to you seven most important behavior principles you should want your children to learn before they leave the home as independent adults. Here they are:

1. How to do things for themselves: INDEPENDENCE
2. How to do what they say they'll do: DEPENDABILITY
3. How to have confidence in themselves: SELF-ESTEEM
4. How to get along with others: COOPERATION
5. How to solve problems without yelling and hitting: PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS
6. How to do well in school: ACADEMIC SKILLS
7. How to live Godly and righteously in this world: SPIRITUALITY

Understanding these behavior principles is important. In addition, knowing and understanding the three most important goals in parenting is crucial. These goals are: 1) Teach your children to think independently. 2) Teach them to be critical thinkers. 3) Provide the environment for them to create original thought.

The goals of active parenting are not to drive away stubbornness, break the will, "teach them a lesson or two," nor to restrict behavior. In a nutshell, active parenting provides the freedom to choose, think, and act on your own.

## 22 Stupid Things Parents Do To Mess Up Their Children's Lives.

Here is my list of stupid things parents do to mess of their children's lives. Note that most, if not all parents, have done some "stupid thing" while raising their children. Effecting parenting is being wise and alert, not forceful and acting like military leaders in the home. I am deliberately omitting comments after each one to allow you to think and explore on your own.

1. Failure to start preparing your child for adulthood twenty years before they are born
2. Not providing a peaceful environment before the children come out of the womb.
3. Not setting boundaries from birth. (Time to eat, sleep, etc)
4. Not letting your children see you reading the newspaper and the Bible.
5. Saying: "I can't wait for you to bring home some grandchildren."
6. Going to sleep before your children go to bed.
7. Not creating a schedule of chores for everyone in the house.
8. Not respecting your children's right to be stupid at times.
9. Forgetting that you were once a teenager.
10. Not spending enough time having fun with your children.
11. Not letting your children see you kiss.
12. Not letting your children see you settle simple differences effectively.
13. Letting Grammy rule your house.
14. Telling someone in the presence of your unruly teenager: "He is sixteen, I cannot tell him what to do."

15. Telling your children: "When you get eighteen you will be free to do what you want to do?"
16. Going to church and leaving your children at home.
17. Not making sure your children understand clearly the reason they are being punished.
18. Asking your children: "Do you have homework tonight?"
19. Intentionally embarrassing or shaming your children in public.
20. Always controlling, choosing, or making decisions for your children.
21. Failure to acknowledge the uniqueness and creativity of each child.
22. Requiring your children to be obedient and you have not demonstrated obedience in your own life.

### **WHAT METHODS SHOULD PARENTS USE?**

#### **Here are some things parents can do to avoid "doing stupid things"**

Make your demands simple and clear.

Speak once.

Follow up with consequences.

Speak firmly but softly. (Do not scream and shout.)

Be willing to apologize.

Establish rituals.

Let the children participate in setting the rules.

Spend quantity and quality time with your children.

Allow them to act crazy at times. It's okay.

Select your battles wisely with your teenagers. Remember you were once crazy. You were once a child.

Reinforce frequently positive behavior. Always praise the behavior you want your children to display. (Absolutely, never shame your children.)

Use negative reinforcement sparingly, including physical punishment

Nurture and teach moral and spiritual values as part of the disciplinary process.

**Barrington H. Brennen is a marriage and family therapist. Send your comments or questions to P.O. Box CB-13019, Nassau, The Bahamas; or visit [www.soencouragement.org](http://www.soencouragement.org) or call 1242 323 8772. Or you may email [question@soencouragement.org](mailto:question@soencouragement.org)**