

Opening Up the Power Within Young People
Position Paper By Dave Farbrook
An idea documented by a parent for his step-son.
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There are many days and many times for opportunity to open up questions my son had about growing up. One of my famous lines that is "when you get to be my age and your son does..." Or "when you're a parent and your son does just the same thing that you're doing to me today you will..." This seems to work very well in navigating very sticky conversations where one or the other being me as the other would use this as an opportunity to fight. In this framework it's dealt with as a situation which has yet to be navigated by my son and therefore opens to a future of speculation and thoughts.

Of course this is done in the spirit of self-learning and understanding and insight that is actually more mature than what his young age would normally allow. My son for Father's Day gave me an interesting card in that his written thoughts were both mature and yet very reflective in a surprising way. Especially so since he has only known me for about three to half years as of this writing.

He writes "Dave you truly are the \$10 king. Ha. But in seriousness happy Father's Day. My third but most important father figure yet. Our clashing personalities and mindsets teach me things that I would literally never imagine. Love, your son" Opening up personal power in a growing young individual really challenges self-identity.

One of the hardest things that as a parent that I really die inside when it happens and is difficult for me to try to correct or just to improve is the issue of lying. Even omission makes it so hard for me to reach this smart young man. It probably is the single most damaging to personal identity that individual can make.

Aside from the fact that lies and omissions are revealed sooner or later. The issue form is how one maintains a trust with an individual whom you parent and know is being

deceptive yet you have to depend on trusting him in order to maintain a family. How does one do that?

I learned that for me the challenge is waiting (or playing the waiting game) with my son. The waiting game implies that you have the patience to wait for the lie to come out and the truth be told. The truth is like sifting for gold in the ashes of an event that inevitably has to occur for the lie to be revealed.

For me I only hope that my son being this young will learn the lesson sooner rather than later when law enforcement may get involved. It's not really my only hope to be honest my main hope is that my son finds his personal identity in honesty and not in deception. Personal identity with the underpinnings that holds honesty as the highest level of behavior and interaction with others is the most important key to an authentic life.

I may not always agree with what my son is involved with, the friends he is involved with, or even the decisions that he makes about that. But I always try to remind myself he has a lot to learn in a short period of time. Is very simple to be Mr. Authority and just beat the life out of him and if I am honest with myself, there are sometimes where I really want to.

But I have to remind myself that if I fall into doing that I am only failing and delaying the inevitability of the fact he has to be in charge with his own life. And the real challenge for me to remind myself that I am in many ways, a life coach.

To be a life coach.

What does that mean? How does one do that? What does that even look like? And my role as his step-parent is just as my role as a parent to my daughter was different. I

realized each child has different needs and learns differently, it's like a certain gravity that challenges each and every teen in each and every way. How does one understand?

What is the signal that too much has happened in seeing a decision my children have made that has gone the wrong way. When does one have to step in and say enough is enough yet still keep learning authentic?

For me I found help when I try to bring in as many "parents" or parent figures, as I need for the given situation. And I look for other people in my son's life to help me when I don't have the answer. I also listen to my gut and form a decision after careful consideration of all that I have learned.

To create a network like this takes time and it also takes a lot of consideration on deciding who is best at enhancing my children's learning ability or capacity and their individuality. When I have a group around me like this I feel a lot less foolish as a parent when things happen and when I worry about having the capacity in making the best decision.

It is so easy to worry and not get a thing accomplished. When I have a network like this it's how I imagine it was like in the old days when there was an extended family to rely on. With this network I have a group of support around my son that makes things look a lot less overwhelming and somehow manageable.

I always try to look at the future with a sense that I feel like I'm helping to build a future not only for my son but for all the individuals he will touch and he will yet to touch in the future. His future wife, his employment relationships, all the family members he will be a part of. I always try to remind myself I'm building an intelligence that will explore and continue to learn. And I hope that the direction that he takes will be good and trustworthy. And that's what I know today.