

CREATING LITTLE LEADERS

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Is it true that some are born to lead while others are destined to follow? Can we instill leadership skills into all of our children? These are interesting questions to ponder. The first statement is true. Some people are born with the personality traits and gifts that give them the aptitude to lead without trying. It would be a sad and crazy world indeed if we had all leaders and no followers. In fact, you can't be a leader if nobody is following.

There are those who like to manage or influence other people and those who would rather follow instructions and just do the work. No matter which category a person falls into, it is imperative that we learn the kind of leadership skills that will protect us from blindly following a negative path. The kind of skills I am referring to are such things as; knowing right from wrong, learning how to make wise choices, accepting responsibility for our own actions, respecting authority, forgiving others, motivating others, putting others' needs before our own and trusting them, to name a few.

How and when should we teach our children these leadership qualities? Firstly, we need to realize that leadership is a training process. It is not merely a trait that you have or don't have that needs some honing up during the teenage years. From infancy children begin to learn right from wrong as parents explain and train their children how to meet their expectations. God has placed in everyone a sense of knowing right from wrong. Isn't it amazing that we never have to teach children to be bad, but we do have to teach them how to be good! Consistency in training along with praise for getting it right and good modeling develops this quality.

Setting boundaries and issuing consequences guides a child to learn obedience and to respect authority. By crossing the set boundaries, they are making the choice to take the consequences. The parent is merely carrying out the penalty the child knew would occur, thus teaching them to take responsibility for their own actions.

Making wise choices is learned through positive role modeling by parents, open communication between child and parent and support when negative choices are made - thus alleviating a similar result next time. Not every decision needs pondered thought. It depends on how it will affect them or others. Parents need to explain the kind of steps that will help produce a positive outcome. How important is this choice to me? Is my decision going to affect anyone else? Is this decision going to alter the course of my career or long term goals?

Too many times we make choices by not doing anything or by being sucked into a negative activity without thinking. Making wise choices is all about thinking of the consequences before we act. Effective leaders are not trapped into holding grudges. By forgiving others, we become free to focus clearly on what is ahead. By working as part of a team we learn to trust others. There is no need to clamber for the glory.

We need to instill leadership qualities into the followers as well as the natural leaders from an early age so that our children make a positive imprint on the world around them. The world needs leaders who can inspire others and lead them on to greatness.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.

