

# LEARN TO LIVE

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Our Pastor read this quote from Dorothy Law Nolte yesterday at church and it was so insightful I thought I would share it with you.

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.  
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.  
If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.  
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.  
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.  
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.  
If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.  
If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.  
If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.  
If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.  
If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.  
If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.  
If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.  
If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.  
If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.  
If children live with fairness, they learn justice.  
If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.  
If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.  
If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

There is so much truth in the words above that a cursory glance would be doing them a great injustice. This is a working tool and an excellent framework to teach and model from. How we act as parents is more than likely how our children will behave. If you don't want to replicate yourself as you are now, then perhaps this list will help you make the necessary changes in your home environment from negative to positive.

It would be a really good idea to print this list off, enlarge it and place it in clear view for the family to learn from. You can discuss it as a family, choosing just a few at a time or one a week, then after a few months go back and practice the ones that have not been mastered yet. Not only do you decide *what* you want to change and *why*, but also *how* you will change it. If you or other family members are critical, explain what that means. Being negatively critical means that you always see the bad side or poke holes in what someone else does. That makes those criticized feel worthless and not want to try anymore. To make them feel good about themselves or about what they are doing, you need to use

positive words to encourage them instead – words such as, “I like that!” “You worked hard and finished it!” “Well done!”

As well as choosing a negative statement from the quote by Ms. Nolte choose a positive one as well e.g. kindness. You could say to the family, “Let’s practice being kind. Kindness means doing thoughtful things for another person. If we don’t show others that we are thinking of their needs they feel left out. We can be kind by offering to help one another or by saying kind words. This makes us feel loved and cared for.”

The positive traits on Dorothy Law Nolte’s list are valuable and we do well as parents to teach our children by word and by demonstration how to make a positive difference in the world around us.

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