

Being a Mother

Mother's Day is just around the corner. This is a time of family gatherings to celebrate mothers. Family traditions of cookouts, picnics and dining out are fairly common. It goes without saying; mothers play a very important role in our lives. Many articles and books have been written about this. There is a tremendous amount of research about being a mother. It has been dissected from every angle and from numerous counseling theories. Attachment theory says that Infants form attachments to any consistent caregiver who is sensitive and responsive in social interactions with them. The quality of the social engagement is more influential than the amount of time spent. I'm not going into more detail about this in this article. You can find out more about attachment theory by going to [Attachment](#). I am writing to give mother's practical insights to improve their relationship with their children. I will be blogging during the month of May with specific "how to's" on being a mother. Follow my blogs at Ken Thom [BlogSpot](#).

One of the most important, if not the most important concept to keep in mind is that parenting is all about influence. Read my article ["The Power of Relationships"](#). It is easy to cross that thin boundary into control. Remember, control is a function of fear. Influence is a function of love. Each and every interaction with your child influences what they will do in the future: their relationships, their career decisions, and their spiritual focus. Ask yourself this question, "What am I doing right now to improve my relationship with my child?" Another question to ask your self is - "What am I doing to connect with my child in a mindful manner?" Read my article ["The Power of Presence – Being Mind"](#) for tips on being mindful. Both of those are simple questions or concepts. That doesn't necessarily mean that the answer or response will be easy. There are many challenges in simple concepts. After all, did you really know what you were signing up for when you decided to be a parent? I don't think any of us had a clue. I know from my personal experience that teaching and writing about these concepts is much easier than implementing them.

Find out who your child really is. Find out what they are all about. We carry with us way too many stereo types of girls and boys, and of females and males. Many of the role models we experience in society are inaccurate. Some stereotypes may come from your own family background and traditions. It is unfair to place these roles or stereotypes on your children. If you don't value and honor your child for whom he or she is, then they will not be able to value and honor themselves. This may be a challenge because of your own past experiences in relationships. You may see someone else in your child because of something in your past. Work through this because that miss-perception about your son or daughter will not allow you to connect in love. That irrational or erroneous belief about your son or daughter will take you out of relationship with your child.

It is important for mothers to help their children have a voice. Many girls grow up with a blueprint of always having to please. This interferes with them setting healthy boundaries. This can be achieved by allowing your daughter to be frustrated or angry. Be in that space with them. Let them know that those feelings are OK. Let them know that you can handle their feelings. There is a tendency

to shut our children down if they express their feelings and it feels disrespectful. You may shut them down if their feelings are too intense for you to handle. The appropriateness of express can be taught at a later time. The important thing is that they are expressing their feelings. When you validate their feelings, you are validating who they are. That is another piece of them that then become OK. Not validating their feelings tells them that their feelings are not OK. Therefore they are not OK. Boys may find their voice only through anger. Many times anger is the only feelings boys are allowed to have. Our society tells men that it's not OK to cry or be vulnerable. When their anger is shut down, boys feel disrespected. Then the message is that anger is not OK. This means that they are not OK. The anger is suppressed. Suppressed anger builds into rage. Rage can then become out of control. It may go the other direction and contribute to depression. After validating your son's anger, you can then start to reach the hurt and fear that is under the anger. Mothers need to evaluate their own blueprints around anger. Mothers need to understand their own reactions to anger in order to connect with their children when their children are angry. Otherwise the child feels rejected.

Mother's are the role model for their children of interaction with the opposite sex. Children learn through modeling. Your behavior teaches your son and your daughter what is acceptable or not acceptable in relationships. Open communication and expression of feelings with your spouse let's your children know it is OK to feel. Setting healthy boundaries in your relationships will automatically help your child set healthy boundaries in their lives. Boys will learn what it is to respect females. Your son will be more likely to turn to you for matters of the heart when he sees you being able to listen to his dad's feelings. Girls will learn to expect respect from males. Girls will learn that they have a right to expect men to listen to them. This promotes positive self esteem with both boys and girls. Simply put, they become comfortable with being either male or female. Both masculinity and femininity are validated when they are demonstrated through healthy, regulated behaviors. This keeps us away from the "battle of the sexes".

Let's not forget the oxytocin factor. Mother's are usually better equipped neurologically to express and process feelings. Mothers tend to be better at helping a child develop a strong oxytocin response. All children need this. Boys and girls both need this to balance their testosterone levels that begin to rise in puberty. If mothers don't help their daughters with this, the daughters will seek out that regulation from males. Boys need regulation from their mothers to help reduce and manage their aggressive tendencies; otherwise connection with other aggressive males will escalate their aggressive tendencies. Oxytocin helps maintain emotional regulation. Emotional regulation allows us to connect in relationship with others. Emotional regulation keeps us out of a state of fear. Fear causes irrational and distorted thinking and short term memory loss. Equipping your child to have a strong oxytocin response as well as learning how to stimulate their own oxytocin is an invaluable gift to give to your child. It is most definitely the gift that keeps on giving.

Finally, be a Godly role model. Treat your child with mercy and grace in all situations. Just like your Heavenly Father treats you. Demonstrate forgiveness. Train up your child in the ways of the Lord, [Proverbs 22:6](#). Pray with them, not just for them. Actively engage them in praise and worship for God. Make God the center of your relationship with them. Make God the center of all family relationships. Read my article "[Godly Families](#)".

This is only the tip of the ice berg on “Being a Mother”. These concepts will get you pointed in the right direction. During the month of May, [my bi-weekly blogs](#) will provide specific hints to help you with being a mother. If you find these suggestions difficult you may want to consider some professional services or support. Check out [my website](#) for products and services that will help you along your journey. Remember to parent in love because love never fails.

In Christ,

Ken Thom, LPT