

Parenting: learning and growing

Being a constructive, positive and ethical role model are high priorities in Wendy Havemann's parenting strategies. What strategies do you use in your relationships? Hear more from our youth involvement director.

Parenting is tough. With serious knowledge and understanding of character education, I have been a better parent. Character education enhances every aspect of my life. The key piece I see where it fits is in the type of behavior I am modeling and if my behavior matches my expectations for my family.

Being a constructive, positive and ethical role model is a very high priority in my parenting strategy. As a good role model I do my best to demonstrate the same behavior I am asking of my children. I have also found it important to be transparent in my humanness – I make mistakes, I apologize, and I try to do better next time. To me, the only time a mistake is worthless is if nothing is learned from it. Life is a time of ongoing learning and growing and the growth does not stop until our hearts stop.

One technique that is helpful is to discuss around the dinner table positive things that happened throughout the day. If there were painful experiences, I use this as a time to re-frame those experiences and talk about how events can be looked on through a positive, character-based lens. Negative experiences need to be validated, but they do not need to stay negatively framed forever. If each person states something in the form of 'I am grateful for...' during dinner the energy in the family will rise and life may begin to look a bit better.

Parenting is the most rewarding and most challenging job in my life. Even though my children are adults, parenting never

truly ends and I am grateful!