Parenting is the easiest thing in the world to have an opinion about, but the hardest thing in the world to do.

Matt Walsh

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Raising an adult, not a child

- Childhood looks very different today than it did when we were children
- Helicopter parent, snowplow parent, lawnmower parent—whatever you call it, it can have the opposite effect of parental responsibility to raise a child to be independent
- Parent vs. friend
- For best of reasons—love of our children
Raising an adult, not a child

- Problem solving—don’t solve problems for them
- Responsible for their own lives and actions
- Preparing them for life’s challenges
- Preparing children FOR life vs. protecting them FROM life
- Self-efficacy
- Of whom is the college bumper sticker a reflection of?
- Stress! For children and parents
- How will our children be successful without us?
• We are responsible to keep our children safe,
  • But cannot keep our children from ever getting hurt
• Cell phones are a convenient means of communication
  • But can serve as “the world’s longest umbilical cord”

• We want our children to have opportunities for the challenges of sports
  • But without getting their feelings hurt
• “We perceive that our nation is a more dangerous place, yet the data show that the rates of child abduction are not higher, . . .”
• The number of missing persons of all ages went down 31% between 1997 and 2011.
• The internet and speed of reporting—the 24/7/365 news cycle--TMI
What does it mean to be an adult?

- Resilience to handle difficult social challenges
- Accepting responsibility for the consequences of your actions
- Being financially independent
- Having a relationship with parents as an equal adult
- Deciding on beliefs/values independently of parents/other influences
At what age?

https://goo.gl/forms/B1egsZks84YzbXE73

- Do their own laundry
- Make their own appointments
- Make their own breakfast
- Pack their own lunch
- Do their own homework
- Getting to school on their own
- Cutting their own meat
- Help with household chores
- Cook their own meals
- Getting up in the morning
At What Age?

• By age three: help put toys away, dress him/herself (with some help), put clothes in hamper, clear plate after meals, assist in setting table, brush teeth and wash face (with help)

• By age five: know full name, address, and phone number; know how to make emergency call, perform simple cleaning tasks, feed pets, identify monetary denominations and understand basic concept of money, brush teeth, comb hair, wash face (without help), help with basic laundry chores, choose clothes to wear
At What Age?

- By age 7: start to help with cooking meals, help put groceries away, wash the dishes, use basic household cleaners safely, straighten up bathroom after using it, make bed, bathe unsupervised
- By age 9: fold own clothes, learn simple sewing, care for outdoor toys, care for personal hygiene without being told, use broom and dustpan, read a recipe and prepare simple meal, help create grocery list, count and make change, take written phone messages, help with simple lawn duties, take out the trash
At What Age?

• By age 13: stay home alone, go to the store and make purchases, change own bedsheets, use washing machine and dryer, plan and prepare meal with several ingredients, use oven to broil or bake, read labels, iron own clothes, use basic hand tools, mow the lawn, look after younger siblings or neighbors

• By age 18: perform more sophisticated cleaning and maintenance tasks, fill car with gas, add air to and change a tire, read and understand medicine labels and dosages, interview for and get a job, prepare and cook meals
By age 18 children should be able to:

- Talk to strangers
- Find their way around
- Manage assignments, workloads, deadlines
- Contribute to a household
- Handle interpersonal conflict
- Cope with life’s ups and downs
- Earn and manage money
- Persist
At What Age?

• Young adult preparing to live on his/her own:
  • make regular doctor and dentist and other important appointments
  • have basic understanding of finances and be able to manage bank account
  • pay a bill and use a credit card, understand basic contracts, like an apartment or lease
  • schedule oil changes and basic car maintenance
Parenting Styles

Authoritarian
- Punishment
- Rigid
- Obedience
- Status
- I’m the Boss
- Rules
- Directive
- Structure
- Low
- distance
- uninterested
- absent
- passive
- neglectful
- lenient
- authoritarian

Authoritative
- high standards
- enabling
- guidelines
- democratic
- warm, supportive
- high
- self-regulation
- appeasement
- no guidelines
- supportive

Uninvolved
- Low
- Low

Permissive
- Non-directive
- Over-involved
- lenient
- indulgent
- lenient
Teach life skills

• The mountain climber takes pride in planting his flag at the top because it took a lot to get there. If he took a helicopter it wouldn’t feel the same. In facilitating success parents are paradoxically guaranteeing that a kid can’t achieve it on his own.”

• ~David McCullough Jr., teacher Wellesley HS, author of You Are Not Special: and Other Encouragements
Three ways we might be overparenting and unwittingly causing harm:

• When we do for our children what they can already do for themselves
• When we do for our children what they can almost do for themselves
• When our parenting behavior is motivated by our own ego

"Do not handicap your children by making their lives easy."
- Robert A. Heinlein
How do we get there?

- Enforcing consequences for our own children
- Teachable moments
- Practice independence skills
- Share the challenges you have faced
- Support your children in being who they are
- Let go of perfect
- Teach them how to think
- Praise them for their effort
- Teach them to think about more than themselves
- Let them speak up for themselves
- Prepare them for hard work
- Let them chart their own path
  - embrace the child you have!
- Allow them to struggle
“Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty...

I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life."

- Teddy Roosevelt
• Find them doing good
• Talk future tense—who they are going to become
• Invite them to ask questions
• Less helicopter parenting, more stealth-drone parenting
• Eat family dinner together
• Digital detox
• Give them choices
• Model gratitude
• Shift responsibility for learning to the child
• Give them unstructured time—get out of their way when they play
• A young adult lacking life skills is not prepared to succeed in life, no matter what their resume
Are You an Adult?

- To be a good role model, you have to take care of yourself.
- Discover your own passion and purpose
- Learn to say no
- Prioritize your own health and wellness
- Make time for your most important relationship(s)
- Practice kindness and gratitude
- Be the parent you want to be
Steps to Children’s Independence

• First we do it for you
• Then we do it with you
• Then we watch you do it
• Then you do it completely independently
There are two things children should get from their parents: roots and wings.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
College = Independence?

• The College Admissions Arms Race
• Would you rather your child be depressed at Yale or happy at University of Arizona?
• Correlation between overparenting and rise in mental health problems (no causation has been proven)
• Students with helicopter parents were found to be less open to new ideas and actions and more vulnerable, anxious, and self-conscious
• Fear of failure
Post-College Results of Helicoptering

• (Adult)children are more likely to
  • Be dependent on others
  • Engage in poor coping strategies
  • Lack soft skills like responsibility and conscientiousness
  • Have maladaptive job search and work behaviors
Was yours a straight path to success?

What people think it looks like

What it really looks like
What were your first seven jobs?

https://goo.gl/forms/RcZX6H4RdCBLZmdY2

• Mine:
  • Farm stand sales
  • Babysitter
  • Counselor in training
  • Retail sales
  • Gas station attendant
  • Fast food
  • Waitress
Conclusion

• Provide a safe and nurturing environment
• Love our children for who they are and support their interests
• Teach children skills and values that will foster independence and prepare them for adult life
• Take responsibility for our own happiness and well-being
• Prepare children to take on leadership for their generation
Resources

• *How to Raise an Adult* by Julie Lythcott-Haims
• *The Vanishing American Adult* by Ben Sasse
• Life