

Motherhood is not for the Meek!

Dear Readers,

From time to time I will be breaking from the Q & A format to provide you with different articles. This article is dedicated to the brave mothers out there, willing to make a difference with our next generation.

How many of you are mothers? How many of you are thinking of being a mother? I can assure you that this article will be of interest to anyone who currently rears children or who may have plans to do so in the future. This also includes the dads out there as well, but for the sake of the Mother's Day holiday this month, my focus is on the role of motherhood.

The role of motherhood has changed dramatically over the generations. We have moved from the stereotypical mother of the 1950's in her dress, apron and heels cleaning the house and feeding the family to the "anything goes" mom of the 21st century who may or may not work outside the home but who, nevertheless, works indeed. The role of motherhood, however, goes far deeper than what she wears and where she works. A mother's role encompasses everything from educating and disciplining her children to caring for them both financially and emotionally. Mothers play a vital role in how the children feel about themselves. Children who are nurtured, respected, disciplined and taught the core values of life have a greater chance of succeeding and feeling good about who they are as a person. Think about your own childhood and recall what made you feel good about yourself? Most of us as children felt good about ourselves

when we pleased our parents. Providing positive feedback to your children helps them realize they are good people and that they are worthy of love themselves. Mothers and fathers are the main role models for the child and their views, opinions, and beliefs become the child's sense of reality (until they begin

ing the same behavior.

The most important, and probably most challenging, role of any parent is modeling the kind of person you expect your children to be. We are all guilty of it to some degree. We expect our children not to swear, yet we may swear ourselves. Or, we tell the children not to be mean to-

towards others, yet find ourselves yelling at the driver in front of us. Take the time this Mother's Day to step back and look at who you are as a mother. What kind of role model are you for your children? Are you the kind of person who expects your child to "do as I say" and "not as I do", or are you living an example of what you expect them to be?

Some of you may think, "I'm an adult and I have the authority and the right to act differently than my child does". You're absolutely right. You should be able to act differently because you are more mature. Notice how I stress the word, 'mature'? Often times, adults don't always act in the most

mature ways. We get angry and frustrated and may yell and act out—just as children do. My point is that even if you have the mindset that what you do or how you act is okay, simply because you're the adult—think again. Your

Take the short quiz below to see how you rate in modeling healthy behavior. Simply answer True or False to the following statements:

- 1) I am living the life of a balanced person who spends adequate time playing and taking care of herself as much as she spends time working hard.
- 2) I feel I am accomplishing my goals in life and feel in control knowing I have accomplished what I needed to by the end of the day.
- 3) I eat healthy and exercise regularly.
- 4) I don't anger easily, and when I do, I am in control and don't yell, hit or raise my voice.
- 5) I take time for myself regularly to do something enjoyable, just for me.
- 6) My significant other treats me with respect.
- 7) I feel fulfilled spiritually and am able to raise my children according to my spiritual beliefs.
- 8) I am satisfied with my work and find it fulfilling and purposeful.
- 9) I take care of my body and see doctors and dentists regularly.
- 10) I don't stress easily and when I do, I cope in a healthy way.

How did you do? The more "True" answers you have, the better role model you are to your children. By taking care of you as a person and fulfilling your needs and desires in life, you are living, and modeling, a healthy lifestyle.

to mature and challenge those beliefs!). This reality is the mold in which the child grows and matures. If the mold is laden with negative views and degrading comments, the child will often become a negative person himself, repeat-

children may not be allowed to act as you, because they aren't adults. But they grow up into adults and will often mimic and repeat the same pattern of behavior you model to them. Do you want your son or daughter to grow up and behave as you do?

If you look back at your own childhood, you realize you pick up a lot more information about life (relationships, love, money, work, family, etc.) simply by observing your world around you. As a child, your world is your family. If we, as parents, aren't living a life that is healthy and balanced, we shouldn't be surprised when our children, as they mature, continue our same pattern.

There are 4 main components to attaining a successful lifestyle (hence the name of my business, "Coaching 4 Success"). By focusing on these four pieces—**Spirituality, Work-Career, Relationships, Self** and having a healthy balance among them—you will feel complete and in control of who you are as a person. Think of each square

individually and shade in the portion to which you feel your needs are being met. For example, if you feel you are meeting your Spirituality needs 75%, then you would shade in 3/4 of the square. Repeat for each square or Lifestyle Component. This will give you a visual sense of which component may need more focus than another.

Don't worry if you aren't quite there in modeling a healthy lifestyle. Most of us are "works in progress" trying to be the best we can be to ourselves and to our children. The important factor to remember is that we care enough to try.

This Mother's Day, pat yourself on the back for your hard work in being a mom. It certainly isn't easy juggling all of the responsibilities to take care of our children, let alone ourselves. Moms have a huge role to fill in order for our children to learn and observe how to be a healthy person. The hard work will begin to pay off when you feel better knowing you are modeling healthy behavior and seeing your children re-

peat that same pattern in caring for themselves and their children.

Happy Mother's Day!

Note to readers: *I am looking for questions regarding family, relationships, children's issues, etc. for upcoming columns. Please email me at: rkennedyedwards@netscape.net with your questions. Feedback is welcome!*

Renee Kennedy-Edwards, MS has combined her expertise as a Clinical Psychotherapist and Business Consultant/Trainer into an Executive and Personal Coach assisting others in reaching their potential and effectively moving through transitions. Renée owns Coaching-4-Success, a business in which she coaches individuals, couples and businesses on issues such as, burn-out, communication, motivation, and empowerment. She can be reached at 272-2888 or rkennedyedwards@netscape.net. Renee currently resides in the Naples area with her husband, Robert and daughter, Brittany.