

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Island Parenting: What I Wish I Had Known Before I Had Kids That I Know Now

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Navigating Island Parenting

As I was thumbing through one parenting journal; I came across a rather poignant excerpt by Dawn Hallman M.A. It was titled, "What I Wish I Had Known before I Had Kids that I Know Now." Hallman's words have been instrumental to my parenting approach over the years. Her words have helped me to understand that 'my children's behavior was a language that their actions and words were telling something about what they were feeling and thinking.' Her words have helped me to exercise the much needed love; understanding and most importantly, her words have helped me to exercise patience when responding to my children's language. I can't quite recall every bit of information,

but as I took in the words of Ms. Hallman once again, and reflected on my parenting skills, I thought that this nugget was worth sharing, and sharing, and sharing again, so I thought that I would share.

What I Wish I Had Known Before I Had Kids that I Know Now

"I wish I had known that my children's behavior was a language-that their actions and words were telling me something about what they were feeling and thinking. I wish that I remembered that they did not get up in the morning plotting to do things to frustrate me. I wish I had known that the meltdowns and explosions usually meant that my kids were tired, or hungry or bored or frustrated themselves. I wish I had known that they needed an adult to help them find the words to express what was troubling them. But they sure didn't need a frustrated adult. I wish I had known more about child development, brain development and behavior. I wish I had known that growing up is a slow process. I wish I'd known how each development stage has its own way of seeing the world. I wish I had known that most times they saw things very differently than me. I wish I had listened more to what was true about their hearts and spirits and personalities than worrying about what other people thought of their behavior." Dawn Hallman, M.A. – Executive Director of the Dallas Association for Parent Education

A Child's Nature

"It is the nature of the child to behave childishly. That means that childish behavior is normal for children. Parents reacting with childish outbursts, hitting and demanding their own way and name calling to their children's normal behavior reveals areas the parent needs to grow so that they can respond with the true nature of an adult...with mature, wise and compassionate guidance." L.R. Knost

Words of Wisdom for Your Children

"If you do not step forward, you will always be in the same place. If you don't ask, you don't get. Your words are powerful so use them wisely. All great achievements require time."

Recommended Reading for Children

The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters written by Allan Ahlberg, Illustrated by Janet Ahlberg
The Story of Babar by Jean De Brunhoff
Little House in the Big Woods by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Gentle Reminder for the Parent

"You are only human. You don't have to have it together every minute of every day."
Anne Hathaway

Parenting Quotes

"As a mother it is my job to take care of the possible and trust God with the impossible."
Ruth Belle Graham

“Nothing else you will ever own; no worldly thing you will ever acquire, will be worth so much as the love of your children.” Gordon B. Hinckley

“It is crucial that when our children look into our eyes, regardless of the circumstances that they are facing, what they see is someone that believes in them.” Unknown

“Your children get only one childhood. Make it memorable.” Regina Brett

“Children need at least one person in their lives who thinks that the sun rises and sets on them, someone who delights in their existence and loves them unconditionally”. Pam Leo

Recommended Reading for the Parent

Ages and Stages: A Parent's Guide to Normal Childhood Development by Charles E. Schaefer and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo