

Your Starting Point

The path to being a good role model is not the same for everyone. The path to a destination depends on your starting point. *So, we have to find where you are starting in order to decide your path to being a good role model.*

Study after study has found the best parenting style has high responsiveness AND high demandingness. That means parents who are *responsive* and *open* to their child's needs while also setting goals and having expectations will likely:

- increase their child's academic performance
- Reduce their aggressive behaviors
- Support their emotional health
- Lower their levels of obesity.

Where are you?

Which of these best describes you? Knowing your parenting style will help you understand what you can improve in order to be that role model you want to be.

- **Are you more of an authoritarian?** Do you have lots of goals and expectations for your child but need to work on connecting with them?
- **Perhaps you are more of the permissive type** who is really supportive of your child but needs to create more goals and boundaries.
- **Or, you might be disengaged** and need to work on simply getting involved with your child both emotionally and by giving them challenges and goals.

If you want to change your children, then you need to start by changing yourself!

The way to change is to practice again and again *and again* until you find you are no longer practicing but just doing.

If you are an **authoritarian** father who has lots of rules but has trouble relating with your child, then you need to practice being responsive.

1. Start by talking with your child.
2. Look for opportunities to jump in and respond to their needs.
3. Finally, always ask them what they think about your rules, and encourage them to ask questions about each one so they fully understand.

Be willing to change rules that make sense if your child brings up a good point or if you realize that it is not age appropriate.

If you are a **permissive** parent who has a great connection but not so many goals and expectations, *then it is time to start putting some more rules and boundaries into place.* A great start is a chore chart that has chores that need to be done and then consequences if they aren't. *The trick is to push yourself to follow through.* The chart won't make something happen; YOU are the one that that does that.

Finally, if you find that you are **disengaged** and not interacting with your children in either area, then you are going to have to work twice as hard and do both of those types of things listed above.

Showing What You Value

Changing to a better parenting style is being a great role model; but there are other things your children are looking at too. The big one they see every day are your priorities. Priorities are the things we think are most important in our lives. You can normally tell a person's priorities by the way they spend their time.

What you value will consume your time. If you value family more than video games, you will spend more time with family and leave your games for a different time. If you value football more than you do your wife or girlfriend, you will spend more time watching football than spending time with her. Here is the point; a good role model has good priorities.

What are those things? Well, they are different for everyone. The priorities you WANT may be family, career, church, and learning. The priorities you actually do may be job, TV, and sleep. Create your list of 3 - 5 priorities you want most to be important in your life.

My Priorities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

When you start an activity simply ask, "Is this one of my priorities?" Think back to this list. If it is not on it, go do something in support of one of your main priorities before coming back to your activity. *This is part of being a role model; to make choices that are not always fun but are important.* The rewards of doing this will be huge over the years as you choose to do those things that are what you WANT to be important in your life.

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