

A group of seven diverse children of various ethnicities are lying on a lush green lawn. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The children are dressed in casual clothing like hoodies and t-shirts. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and sunlight filtering through, creating a warm and happy atmosphere.

# Has Parenting Really Collapsed?

Dianne Parnell | I Found Time

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Speaking from my experience as a mother, a grandparent, an aunt, a friend, a godmother, and a parent volunteer (when my children were in school). I would also like to point out that this is my point view, and although I hold no degrees in child psychology, I feel that I am an expert on what I see happening in the world today.

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## What I believe in:

- Routine
- Conversation
- Consequences
- Respect
- Discipline
- Unconditional love
- Hugs no matter how old they get
- Honesty
- Right and wrong and teaching morals
- That the parent is the parent and is responsible for their children and their behaviour
- That children need to take responsibility for their actions
- Children need to be taught “How to think, not What to think”. Barbara Colorroso

## What I don't believe in:

- Children ruling the roost
- Throwing temper tantrums
- Being rude to anyone
- Being disrespectful, being hurtful to others or animals

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## Teach your children:

- How to think for themselves
- Teach them right from wrong and that there are consequences for their actions.
- Teach children how to cook, clean, do laundry, care for their siblings. It's called chores.
- Teach your children to respect their elders as long as the elders are not disrespecting them.
- Teach your children manners, Please and Thank-You go a long way in my book. Excuse me is another one.
- Teach them to hold the door for other people, doesn't matter if they are male or female, hold the door for anybody who comes behind you. It called common courtesy.
- Teach your children common sense, if they know in their heart it's wrong – don't do it!
- Teach them how to stand up for themselves respectfully and if they aren't able to do it for themselves then teach them to ask for help.
- Speak up for bullying, abuse, anything that puts them in danger or anyone else. Tell someone!!
- Listen to your children and investigate.
- And last but not least, Love your children unconditionally, teach them to love unconditionally, including animals, insects, nature. And enjoy your children, they have so much to teach us, if we pay attention to them you would be amazed at the wonderful education you will receive.

Sitting in the doctors' office with my mother a while back this headline caught my eye.

*"It's time to stand up to your kids. Treating children like adults doesn't help them succeed in life. New research shows it's making them anxious, depressed, overweight and downright unlikeable."*

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*McLeans magazine January 18/2016.*

Well then, that sums it up quite nicely....or does it?

The article goes on to say *“that the children have become the “boss” in the families.”*

I will say right off the bat, that this does not apply to ALL families, however there are a number of families that one could say this fits rather appropriately.

The article also says, *“too often adults defer to kids because they have relinquished parental authority and lost confidence in themselves.”* In my opinion, parents have lost their confidence because a lot of their rights as to disciplinary decisions have been taken away. After speaking with many young moms they say they are afraid to discipline their children in public for fear of recrimination. They are afraid to feed their children the wrong things, afraid of vaccinating/not vaccinating, what's the best snuggly to buy, milk or no milk, eggs no eggs, and the list goes on and on. Google is a wonderful thing, however, it is filled with misinformation as well. My theory is and always has been.....follow the money....that's usually a pretty good indicator of whether someone has a vested interest in their theory.

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Over 30 years ago this very thing happened to me. My son was having a difficult time while we were out shopping, I don't recall the circumstance that started it, however, I was angry and disciplined him in a way which was appropriate, there was no beating, no spanking, however, there was a consequence issued. More often than not consequences were followed through. Well, apparently a woman who overheard the conversation or part of the conversation thought I was the most horrible mother out there. She reprimanded me quite harshly regarding my choices. Remaining calm I asked her if she was aware of the circumstances that precipitated the dialogue with my son. She said she was not. Calmly I replied that perhaps she best have ALL the facts before she starts accusing anyone of something she had no idea about. At that point my mother showed up and asked what was happening.....my mother was not impressed with my son's behavior either so she pretty much repeated what I had said to this woman. The women left in a huff, and we took my son home.

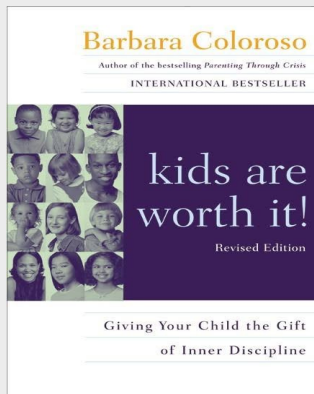
Now being a mom who had a rule of not taking our children shopping until they had eaten or after their naps, this was one time that that didn't happen. And it never happened again. All of us were frustrated, and it didn't make for a fun experience.

Being raised in a home where physical abuse was not tolerated, there was verbal abuse. It was not purposely done, it was the way my mother was taught and she did the best she could with the information given, and she repeated the pattern. Don't get me wrong here, I was not abused, her verbal abuse were words like "don't be so stupid", "don't be such an idiot". The words scared me I will admit and I have done a lot of work on my relationship with my mother.

A quote that really resonates with me is: "When you know better, You do better."

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I swore I would never raise my kids that way, and I'm sad to say that there were times when I was verbally abusive to my children (same as above). I am very fortunate that my journey led to a wonderful woman name Barbara Coloroso author



hor of “Kids Are Worth It” who helped me tremendously with child rearing and I will be forever grateful for her sage advise. My children and I have discussed this several times and we’ve dealt with issues that have arisen from that. (<http://www.kidsareworthit.com/about-us.html>)

Our children were raised that what I cooked for dinner was what they ate. I did not prepare two meals ever. Once a month, sometimes more, we had a “you pick” night. They got to pick whatever they wanted to eat that night. It was fun and we looked forward to it.

Our children started helping prepare dinners at a very young age, and I believe that helped a lot with the way they thought about food. Today, both our grown sons are fabulous cooks and will eat anything. The way we handled the food issue is partly responsible for this.

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A nurse once told me when our first son was born that children will never starve themselves. I was having difficulty breastfeeding and was extremely upset. She was an angel and said that when he was ready he would latch on and eat. And she was right, she also told me that the same holds true for toddlers, she confirmed as my mother had that you never force a child to eat. My mother always said, "If I don't like something I will not eat it, so why would I force you to eat it?" Wise advice and it sure helped us through those years of meals. Our children were expected to try something new and if they didn't like it they were not forced to eat it. If I made the dish again, I expected them to try it again, because our taste buds change over time. If again they didn't like it, they were not forced to eat. If they refused to eat a meal, then they waited until breakfast.

I can hear some of you now gasping..my children were not starved to death. Were they hungry when breakfast came around? You bet they were, and usually, the reason they didn't eat their meals or part of their meal was because they had snacked too much prior to the meal. And that usually meant that they snuck an extra cookie or two or helped themselves to something else. No, my kids were not perfect and yes they snuck food when they were told not to.....and thank God for that.....they also learned that there was a consequence for the behaviour, so it wasn't repeated very often. It was very rare actually.

Do you remember the phase going around, "if their kids didn't eat their dinner, they ate it for breakfast".....are you kidding me? Unless it's cold pizza of course.....'giggle'

My sister in law would cook a meal and if her boys didn't like it or want to eat it she would cook them another meal. She saw nothing wrong with that, I had issues perhaps because cooking is not my favorite thing to do so I was not going to be in the kitchen any longer than I had to be.

However, she was completely content to do this for her children. Who am I to judge her?



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Our children had routine in their lives. They had a set bedtime, we read to them before they went to sleep and they woke up at a certain time and had a homemade breakfast before leaving for school, they were fortunate enough to be able to come home for lunch every day until we moved away. When they came home after school they were offered a light snack and then dinner was at a regular time. We always ate meals together as a family.

There are lots of children who don't get that opportunity and now there are breakfast programs at the schools to give these children a good breakfast. This is a great program which I volunteered for many years. It's important to take care of the children even if they aren't ours.

It takes a village to raise a child....

I believe that this is important for children, it helps them later in life. The reason I say this is because I knew families that were willy nilly about meal times. My cousin's partner's family had a big pot on the stove and whenever they arrived home they would grab a plate or bowl and dig in. There were no family dinners were they sat together and discussed their day. To this day the family is not close and their eating habits are all over the place. All of them suffer from dis-ease of one kind or another and their family dynamic is fractured. Is it because of their lifestyle? I believe it is, however it is the way it is and for them, it worked at the time. Having had conversations with them as adults, they have told me that they felt something was missing, they never had connection with the rest of the family. Perhaps that is why the family is fractured today.

Let's help parents gain back some control over raising their children and support those who need our help raising their children. "It takes a village to raise a child"

Help out a single mom or dad, start support groups or coffee groups with your friends.

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When I was a young mom, there was a group of us that met for coffee once a week and I believe that saved a lot of us from losing our minds over raising kids and being in a relationship. We knew we were safe in the group and that nothing left the group. We shared our triumphs and our sorrows.....It was our saving grace and I am grateful to every one of those women who I call "friend".