

# What Really Matters, Episode 51



## Power of Moms A Gathering Place for Deliberate Mothers

In a lively and informative discussion, Saren discusses with her parents, Linda and Richard Eyre, what they have learned really matters looking over the years of parenting their nine children. Following is a summary of their discussion:

Richard begins by explaining that one of the best things you can do with your kids is not something that directly involves your kids. Having a monthly **five-facet review** where you discuss how each child is doing physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually will benefit and involve both parents on the welfare of their children. He states that the two primary reasons for conducting these monthly reviews are to:

1. Pick up danger signals early to nip them in the bud.
2. Notice a talent/gift to foster or magnify.

“This is considered a management meeting where we’re reviewing the people most important to us and trying to determine what we could do better,” they said. Linda was considered the CEO and took notes for them to refer back to for the next month to see how problems were resolved or what needs further improvement. Richard notes that typically once a problem is pointed out that Dad steps in to help solve it, but needs that direction or understanding of a problem that Mom often sees firsthand.

The next important element is **education** though not necessarily in the “system” or school. Linda explains that she recently read a book, “Race to Nowhere,” where parents were involving their children in all the extra-curricular activities and pressuring perfect grades in school and that this concept is prevalent throughout society. Parents are killing themselves to get kids to be the best, but the kids may be missing out on “real” education. Richard notes a common phrase they used to say in their house (and that the kids would sometimes take advantage of): “Let’s not let schooling interfere with our education.” As the parent, be in charge of your children’s education by supervising academics, homework, and then supplementing that with what school doesn’t teach, such as speaking spontaneously, thinking outside the box, and appreciation of arts and music.

The Eyres devoted dinner times to this type of supplemental education. They would plan to have dinner guests that would talk about their specific field of study or where they were from. They also would teach their kids to give one-minute speeches about various topics including door knobs. They would also play the thinking game where they would have to state what was similar between two dissimilar things like a turtle and a telephone.

Then they discuss how making **decisions in advance** helped prepare for reality. This is based on the philosophy that you should face a situation in theory before facing it in reality. At age 11 or 12 give them a journal where they keep track of the decisions that they have made. Have them make their own decisions (don't dictate) and play devil's advocate. Linda used to describe the situation and put them vicariously in that situation and once they knew what they would say and do in a given scenario then they could write it in their journal.

Let children gravitate to their own passions not your passions. Richard broaches this topic by remembering what he would have **done differently**, noting that there is usually a lot of guilt in parenting. He spent a lot of time pushing sports on his boys and would keep track of how well the team did when his sons played and compared to when they didn't. Linda pushed her kids in music by starting on violin, piano, etc. hoping to fulfill her dream of a family orchestra. Now, none of the kids play sports or music. However, Saren points out that they all have an appreciation for those things and that through learning these skills they developed discipline.

The most serious issue facing kids today is the issue of **Entitlement**. Kids are not learning to work for things or experiencing delayed gratification. The best way to solve this issue is through money systems. Do not use "allowances." Instead, create a family economy where the money received is directly proportioned to the amount of work contributed to the family. The Eyre's started with a complicated system but then modified and simplified keeping the elements that worked for their family. This problem begins with the parents who give things for not giving time.

Parents can end this problem by creating a **family culture** that is stronger than all the other cultures swirling around our children. By creating family traditions, family economy, family mottos, we can create a culture that shows our children what it means to be a part of a family unit. Technology can sometimes take over our lives so create a technology contract that limits the use to certain hours and delegate time with television. If you child really wants something that a friend has, Linda teaches three little words to say to our kids: "in our family..." Talk about your ancestors and what you were like as a child. Knowing the stories of ancestors, both the good and the bad, becomes the fabric that binds a family together.

Closing thoughts: Being too overwrought/worried about every little thing that our toddler is doing and beating ourselves up about our teenagers is the worst mistake. Remember that the thing you're most worried about is probably a phase. So many things change like reading habits, homework habits, friends, etc. Enjoy parenting. Ask for forgiveness when you need to. And watch your kids turn out to be fabulous.

Show unconditional love. Be their best supporters, their most helpful helpers. Love more. Love beyond measure. That's what really matters.

*Transcribed by Rosie Liljenquist*