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Be the fine parent your child deserves

Parenting is hard work. It can be frustrating, emotionally draining, expensive and challenging but it can also be exhilarating and immensely rewarding.

C. Everett Koop, 13th Surgeon General of the United States, notes: *“Life offers no greater responsibility, no greater privilege, than raising the next generation.”*

As you carry out your parenting journey or take on the commitment of coming alongside and mentoring youth, I truly hope that you can experience the joy of Great Kids. You have surely surmised by now that I strongly believe Great Kids are neither a genetic fluke nor the luck of circumstance.

Our Great Kids know with certainty the feeling of unconditional love and they understand very clearly the concept of natural consequence.

IN THE INTRODUCTION to this book I noted that the single common characteristic of almost every Great Kid I have met is *an adult who made a positive difference in developing personality, successes and, ultimately, life chances*. Although this adult is usually a parent, they may instead be an involved relative, family friend, teacher or someone who has worked hard at nurturing greatness in kids.

Throughout this book we have met many Great Kids. They are out there, and they exist in greater numbers than many would believe. Having worked with thousands of youth over the last 36 years I know that most kids have the ingredients of greatness in them. Those that become great have lessons for all of us; these lessons are the central thesis of this book.

Our Great Kids know with certainty the feeling of unconditional love and they understand very clearly the concept of natural consequence. To them, natural consequence is more than just understanding what happens when they make a mistake. It is also the core belief that success is the natural consequence of hard work. They are not afraid to take risks and they are not afraid to fail because they have that greatest of all safety nets, a committed adult, ready to pick them up if they fall too hard or to re-direct and encourage them if they fail.

Finally, the parent or adult coming alongside the Great Kid works really hard at maintaining deep attachment, despite the increasing societal challenges to such adult attachment.

THE FINAL GREAT KID I want to introduce you to is Scott. Scott comes from a family of three boys and is the eldest. I suspect that Scott has many “eldest child” memories and perhaps, as most “eldest” can attest, a few parenting scars. But as I have gotten to know him I have recognized

that he is a really Great Kid (although almost 30 now!) When I asked Scott to identify the biggest influence as he grew up, he was reflective for just a moment. Then he said, “My parents, they demonstrated unconditional love. They showed me, through their commitment to us and by their actions that they would always be there for us, no matter what.”

I BELIEVE THAT James A. Brewer best summed it up: “Lucky parents who have fine children, have lucky children who have fine parents.”

Whether you are parenting your own child or mentoring a kid in need, I hope that as you consider some of the common characteristics exemplified by the Great Kids discussed in this book, you will be better prepared as you nurture them towards greatness.

May you be the fine parents
—and mentors—our children
deserve!

Mike McIndoe