

# What really matters this Thanksgiving ...

I have been parenting for more than 27 years; there have been many years when I believed my parenting skills to be in line with my life's greatest accomplishments and others when I just knew I totally missed the mark.

In parenting I learned that love truly is blind that letting go is by far the greatest challenge and seldom does it matter what I really want for my children, but in the end it comes down to their life their way.

I have loved and lost in parenting to where my skin hurt and the hole left in my heart was at least the size of a cannonball. My kids taught me the true meaning of love, where you give and give and expect nothing in return. It is the only relationship where you literally bring that child into the world and give him life. You give life to your child who may live in a way that you may never understand, but you know that the gift was in the giving.

With the three children I have mothered, I have learned that each child is different and comes with his own likes, dislikes, talents and abilities. I have learned that where environment may matter, that does not translate into the same environment or same outcome for each child.

I have learned humility in parenting and put myself in places and spaces that I would never have gone without the hand-holding of my child who led me there. It was in parenting that I learned that children have immediate needs and that the adults in my life could wait. It was my children who taught me patience and my children who taught me to trust in the letting go. My kids taught me that all children lie at some point and not to take it personally or believe that because you have a close parent-child relationship that will mean honesty at all times on all issues.

If the definition of forgiveness is letting go of how you thought it should be, then, too, it was my children who taught me to forgive. To forgive myself before I could begin to forgive them or any others.

As amazing as giving birth was, so is the cycle and the circle of life. After 27 years of parenting I have learned much from my children and the many enrichments they have afforded me. We are not finished parenting as two of my children are in high school, and although they are currently doing well in most areas I have learned that change will come. Changes will come with new driver's licenses, part-time jobs, new friends, first loves, achievements and disappointments.

My children have collectively taught me most if not all of the important lessons I have learned, and this Thanksgiving it is for my children and my husband that I am most thankful.

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