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# The Zags and Zigs of Raising a Child — Successfully



Nicholas Pollak / November 9, 2009 /

OP-ED (<http://www.thefrontpageonline.com/category/op-ed>)

*To paraphrase a line I once heard:*

“Children, you can’t live with them and you can’t shoot ‘em.”

*As my father said:*

“Children should be seen and not heard.”

*Others have said:*

“Once you have ‘em, you’ll never be rid of them.”

The Zags and Zags of Life: A Parent's Guide to Raising a Bawling, Teething Baby: Pour a shot of vodka. Dip your finger and rub it on the baby's gums. Drink the rest."

*Many parents says:*

"The only time I hear from my daughter is when she either is in trouble or needs money."

"I wish I knew then, what I know now."

*From George Bernard Shaw:*

"Youth is wasted on the young."

*From comedian Bill Cosby:*

"I am your father. Do what I say or else. I brought you into this world, and I will take you out."

*Also from Mr. Cosby:*

"For the first four years of my life, I thought my name was Jesus Christ and my brother's name was goddammit."

## **As I Was Saying**

The burden of having children is a heavy one or, a joyous one, filled with ups and downs. You choose.

Even though comedians joke about them and some of the more serious lines point with negativity toward children and child rearing, raising children probably is the most important responsibility any person will do.

We are given the joy (and sometimes the pain) of witnessing all the physical and mental changes that occur with a human being from birth, through infancy, the toddler years, to adolescence and finally adulthood.

We have no manual to work with.

But we are offered plenty of advice, good and bad, from books, friends and parents.

You can be sure that no matter what you do, someone will say that not enough was done or that your parenting skills were of no value.

A friend had a major issue with his younger daughter. She was doing major drugs and alcohol, cutting as well as having frequent sex with a variety of partners. She had become extremely distant and moody with her parents.

All this, and she was only 14 years old.

A major intervention was required.

### **The Final Step**

One dark overnight at 4 a.m., two burly looking individuals from a security company, with permission from the parents, entered this child's room, made her dress and handcuffed her so as to reduce any potential violence or attempt to escape.

Taken to the airport, she was flown to Montana where she was placed in a boarding school for a year to dry out, become aware of her mistakes and continue her education.

Her parents had not failed her. They were in the right in trying to re-set her life orientation.

Over the next 12 months, more than 100 letters were written by the child to the parents. And more than 100 responses from the parents to the child.

In those letters, things were said and explained in ways that had not been accomplished face to face. Needless to say, both the parents and the child learned a lot about each other and what it would take to make their relationship work.

She appeared to have gotten the message.

But, little by little, her ill-behavior began to return, although not quite as extreme.

Matters came to a head when she failed a drug test at school, and consequently was expelled.

Her parents had warned that if there were a recurrence of her old drug behaviors she would not be allowed to remain at home. She would have to go elsewhere.

That is what happened. The parents knew they absolutely had to follow through or anything else would have been meaningless.

## **The Road Back**

She was placed with her godmother.

When the child turned 17 1/2, it was agreed by parents, godmother and daughter that it was time for her to move on in life. Entering a halfway house, she continued with her schooling and found a part-time job to pay her minimal rent.

She lived in this house with 20 other people.

After six months, she figured out what she needed to do to get out and start to make a real life for herself. (Meantime, she was so respected by everyone in the house that she became the house manager.)

With support from her parents, she found an apartment and moved in with two friends.

To this day, she continues to prove herself in everything she does.

While working as a senior sales person in retail, she even has started a small niche business, earning enough to support herself. As a reward, her parents bought her a car, helping her to further her goals since she now has a reliable vehicle.

As a productive member of society, she has learned the lesson of the error of her ways. Her old path was filled with rebellion, anger, self-abuse, emotional pain and separation from her family.

Ultimately, she showed her determination to be a better person.

Her parents went through as much emotional anguish as their daughter, as well as a \$55,000 commitment to her future, which the father will be paying off until age 68. Proud to call her their daughter, they take great joy in sharing her successes and accomplishments with their friends.

As parents, we can guide, support, teach, reward, cajole, threaten, wheedle, beg, plead, punish, withhold affection and material gifts to create results from our children.

In the end though, it is up to the child. Many of us went through similar trials. Somehow, we matured and became productive members of society.

Life is a rite. We all go through the same phases of growth, and eventually we will all die.

As parents, we have the advantage of life experience that we apply to show our children a better way to live, and to hope they will be better than we were and are.

When your child turns 18, all we can do is watch them live their lives and hope, enjoy our time with them and give them unqualified love.

We cannot give them the experience we have gained as everyone must experience for themselves. Being told what to expect is just not the same as actually experiencing for yourself and dealing with the consequences of your actions.

Recently I saw a film, whose name I have forgotten, with an amazing line.

An old man in a wheelchair was having trouble breathing, he he said to his 20-something son:

*"Where you are, I once was."*

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April 29, 2015

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Repeat Every 1 Week(s) on : Wednesday,Thursday,Friday,Saturday,Sunday

A secret cache of letters brings together a former

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The multiple award-winning Echo Theater Company, n

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Community Uniting May 2nd to Chart Future at Hope&

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