



So You Want to Be a Father!

TIPS ON PARENTING

Maureen Ng B L

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Introduction

Dear Future Daddies,

While pondering over the framework for this booklet on fathering, I decided to use personal experiences to construct the flow of my writing. My six years as principal of a junior college in Singapore have given me insights to what had gone wrong and right in parenting. I had the privilege of interacting with teens at different levels of emotional strength.

Those with the resilience and ability to “flow with the tide” of the difficult teen years usually had good relationship with their families or at least had emotional support from significant adults in their lives. On the other hand, those who cracked at the slightest provocation and who behaved as though there were enemies at all fronts were those who were either alienated from a parent or were stressed because the cracks in their parents' marriage had widened to the point of daily eruptions. Some suffered from physical and mental abuse from their fathers. They chose not to share their problems with their parents and tended to act out their disenchantment by bullying peers who were weaker. When faced with the consequences of their actions, their usual defence was sullen silence. It took a lot of patience and understanding to help them begin their journey from despair to repair.

Hence, I chose to name the first chapter of this fathering booklet *Begin with the end in mind*. When it comes to our careers, many of us have goals regarding what we want to achieve. We take stock of our abilities, plan for academic or professional competence to achieve our goals. What we don't realise is that we also need to set goals for our family life. What are your aspirations? You should take stock of what you have and what are achievable in the next 20 years or so, especially if you are thinking of having children as part of the family. Involve the key players – your wife and children (when they come along the way), make the

necessary changes and sacrifices to ensure that those dreams come true. Don't leave it to chance or else the little darling whom you sacrificed sleepless nights to look after, may turn out to be the monster who invades your peace when he becomes a disenchanting or disconnected youth years later.

We are strongly reminded of the truism of seeing the father in the child.

Happy Reading! May you find fulfilment and joy as you nurture and build a happy family!

Yours sincerely,

Maureen Ng B L



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All parents want the best for their children. However, they are influenced by their own upbringing and their social environment. Communication between the couple is necessary as both parties may have different expectations of themselves and their offsprings. This chapter explores areas for communication and how to manage the expectations.

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Using this medical expression to describe this phase underscores the importance of developing the right mindset while waiting for baby to arrive.

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