

Helping parents help a child

Love and Logic program promotes relationship building

Raising teenagers was not nearly as easy as the Currans had hoped.

"One of our daughters was getting into a lot of trouble," said Eileen Curran of Chandler. "She had always given us problems and was incredibly intense, but we didn't realize what was really happening until we were called to the hospital because of an over-the-counter-drug overdose."

The Currans tried counseling with their daughter, but when she refused to go, the counselor recommended private coaching sessions with Keri Maughan, a life coach and Love and Logic programs facilitator.

"My husband and I started to meet with Keri. She helped open our eyes to what was really going on. Once our eyes were open, it was all so obvious," Curran said.

What was not obvious to the Currans was how to fix things. Maughan helped them allow their daughter to reap natural consequences for her behavior, and they eventually came to the conclusion that a drug-treatment facility would be in everyone's best interest.

"Today, many years later, our daughter is doing well and we have a great relationship with all five of our children. Keri showed us how to put Love and Logic into practice in our family, and we have a new paradigm for looking at problems and coming up with solutions. Even today when there is a big disagreement, my kids will say, 'Call Keri.' She is such a trusted part of our family now. I feel like every family can use a third-party perspective," said Curran.

The Currans also attend many of Maughan's teen parenting classes, in which Maughan tackles standard problems and gives advice that changes lives.

"Our kids need to know that we are on their side," Maughan said. "We need to treat them as we would like to be treated. Tell a child what you will do, not what you won't do and try to say, 'Yes,' as often as possible."

For instance, when a teenager wants to



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borrow the car, Maughan suggests a parent says, "I'm happy to let you borrow the car if you make it a win-win situation for me. So, if you bring it back with gas in it that would make it worth it for both of us."

If the teen doesn't want to fill it up with gas, he or she can find another ride or suggest a different payment.

Maughan's philosophies center on building solid relationships, which is why she thinks curfews are unnecessary.

"I know it sounds strange, but I don't like curfews," she said. "I think a much better arrangement is to talk about what the child has planned. If they are going to a movie or a school function, I'm OK with letting them stay out later as opposed to just hanging out at a friend's house. We decide together on a reasonable time to be home depending on their activity, and if plans change they must call. This kind of communication builds relationships and mutual trust. If they are late without good reason, I have them make that time up to me by detailing my car or cleaning the garage before they can go out again."

Not only are teens capable of being part of the decision-making process, Maughan believes they are also capable of waking themselves up, getting to school on time, getting their own work done, pursuing their talents and being productive members of the family at a relatively young age. She thinks parents often don't give teens enough credit or responsibility or let them fail and take the fall.

During her teen classes, Maughan shares specific tips, answers parents' questions and shows role playing that illustrates how to create independent, successful children.

"When a child turns 18, I don't want that to be their first try at the adult world," she said. "By then, I want them to be so familiar and confident with the adult world and with themselves and their capabilities, that, right away, they spend their time becoming a success and getting ahead."

Information: www.kerimaughan.com.

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