

2 TOP 20s HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE: KNOWING WHY WE PARENT

Our lives can be so hectic and busy that we sometimes lose focus on why we parent. The pace of our day and the countless interactions, interruptions, and decisions we have to make can result in our feeling like a hamster on a wheel. Experiencing this over time can begin to blur our purpose. Developing a purpose statement can help us stay focused on what is truly important.

Reflection:

- A. Our purpose as parents is often influenced by our own parents or someone who has had a significant impact on us. Identify and write the name of one of these people for you.

- B. What was it about this person that affected you and caused you to want to be in this person's presence?

- C. What three values are most important to you as a parent?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- D. Craft your purpose statement, including the three values you selected.

My purpose as a parent is ...

E. Based on this purpose statement, write three action statements that will help you parent from this purpose on a daily basis.

1.

2.

3.

It's easy to be clear about our purpose when everything is going smoothly. However, as we begin to experience "hits" (unexpected and undesired negative random events) that begin to wear on us, we can become distracted from our purpose. Hits can include:

Disruptions

Problems at work

A neighbor complaining about our kid

A car that won't start

A kid not doing chores or homework

A family member's illness

A negative report from school

A broken washing machine

A critical comment from someone

Siblings fighting

When hits occur, they can cloud our sense of purpose. Lacking a clear sense of purpose, we can lose patience, blame, complain, threaten, pout, shut down, or dishonor others or be sarcastic.

Reflection:

- What hit is most difficult for you to rebound from and to respond to from your purpose as a parent?

Following are strategies for dealing with these challenges.

- **Pause:** When hits occur, allow yourself to pause before responding. During the pause, connect with your purpose. Then respond.
- **Fix it in your seat before taking it to the street:** Before beginning your day or coming home from work, lock into your purpose. Because you can count on hits occurring once you begin your day, ground yourself in your purpose as soon as you wake up or on your way home from work.
- **Purpose Pal:** Identify a friend or spouse who knows your purpose and can remind you when you begin to forget.

Reflection:

A. What is your strategy for staying on purpose when hits pile up?

B. What have you become aware of regarding having a clear purpose that you want to:

- Continue doing?
- Start doing?
- Stop doing?