

Parenting without Blind Spots

Proverbs 20:11 Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right. NIV

You've probably seen naive parents of criminals on the news before. They say, "I know my little Jonnie would never do anything like this. He's not that type of kid. He was just hanging around with the wrong crowd." No matter what the circumstantial or physical evidence says, no matter what the jury says, forget the DNA and the fingerprints, Jonnie is innocent in the eyes of the parents. Very rarely will the parents admit to the guilt of their children. These are the same parents that would back up the student when the teacher or principal called. These are the same parents that felt their child was always misunderstood, singled out, or treated unfairly.

Have you ever seen those parents? I sure you have. We all have. I believe that even these misguided parents could point out the same weakness in *another* set of parents, but they can't see it in their own lives. It is just a blind spot that we have. It is hard to see the faults of our own flesh and blood.

It is natural to want to stick up for our children. It's easy to look at them in a way that is overly optimistic. I suppose that is where the putdown comes from that states "He has a face that only his mother could love." Moms and dads take a preferential view of their own kids.

We were watching some kids once and Kathleen caught one of the kids cheating on some school work—blatantly. The mom came home and was appalled at this report. Questioning ensued. The mom then told Kathleen that it was all just a misunderstanding. But it wasn't. She was cheating, and then lied her way out of it. Her mom missed it.

Another child we watched threw a tantrum in the store. It was the same story. Mom was upset. Talked to the kid. Kid lied. Mom defended.

Another child. Kid bit. Parents told. Oops, he was just teething, stressed, and hungry.

Another child. Kid yells at adult. Parents told. Excuses made.

Get the pattern?

Of course everyone has blind spots except me and you...and sometimes I wonder about you. ;-) It's not just these crazy parents on TV court cases that see their kids in such a distorted light. We all do it at times. We all miss character flaws in our children, and we all miss opportunities to correct and train.

I have an uncanny ability to evaluate kids. This one is sweet, that one is naughty, and the one over there is rebellious to a level that is scary. It's not because I'm Mr. Parenting Guru. Your mother has this ability, so does your best friend, and so does your child's teacher. It's because we all tend to see other people's kids clearly. We view our own kids through rose-colored glasses, but we see other kids through binoculars. "Even a child is known by his actions." Ask anyone. They can tell you how your child is perceived.

I'm serious. *If you want to know how you are doing as a parent*, or how your child is doing, ask. Ask his teachers and Sunday school teachers. Ask your closest friends. Ask anyone who has spent time with your kids. Ask several people. Here are some questions:

- 1) Do you have any concerns about my child?
- 2) What can my child improve in?
- 3) Do you have any input on my parenting?

In fact, you could cut and paste these into an e-mail right now and send them out. Brace yourself for the feedback and prepare not to take it personally. Take the input seriously. Negative input does not make you a failure; it just points out what needs to be worked on.

If you don't want to be affected by the blind spots that we, as parents, all have, do this exercise. It will help you immensely.