

# SUMMER SURVIVAL STRATEGIES



*by*  
*Don Lasell, (B.Ed., M.A.)*  
*Registered Clinical Counsellor*

# OVERVIEW

- I. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
- II. NURTURE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS
- III. SPEND ONE TO ONE TIME WITH EACH CHILD
- IV. HOLD WEEKLY FAMILY MEETINGS
- V. CREATE A SUMMER SUPPORT NETWORK
- VI. HAVE THE COURAGE TO BE IMPERFECT
- VII. RESOURCES

# 1. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

## Manage stress

- Stay in your circle of influence.
- Choose your battles.

## Set boundaries

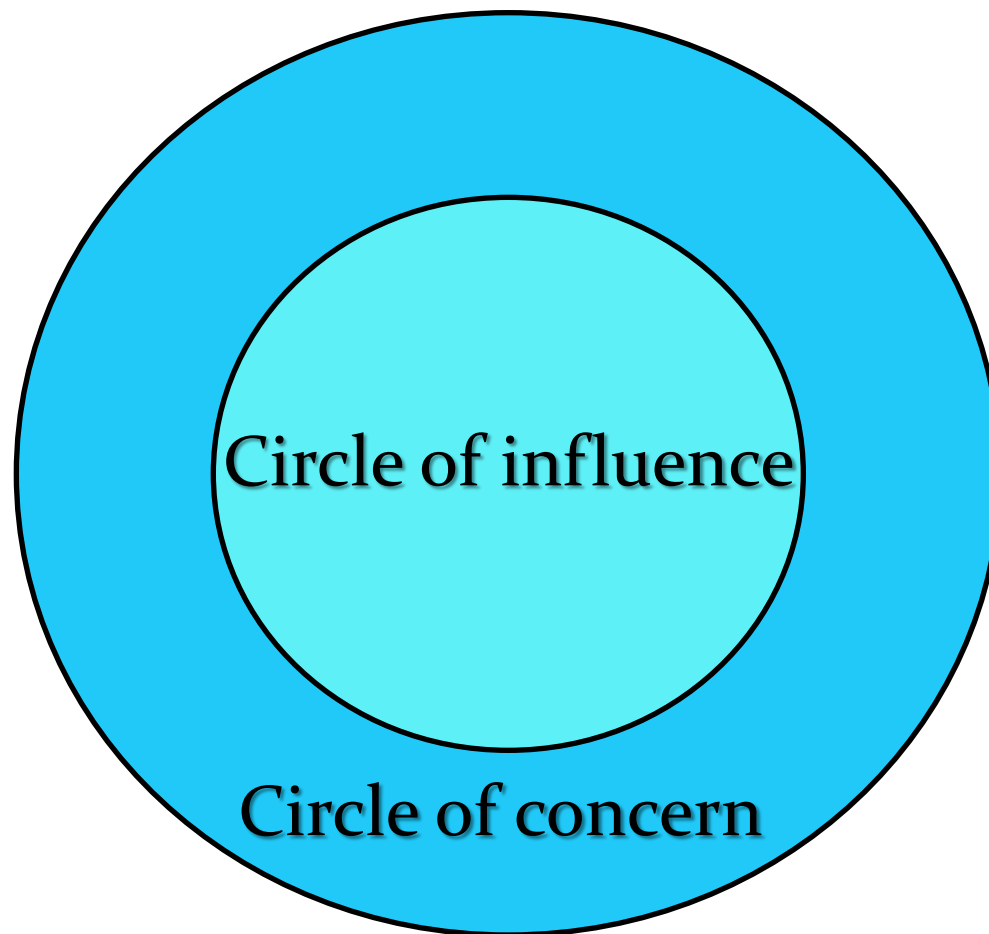
- Focus on your response.

## Know & work with yourself

- Reflect – recognize/choose your perspective.
- Learn to let go.



# Circle of influence



Stephen R. Covey – Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

# Boundaries



## Communication



I message



*When... I feel... because...*

## Request



Request behavioural  
Change



*Would you please...*

## Consequence



Self-imposed  
response



*If you... I will...*

# Know yourself

- Practice mindfulness.
- Pay attention to self-talk.
- Be present focussed.





# Mindfulness

*“Learning to pay attention to what we pay attention to.”*

- Know what you want to change
- Know what you want to replace it with.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Never give up.



# • Holmes Rahe Scale

<i>Event</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Value</i>
Death of spouse	100	Son or daughter leaving home	29
Divorce	73	Trouble with in-laws	29
Marital separation	65	Outstanding personal achievement	28
Jail Term	63	Spouse begins or stops work	26
Death of close family member	63	Starting or finishing school	26
Personal injury or illness	53	Change in living conditions	25
Marriage	50	Revision of personal habits	24
Fired from work	47	Trouble with boss	23
Marital reconciliation	45	Change in work hours, conditions	20
Retirement	45	Change in residence	20
Change in family member's health	44	Change in schools	20
Pregnancy	40	Change in recreational habits	19
Sex difficulties	39	Change in church activities	19
Addition to family	39	Change in social activities	18
Business readjustment	39	Mortgage or loan under \$10,000	17
Change in financial status	38	Change in sleeping habits	16
Death of close friend	37	Change in number of family gatherings	15
Change to different line of work	36	Change in eating habits	15
Change in number of marital arguments	35	Vacation	13
Mortgage or loan over \$10,000	31	Christmas season	12
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	Minor violation of the law	11
Change in work responsibilities	29		





*“Often the way we see the problem, is the problem.”*

- Stephen R. Covey

# Stress quiz – how stressed are you?

<http://www.arc.sbc.edu/stressquiz.html>

## 2. NURTURE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

- **Be a good listener.**
  - Communication styles
  - Levels of communication
  - Active vs. passive listening
  - Acknowledgement
- **Hang out together.**
- **Consult & collaborate.**
- **Be open to growth.**
- **Manage conflict immediately.**
- **Forgive often.**



# Communication Styles

Aggressive

Assertive

Passive



# Levels of communication

Topic

Emotion

# Active listening

- Listen actively, rather than passively.
- Pay attention to body language/tone of voice.
- Give your full attention.





# Two step listening

- i. Listen and watch for feelings, then acknowledge – i.e. “you seem...”
- ii. Ask if a suggestion or advise would be welcome - i.e. “may I make a suggestion?”



# T-times – Denis Boyd

## Hang out with each other daily

- Schedule daily talk time.
- Start with the “mood of the moment” by guessing each other’s mood.



- “Check in” by talking about your day and how you felt about it.
- Talk about current family issues only after you have checked in with each other.

# Time out/time in

- **ANGER** – can be expressed as ranting and raving or as shutting down – both hurt a relationship. Anger can be a sign of poor listening.
  - **ANGER** – should not be expressed disrespectfully (i.e. name calling, put downs, sarcasm, ridicule...).
- Denis Boyd




# What is your communication style?

<http://goddessintellect.com/true-colors-quiz-what-is-your-communication-style>

<http://www.positivelymary.com/ColorCommunicationQuiz.html>

<http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/preparing.../conflict-management-styles-quiz.pdf>



***“It is better to keep your mouth closed  
and to be thought a fool than to open  
it and remove all doubt”.***

**- Mark Twain**

# 3. SPEND 1 to 1 TIME WITH EACH CHILD

- Set up a regular “date time” with each child.
- Try to do more listening than talking.
- Pay attention to what is said and how it is said.
- Also pay attention to what is not said – listen for feelings.
- Notice and encourage willingness to share thoughts and feelings.



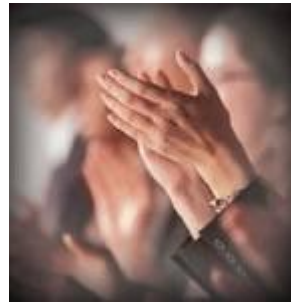
**Remember -in the end, it is all about relationship.**



# Praise vs. Encouragement

Systematic Training for Effective Parenting – Dinkmeyer & McKay

## Praise



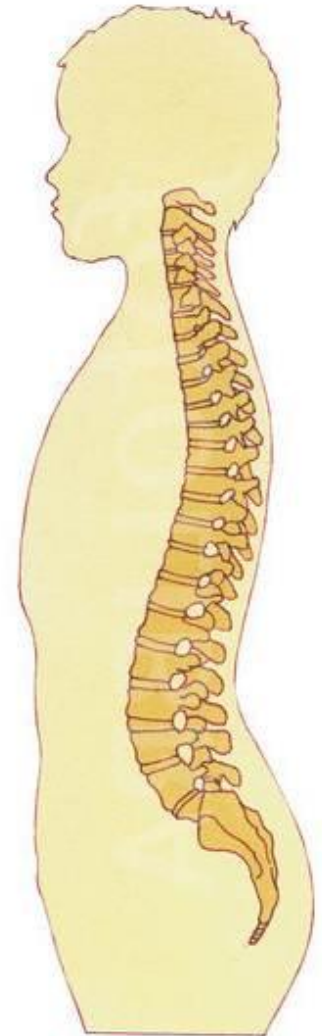
## Encouragement

- Focus on accomplishment
- Fosters competition
- External locus of control
- I matter only when...

- Focus on effort
- Encourages cooperation
- Internal locus of control
- I matter.

# Parenting styles

- **Authoritarian** – gives orders
- **Permissive** - gives in
- **Democratic** – gives choices



# What is your parenting style?

<http://www.parentstoolshop.com/HTML/quiz.htm>

<http://www.embracethechaos.ca/2011/04/what-is-your-parenting-style.html>



***“Encouragement is to a child what water is to a flower”.***

# 4. HOLD WEEKLY FAMILY MEETINGS

## Advantages

- Provides a regular forum to discuss family related issues
- Models respectful patterns of communication
- Keeps parents and children better connected
- Teaches problem solving skills
- Encourages cooperation
- Increases responsibility
- Reduces complaining
- Improves relationships



# Family council meeting format

- **CHECK IN** - what good things have happened this week?
- **READ PREVIOUS MINUTES.**
- **REVIEW OLD BUSINESS** - discuss what went well, what didn't go well.
- **DISCUSS NEW BUSINESS** - list what needs to be discussed, prioritize, and then discuss in order of priority.
- **PROBLEM SOLVE** - brainstorm possible solutions allowing the person who owns the problem to select the solution of his or her choice to be tried over the next week.
- **PLAN FAMILY FUN** - discuss what will be done for fun after next week's family meeting.
- **REVIEW SOLUTIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES** - discuss who has agreed to do what.



# Family council meeting

<http://www.denisboyd.com/family-parenting/summer-survival-strategies-for-parents.html>

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10249.html>



***“The amazing thing about marriage isn’t that adults produce children, but that children produce adults”.***

**- author unknown**

***“The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.”***

**- Theodore Hesburgh**

# 5. CREATE A SUMMER SUPPORT NETWORK

## Pair up & Take turns

- Pair up with friends or take turns watching each other's children so as to give each other a break.

## Plan ahead

- Schedule more involved activities well in advance, this both reduces your stress while also giving the children something to look forward to.

# Summer activities

[http://www.portcoquitlam.ca/\\_shared/assets/Spring11\\_Leisure\\_Guide10123.pdf](http://www.portcoquitlam.ca/_shared/assets/Spring11_Leisure_Guide10123.pdf)

<http://tcfp.citysoup.ca/default.htm>

[http://www.tourismvancouver.com/visitors/things to do/free or almost free](http://www.tourismvancouver.com/visitors/things_to_do/free_or_almost_free)

<http://www.entertainment.com/discount/home.shtml>

## **6. HAVE THE COURAGE TO BE IMPERFECT**

- **Seek improvement vs. perfection.**
- **Accept reality.**
- **Be present focussed.**
- **Model the courage to take healthy risks.**
- **Share your thoughts and feelings.**
- **Apologise often.**
- **Learn to take yourself less seriously.**

# Resources

## BOOKS:

- Boundaries in Marriage – Townsend & Cloud
- Marriage Can Be Great – No Really! – Denis Boyd
- Mindsight – Daniel J. Siegel
- Systematic Training for Effective Parenting – Dinkmeyer & McKay
- The Power of Now – Eckhart Tolle
- The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People – Stephen R. Covey

## WEBSITES:

- [www.anxietybc.com](http://www.anxietybc.com)
- [www.denisboyd.com](http://www.denisboyd.com)
- [www.forcesociety.com](http://www.forcesociety.com)
- [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental\\_health](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health)





*“Life is too important to take seriously”.*

**- Mark Twain**