

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO NEW MILLENNIUM PARENTS**

by Joan and Bill Bramsch

Dear Mom and Dad,

We're going to make a prediction for you. You WILL survive parenthood, even teenage mania. We made it through and lived to tell the tale. And though you'll get no time off for good behavior, The Watchwords are...Don't let'em get you!

### **RULES FOR SURVIVAL:**

1. Never take what they say personally, especially their comments, criticisms and complaints. It's when they cry silently that you should leap out of your skin and get ready for action!
2. Occasionally rebuke their favorite music, hair styles, makeup, clothes, and good friends. They'll love you for it, and keep every one. And YOU will have fulfilled your duty to provide something for them to push against.
3. Occasionally pick a fight with them about something you really care very little about. "Your room is a mess...that hair of yours must be cut." In the same action, after you put up a grand argument for about five minutes (it's especially effective in front of their peers), you will give in and admit defeat (but not too easily, Mom and Dad!). What you have done is excellent parent work. You will have given them no more reason to go out on the street... getting into God only knows what... to prove they can win against THE PARENT. (Before you discard this suggestion, think about it for a few minutes, please.)
4. Allowances stop at age sixteen. Part-time work is good for the soul. And Parents' pocketbooks. It also teaches the child the value of money and what it takes to earn it.
5. All children of said household will pull his/her own weight when it comes to chores and assigned duties. If s/he does not like the status quo and can find another place in this world to live free, s/he should go there. (S/he won't, you know, but you cannot live in fear of your own child.)
6. No personal cars to support during high school. Education must come first so that the child can learn to support her/himself, in order to release the parent/s from that role.

7. CARDINAL RULE FOR PARENTS: DO NOT BE AFRAID OF YOUR TEENAGERS. FENCES ARE A NECESSITY TO PROTECT THEM FROM THEIR TEMPORARY INSANITY. THE THING THEY DON'T WANT IS EXACTLY WHAT THEY NEED -- A GOVERNOR ON THEIR FREEDOM.

8. Make Granny's Advice your own: "Whatever you promise your children, be sure to give them. If it's discipline or Disney World. Deliver!" Amen.

And we will make you this promise, too, Mom and Dad. When your children are grown, they will return to thank you for:

- a. teaching them right from wrong.
- b. teaching them how to work.
- c. teaching them to be self-starters.
- d. revealing to them the thrill of a job well done.
- e. encouraging them to reach for their star.
- f. and loving them, especially when they were so hard to love.

Put them all together, they spell ABCDEF, a word that means the world to us. But a funny thing has happened to us now that our kids are out on their own, living in far away places. We find we miss them. Very much.

We should have known they'd get us in the end!