

SET THE STAGE FOR LIFELONG RELATIONSHIP

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT LAST A LIFETIME start by setting a stage where relationships can develop and grow. Lifelong relationships won't just happen with our kids—there's too much vying for our kids' attention. If we want a relationship that not only lasts a lifetime but is also one of influence, we must be intentional and make our kids a priority.

- 1. BE THERE AND BE AVAILABLE.** In order to set the stage for lifelong relationship and be an active participant on the stage you must be there. Be with your child. Be home when he's home. Make him a priority no matter his age.
- 2. YOUR ATTENTION.** Your attention to them gives a warm glow to the relationship. Pay attention. Turn off technology when you're with them. This tells them they are important to you.
- 3. LISTEN.** Listen to your child even the little ramblings. This means your child needs to know you are listening. If he keeps saying, "Mom, do you hear me?" you are not *showing* him you are listening. This atmosphere of guaranteed listening creates a lifelong relationship of your child talking to you, knowing you hear him, and then listening for your thoughts.
- 4. ACCEPT WHO SHE IS AND WHERE SHE IS IN LIFE.** Believe me, your kid is going to be a different person than you imagined. We are all so different and often we don't embrace our differences but try to be more like others. What a gift it would be to embrace your child for who she is and where she is in life. Don't try to make her like you or anyone else.
- 5. YOUR BELIEF IN THEM.** Your belief in them goes a step further than acceptance of them. It tells them "I know you can do this. I know you have what it takes. I support you."
- 6. TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN HER INTERESTS**—even if they are very different from yours. Don't be their dream killer. Of course, they can't be everything they want to be but help them explore their interests as far as possible or their interest lasts. They will some day return the favor.