

Early Education / Giving Children Roots

Tammy: Hello and welcome to *Women of Hope*. I'm Tammy, along with Carol. If you're a parent, a grandparent, an auntie or a big sister, you can have a great influence in a child's life.

Carol: That influence is built on trust. So, how do you build trust? ...How do *you* influence your child?

Tammy: How do you give them *roots* so they will grow strong and healthy...and then give them *wings* so they can soar up high? We'll be talking about these things today. Stay with us.

Carol: I have a story I'd like to tell you...

There was a mother who wanted to teach her daughter how to swim. But the child was afraid of the water and would not go in. The mother knew that her young daughter needed to learn to swim because they lived near deep water and she could easily drown if she fell into the water. So, the mother gently picked up her daughter and as she talked quietly to her, she walked right into the water.

Now, the child had learned through past experience to completely trust her mother, even so, she was still frightened. The mother talked calmly to her daughter and patiently taught her how to relax and let the water come up onto her legs...then to her waist. And before she knew it, she was right in the water and resting on her mother's arms.

It didn't take long before the daughter was able to swim around in the water...while staying close to her mother. She was not afraid any more. The trust that she had in her mother helped her to relax and to know that her mother would not allow her to be hurt. So she was able to overcome her fear and learn something new. Soon she could swim very well.

Tammy: I like that story. It shows how important it is to be consistent in our relationships with our children, so that we can build complete trust between us no matter what's happening around us.

Does your child, or grandchild...or niece or nephew trust *you* like that? Sometimes I hear a person making a joke with a small child and telling them something that's not true. They might think it's funny, but the child is too young to know that what they're saying is not true. As a child grows up they learn whether they can trust what you say, and what you do...or not.

Carol: So It's very important to be honest with a young child and tell them the truth. Of course if the child is very young we need to be careful *how* we tell them the truth. It needs to be appropriate for their age and in a way they can understand. But always, what we tell them should be truthful.

Tammy: Most small children can understand and love to hear a story. Do you think they have to always be true?

I think we can tell children a story that helps them to understand something. It might be a made up story, but they soon learn about story-telling...and as they grow up they will work out the meaning of stories. But it's important in your every day life, talking with your children, to be honest.

Carol: You know, building trust in a child's life is so valuable. It's the beginning of building relationships throughout their lives. You can never start too early.

Tammy: That's right. It's easier to begin building the roots of a strong relationship while our children are still young.

Carol: On *Women of Hope* today we've been talking about building roots of *trust* in a child's life. Now I want to talk about building roots of a different kind...the roots of *education* in our children. When do you think a child's education begins? ...That's right, as soon as they're born a child begins to learn.

Tammy: I heard something really interesting recently.

Did you know that *a child by the age of four has developed half their adult intelligence?* That's their *ability to learn*.

Carol: Wow – by four? That's amazing.

Tammy: That's right. And whether you realize it or not, you have a lot of influence over a young child's learning. The learning habits they develop will be strongly influenced by those they spend most of their time with when they're young.

And here's another interesting thing.... How many questions do you think a child, of about four, asks every day?

Carol: Well remembering my children at four, I would have to say it's lots and lots!

Tammy: You're right. I heard someone recently say, 'a young child asks somewhere between 250 and 400 questions a day'.

Carol: And I don't doubt it! We moms and teachers and caregivers can back that up.

Tammy: Well – it could be any number really, but you know the more you give good interesting answers to your young child, the more they will ask you.

Carol: Oh no! Seriously, If we don't answer a young child's questions, they will stop asking...

Tammy: ...and of course that means they won't learn as much, will they?

A young child is programmed to ask lots of questions – that's the way God made us – to want to know things.

And isn't it fun to listen to a little child's questions... Why don't spiders fall off their webs? ...What do worms eat?...Why do ant bites hurt? ...Why is the sky blue? ...Why doesn't a bird fall off its perch? And so it goes...on and on. And we do the best we can to answer their questions.

Carol: You may have a younger sister or brother, a niece or nephew, maybe you have grandchildren that you see once in a while, or even every day. At some point in your life you'll probably have an opportunity to influence a child and help them to learn good things.

Tammy: (singing) "This is the way I wash my face, wash my face, wash my face; this is the way I wash my face so early in the morning."

Do you ever sing to your children? I often sang to my children when they were young. This was a favorite. The songs I sang may be different from the songs you might sing.

I believe that singing to a young child is a natural way to begin teaching them many things. Not too long ago our friend Emily was here telling us all about this. Using music makes the words easier to remember. I added other verses to the song, "This is the way I brush my teeth/put on my clothes/pick up the toys." Children love music so much! Work time can become a learning time when you add music. And words are easier to remember if there's music with them.

Carol: Very young children can begin learning many things at home. We don't need to wait until they go to school. Learning can be very natural. You're teaching your child when you simply do things together. You can just talk together as you go through your day. Here are some ideas that you might try:

Talk about objects in your home and in your neighborhood. For example, a chair...you might say: "This chair is made from wood. The wood comes from a tree." Then ask, "What other things come from trees?" You might talk about fruit, firewood, paper.

You can point out colors. You might say, “The sun is yellow. So are these bananas. Can you see anything else that’s yellow?”

Tammy: Do your children love to help you cook? They can count as you chop things up or measure ingredients.

You can count the steps as you climb them...up – then down.

Talking to your young child as you work makes it more fun for you and lots of fun for your child.

Carol: And then if you have books to share, you can open a child’s world to many new ideas. Is there a library near you or a place where you can borrow books? If not, you could make your own books. Cut pictures from newspapers and magazines. Or draw simple pictures. Then write the names of the objects under the pictures. These homemade books are great learning tools. When children are ready to read, they can read the labels on your homemade books!

Tammy: I hope you’ll enjoy sharing knowledge with your child each day. It’s a privilege to be responsible for their early education isn’t it! And enjoy their questions! You might have to ask someone *else* for the answer... but then, you never know what *you* might learn.

Tammy: Here we are together on *Women of Hope*. No matter what our goals or desires are for our children, they won’t get there if we don’t help them develop strong roots. What do we mean? Here’s our friend, Marli with some good ideas about helping our children to grow roots. Welcome Marli....

Marli: Thank you Tammy...and Carol. Hello my friend. I love to give gifts, especially to my children and grandchildren. If you're a mother, a grandmother, or an aunt, I’m sure you do too...and enjoy seeing their big smiles. And did you know that God loves to give gifts? In God’s word, Jesus Christ said: “If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him.” (Matt 7:11) We have a Father in heaven who loves us and wants to give us good things like peace, joy, love and hope.

Someone said that ‘the best things a mother can give to her children are roots and wings.’ Roots and wings! That’s interesting. I thought that food, a home, sending them to school and toys were good gifts, but how can I give them roots and wings? Well, let’s think about this: We know that for a tree to grow strong, it has to have deep roots that reach into the soil and get the water and nutrients it needs. These roots must go deep into the ground so when storms come, the tree will stand.

Life is full of storms, isn’t it? All goes well till something unexpected happens such as an

accident...the death of a loved one...a fire in our house...cancer...or a child involved with drugs. These are life's tragedies. They happen to all of us. And when these storms come, some of us stand firmly on our feet, while others break and fall. Why? Well, just like the tree, if the roots are not strong, the tree falls down. Let's look at three parts of the root system we can give to our children.

Firstly, a good mother gives the *root of love* to her children. It's very important for children to know how much they are loved by their parents...and by God. But if parents abandon or abuse their children physically, sexually or verbally, how will they believe that God loves them? Children also need to have faith in God. Not in just any god, but in the true, living God, the creator of the Universe, and in His Son, Jesus Christ. The one who became a man, to live and die for our sins, so we can live forever with Him in His heaven when we die.

Jesus Christ loves children so much! He said: "Let the little children come to me." This shows the love of God for children. And God wants parents to love their children too... Do your kids know that you love them? I did not know that my father loved me for many years. He was very good to me, but he never showed me any affection until something very sad happened to me. I remember my strong dad suffering, hurting with me. That was the first time I saw him cry. But, by then I was 18 years old. All those years I wondered if he truly loved me. That day, I saw his love expressed in his tears. To survive well and grow strong, children need your love...just as trees need roots to stand firm when storms come.

Secondly, a good mother also gives the *root of discipline* to her children. The Bible teaches that children should be obedient to their parents, for one simple reason: because it is right. God gives parents to children, and those who care for them, because they need us. They need love, instruction and guidance. I have seen so many parents neglect their children, by not giving them any discipline or direction. When they grow up, the results are disastrous. Now, let me tell you the difference between *discipline* and *punishment*. Discipline trains a child for the future, while punishment is only for a short time. Discipline, and punishment, both have to be part of a loving relationship. If not, children are likely to become rebellious. Too many parents punish their children harshly, abusing them physically, because their anger gets out of control. They punish the child, but in the end, they do not teach them anything. Children must learn to obey their parents so they will know how to obey God. So my friend, let's give roots to our children by teaching them to obey their parents, so that they grow well and are able to stand firm, no matter what comes their way.

Another third root you can give your children is the *root of security*...a happy home, full of love and respect for each other. No fighting, screaming or verbal abuse. A place where they can feel safe.

When I was growing up, we did not have much to live on, but we did have a happy home and I knew I was safe. Your children, my friend, will be able to go through any storm in life if they feel secure and safe with you in your home.

Now you might say, “Marli, no one ever taught me these things. How can I give these roots to my children?” You can pray to God and ask for wisdom. He promises to give wisdom to those of us who ask for it. Then, remember that the Bible, the Word of God, is the greatest instruction book for parents. In it you can find so many wise words. If you have a Bible, start reading it today. Read it to your children. This is one of the most precious gifts you will ever give to them. You see, this will give them the security they need to be like the tree that the Bible talks about in the Psalms. (Ch1 v3) ‘They are like trees planted along the river bank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither and they prosper in all they do.’ This means that when the storms of life come along we can stand firm, trusting, in faith, that God is in control of our lives. What a powerful example for our children.

Now, just remember that faith is a *gift from God*. You cannot buy it with good works, money or sacrifices. God wants to give you this gift through the Lord Jesus Christ freely. If you do not know how to receive this gift from God, please contact us. We will pray for you and answer you if we can. Roots of love, roots of discipline and security are great treasures to give to your children.

Now, how about the gift of wings? Well, I’ll tell you all about wings next time. So, make sure to be listening. I know you will be blessed.

Tammy: Do you remember that little story we started with? The one about the mother teaching her child to swim? She was giving her child roots of love and security, wasn’t she? Her child was developing strong roots of trust.

Did you know that you are also being given roots? God, your heavenly Father, is helping you to grow strong roots in your life each time you have to go through difficult times. Yes, we may feel afraid or distressed during times of growth, but we can trust in our heavenly Father. God’s word says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5 NLT)

Carol: Once again, it’s time for us to go. This program is called *Women of Hope* because we want to leave you with hope and strength for each day. And we hope you can experience peace wherever you are.

You may not have thought about it, but Tammy and I need hope and strength and peace in our lives

too. We are all women and we all need to know we are loved. Yes, we are from different cultures, but we have similar hopes and needs. We'd love to get to know you.

Tammy: You can contact us at... TWRWomenofHOpe@twr.org. That's TWRWomenofHope@twr.org.

If you have missed a program or would even like to hear one again you can do that on our website TWRWomenofHope.org that's TWRWomenofHope.org. or by visiting us on our Facebook page.

Carol: So until next time, at the same time; remember life will have storms, but with God's help we can stand firmly on our feet and pass on the roots of love, security and discipline to our children...and those we love. Have a great week filled with God's blessings.

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