



12 Secrets YOUR Kids Want YOU to Know

**Cameron Colan, Grace Colan,
& Lexi Colan**

Foreword by Tom Ziglar



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Please LISTENUp, Parents

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DEDICATION

*For our parents,
and parents everywhere.*





*Our children are
our only hope
for the future,
but we are their
only hope for the present
and their futures.*

– ZIG ZIGLAR



CONTENTS



Foreword	7
Introduction	9
1 Keep Things in Perspective	13
2 Accept Us	19
3 Be Real	25
4 Talk with Us	31
5 Create Connections.....	37
6 Be Consistent	45
7 Expect the Best	53
8 Encourage Us	59
9 Spread Gratitude	65
10 Take Care of Yourself	71
11 Be Present	77
12 Live What You Teach	83
Thank You for Listening.....	91



foreword

Over the course of my dad's career, he spoke to hundreds of thousands of business leaders. As much as he shared strategies for

business success, he always came back to taking care of our home front first. Being a leader on the home front starts with us being positive role models for our children.

So, I was honored to be invited to write the foreword to *Please Listen Up, Parents!* Lee Colan and I have been friends for some time, and we have shared parenting and life principles at many a meal together. I know his home to be a place of refuge, and his children to be go-getters – and this book is proof!

How refreshing to read a “how to” book from children to their parents! These young authors are very transparent and honest in their advice and suggestions, never accusatory or critical. This book is a delightful expression of positive, upbeat insights and illustrations that will help any family grow stronger and closer.

I believe this book has great value to parents, grandparents, and all others who contribute to young lives.

Tom Ziglar

President/CEO, Ziglar, Inc. and proud son of Zig Ziglar

The first duty of love is to listen.

– PAUL TILLICH

Introduction

Parents, we love you,
and we know that you
love us. We know that
you work hard at being
a parent. We kids don't
come with an instruction
manual, and each one of

us is different, which means we each need special care and handling. Maybe that's why there are so many books and blogs out there about parenting.

We think something is missing in all the talk about parenting: our perspective. As kids, we think we have something to contribute to the conversation. We have different perspectives than you about a lot of things that affect our family, but we don't always have the chance to share them with you.

We know we're supposed to listen to you, and we try our best ... even if we don't always succeed. But we have some secrets to share from our point of view that you might find helpful. So for just a few minutes, please listen to us.

We've heard you tell us to be part of the solution, not the problem. (See, sometimes we are listening even if it might not seem like it!) So, after each secret (chapter) we've included some Ideas for Action that we hope will help you and your family grow and succeed.

You know the saying, "From the mouths of babes often comes truth and wisdom"? Do you believe it's true? We're asking you to open your hearts and minds and **please listen up!**

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he or she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

– MAYA ANGELOU

1 Keep Things in Perspective

Parents, does this sound like something you or your friends might say about kids today?

Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders and love chatter instead of exercise; they no longer

rise when elders enter the room; they contradict their parents; gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers.

Believe it or not, this is what adults thought about kids in the ancient world, over 2,000 years ago, according to Cambridge scholar Kenneth John Freeman. You see, over the ages, not much has changed in how adults view younger generations. So, we're asking you, as our parents, to keep things in perspective.

Think back to the things you did as a kid. We appreciate that you don't want us to make the same mistakes you made and that you want us to benefit from your life experiences. Even though sharing your experiences can be helpful, the best way for us to learn is from our experiences and mistakes. So, keep in mind that we are still figuring things out.



*Good judgment comes from
experience, and a lot of that
comes from bad judgment.*

– WILL ROGERS



Even we kids realize that life is more like a marathon than a sprint, so we have to pace ourselves. With all the competitiveness in school and sports, it can feel like we are in a race to nowhere. Earning that “A” in math class, winning a gold medal in the science competition, getting the solo in the recital or winning that game might seem really important in the moment, but we depend on you to help us keep life in perspective.

Our grandmother Rose Colan often said, “This too shall pass.” It helped her keep perspective during challenging times. This wisdom appears in the works of Persian poets

and in Jewish folklore from King Solomon – quite a few years before we heard our grandmother say it! It comes from a fable in which a powerful king asks wise men to create a ring that would help him both in good times and in bad. After much thought, the sages handed him a ring etched with the simple words, “This too shall pass.” Apparently it worked!

In good times and in bad, we need you to remember – and help us remember – **this too shall pass**. Our successes and accomplishments don’t automatically catapult us to the top of the world, and our mistakes and failures are not the end of the world, either. Even when we lose or don’t achieve a goal, we usually still enjoy the experience and learn about life and about ourselves.

Our relationship with you will go through peaks and valleys. When our relationship is great, enjoy it. When things get difficult, remember that no situation is permanent. Taking these words to heart will help you keep a positive outlook when we do the things that kids do.

All of life is peaks and valleys. Don't let the peaks get too high and the valleys too low.

– JOHN WOODEN

Being a family is a team sport, and we each have an important role. As our coaches, you have laid the foundation for us, and we’re building on it. But we’re still trying to figure out who we are and where

we're going. That means we're going to make good plays and bad plays. Sometimes we'll have good seasons and, sometimes, bad ones. Like any good team, each player has to learn from his or her mistakes and keep moving forward. We both need to keep things in perspective so we can encourage each other to improve and become a better team each day.

reminders

- 🔊 The way adults view kids has not really changed in the last 2,000 years.
- 🔊 In difficult times, remember: This too shall pass.
- 🔊 We learn important things about ourselves when we succeed and particularly when we fail.
- 🔊 Keeping things in perspective helps you enjoy the moment.

*Don't promise when you're happy,
don't reply when you're angry,
and don't decide when you're sad.*

– ZIAD K. ABDELNOUR

ideas for action

Keep Things in Perspective

- ❑ After a big success or a big disappointment, ask your kids to write down three things they learned about each situation, as well as what, if anything, they would do differently in the future.
- ❑ During times of adversity, help your kids create an action plan to move through the adversity and take control of any aspects of the situation they can.
- ❑ Write the phrase, “This too shall pass” on a piece of paper and post it someplace where you will see it every day (like your bathroom mirror). Seeing those words is a powerful reminder to keep life in perspective.

To be fully seen by somebody, then, and be loved anyhow – this is a human offering that can border on miraculous.

– ELIZABETH GILBERT

2 Accept Us

We don't expect you to be perfect, so let's start by taking that pressure off. Please don't expect us to be perfect, either, because we're still learning, growing and trying to find out who we are. Give us grace and time to get there.

Let us be us. That means appreciating what makes us different from you, our siblings and our friends. Sure, you are part of us. We get that (let's not get into the details). In some ways, we're a lot like you. But that doesn't mean we're *exactly* like you. It also doesn't mean that we're some kind of blend of our parents, either. We know God only made one of us – we are a one-in-seven-billion miracle. It might be hard to remember this when we're slamming doors in your face, but here's a secret: **You are our hero.** We love you with our whole heart. But that doesn't mean we want to be *you*. The world already has one of you,

and, honestly, we don't think the planet is ready for more. That would be way too much embarrassing dancing.

It's not about how big our differences are but the attitude you take toward our differences. If we're not zebras, don't try to paint stripes on our backs. Listen and watch for what makes us unique – what motivates us, how we learn, and how we express our feelings. Our grandmother used to say, “You can have 10 children, and they are like the fingers on your hands: Each one is different.” We agree, and we like being different. Each of us is good at certain things but struggles with others. We just want to know that you love and accept everything about us.

We love you unconditionally even though we might not say or show it like we should. Showing us unconditional love and support in real ways – by your actions and words – is all we want and all it takes for us to listen (most of the time). Let us know, regardless of our circumstances or accomplishments, that you can't love us any more or less. In other words, **love us for who we are and not only for what we accomplish.**

Don't get us wrong. We want you to smile, wave, stand up, cheer and scream (but not all at the same time!) when we break the curve, land the dismount, nail all the lines, play all the right notes, score the deciding point, or win the race. We want you to be proud of our accomplishments when it counts, but more importantly we want you to be proud of us when it doesn't count.

Remember your wedding vows? Part of it went something like, “for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow.” That’s what we mean – accept us and love us for who we are, for better or for worse, in good times and in bad.



*There is one thing we can
do better than anyone else:
we can be ourselves.*

– ARTHUR WARD



reminders

- ▶ We don't expect you to be perfect.
Please don't expect us to be perfect,
either.
- ▶ Appreciate what makes us different
from you, our siblings and our friends.
- ▶ Love us for who we are and not just
for what we accomplish.
- ▶ We want you to be proud of us just
for being us.

*The delicate balance of mentoring
someone is not creating them
in your own image,
but giving them the opportunity
to create themselves.*

– STEVEN SPIELBERG

ideas for action

Accept Us

- ❑ Divide a sheet of paper in half. On one side, make a list of five ways that your kids are (each) the same as you. On the other half, list five ways that your kids are different from you. Talk about why it's OK that you're different, and why it's even great!
- ❑ Write a card or letter to your children about a time when you were proud of them, not for a specific accomplishment but for who they are (someone who is reliable, honest, proactive, a loyal friend, serving of others, hard-working, etc.).

*It takes courage to grow up
and become who you really are.*

– e.e. cummings

3

Be Real

We need you to be a person, not just a parent. Seeing the real person behind the parent is one of the ways we learn from you. Admit your imperfections and vulnerabilities. Facing new obstacles in life can worry or scare everyone.

You might be older than

we are, but you still have to keep learning and changing, too. If you don't, we might outgrow you. Showing us that adults can make mistakes and be vulnerable helps us understand that it's part of being human. And it assures us that we're not alone in feeling that way.

It's OK to tell us, "I was wrong, and I'm

sorry." We usually need to apologize for our actions more than you do, but it sets a positive example for us when you acknowledge times that you've been wrong. The best way for anyone, kid or adult, to apologize is to:

1. Apologize for your actions or errors in judgment (not for getting caught or another person's reaction or feelings);
2. Ask what you can do to make it right;
3. Take action as soon as you can, no matter how uncomfortable you feel;
4. Then move on.



*Adults are just
outdated children.*

– DR. SEUSS



Tell us your stories, but not just the ones we've heard before about when you won the game, cured cancer or saved the world. We look up to you, so of course we love those stories, but the ones that stick with us are about your mistakes and failures and what you learned from them. Like the day you stole a pack of gum from the convenience store. Your mom found out and made you go back, pay for it, and apologize to the storekeeper. Or the

time you were a wallflower at the school dance and lost the chance to dance with the prettiest girl in school. Your stories may keep us from making the same mistakes (but no guarantees).

Sometimes, **laughter is the shortest distance between two people.** We love to laugh with you – and, yes, sometimes even at you! Humor brings heart to our relationship. It helps when you can laugh at yourself; it makes you real. It unites us, especially when we laugh together. Most of what happens in our normal, daily lives isn't overwhelmingly sad or happy. But we all say or do goofy things once in a while, so why not take those opportunities to laugh?

Laughter is also healing – it can reduce anger and lower stress. Finding humor in difficult or frustrating situations is the best medicine. Being able to laugh at a situation or ourselves helps us remember to keep everything in perspective and reminds us that we're all human.

*Always laugh
when you can.
It is cheap
medicine.*

– LORD BYRON

As we learn, change, and laugh with each other, we grow closer together, and that's what kids want from their parents.



For some real-time humor, here are a few of Lexi's original one-liners:

- What is a science teacher's favorite part of the body?

Her pupils.

- How do cheerleaders like their sushi?

Ra Ra Ra.

- Why are volleyball players good at hosting parties?

They are good at setting up.

- What does a baker need when he is sick?

Tender loaves and care.



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So for just a few minutes, please listen up.



“Parenting is the most rewarding and humbling experience in life. This book is a wonderful instruction manual for parents of kids of all ages. The Colan children are wise beyond their years. Enjoy their wisdom and apply their practical insights to help your family grow. Read and listen up!”

– David Cottrell,
Father, grandfather, and best-selling author of
Monday Morning Leadership

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