

Parents Know Exactly Where They Failed

Dear Ann Landers: My husband and I have raised three fine young men. A column we clipped quite a while ago was extremely helpful. If possible will you please reprint it? I want to have it framed and give it to our eldest when his child is born next month. — JLC

Dear JLC: Here it is: Congratulations and thanks for asking.

Dear Ann Landers: Rev. C. Galea was assigned to the Guelph Correctional Centre for his summer work. While there he developed excellent rapport with many young lawbreakers.

He asked the boys for clues as to why they had ended up in that institution. He then asked them to draw up a code for parents, zeroing in on specific areas where they had failed. Here it is:

1. Keep cool. Don't fly off the handle. Keep the lid on when things go wrong. Kids need to see how much better things turn out when people keep their tempers under control.

2. Don't get strung out from too much booze or too many pills. When we see our parents reaching for those crutches we get the idea that nobody goes out there alone and that it's perfectly OK to reach for a bottle or a capsule when things get heavy. Remember, chil-



Ann Landers

dren are great imitators. We lose respect for parents who tell us to behave one way while they behave another.

3. Bug us a little. Be strict. Show us who's boss. We need to know we've got some strong supports under us. When you cave in we get scared.

4. Don't blow your class. Stay on that pedestal. Don't try to dress, dance or talk like your kids. You embarrass us and you look ridiculous.

5. Light a candle. Show us the way. Tell us God is not dead, or sleeping, or on vacation. We need

to believe in something bigger and stronger than ourselves.

6. Scare the hell out of us. If you catch us lying, stealing or being cruel, get tough. Let us know WHY what we did was wrong. Impress on us the importance of not repeating such behavior.

7. When we need punishment, dish it out. But let us know you still love us, even though we have let you down. It will make us think twice before we make that same move again.

8. Call our bluff. Make it clear you mean what you say. Don't compromise. And don't be intimidated by our threats to drop out of school or leave home. Stand up to us and we'll respect you. Kids don't want everything they ask for.

9. Be honest. Tell us the truth no matter what. And be straight-arrow about everything. We can take it. Lukewarm answers make us uneasy. We can smell uncertainty a mile away.

10. Praise us when we deserve it. If you give us kids a few compliments once in a while we will be able to accept criticism a lot easier. The bottom line is, we want

you to tell it like it is. — A Reader Who Loves Kids

Dear Ann Landers: No need for you to blush because you called a tomato a vegetable. "Perturbed in Pittsburgh" is a nitpicker.

Last year in biology we learned the botanical definition for a fruit. It is "the developed ovary of a seed plant and its accessory parts which help to distribute the seeds." Therefore, a tomato technically is a fruit. So are peas, bean pods, nuts and burrs. According to this definition, about the only things that can be called vegetables are carrots, beets, turnips and celery. (Corn is a grain.)

More backup from the Random House Dictionary. It says, "A vegetable is the edible part of a plant, as the fruit of a tomato."

Don't be so quick to haul out the wet noodle, Annie baby. You were right the first time. — Cheers From Lehigh Valley

Dear Lehigh: Many readers wrote to tell me I was right, but you were the only one who gave me a short course in botany. Thank you.