

Things to Teach Kids Before They Leave the House

1. WORK HARD: Hard work pays dividends. Experience has taught me that those who say “work smart, not hard” are either in a lucky situation that will change for the worse, or they are not very successful. Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment; it's the willingness to suffer through doing what you know needs to be done, even when you don't want to.

2. CREATE GREAT RELATIONSHIPS: Understand that it is through your relationships with other people that you will learn the most about yourself. Sometimes what you learn will make you feel good. But sometimes it won't. Sometimes what you see in the “mirror of your relationships” will make you feel sad or ashamed. But the truth only hurts when it should, so examine yourself and work hard to change the things you don't like. Be a good friend, spouse, partner, etc. (also see Communicate Well). And always remember: Having the strength to remove people from your life to make room for improvement is the hardest and most important act of courage you will face (also see Be Assertive).

3. ALWAYS DO THE RIGHT THING: Everyone does the right thing when it's easy. Do the right thing, even when it's hard or expensive or painful. You'll get the most precious reward in return; true self-respect. Live with Integrity & Character. Remember: “How you do Anything is How you do Everything.”

4. APOLOGIZE: When you make a mistake, look the person you hurt in the eyes and say you are sorry. To get what you want or to do anything interesting, you're gonna make people mad or sad or both. Become a good apologizer. And be sincere. Be a “beg for forgiveness” not an “ask for permission” person. But don't be a jerk about it.

5. BE ASSERTIVE: You don't need to be aggressive, but to get what you want you will have to exercise the courage to take action in pursuit of your dreams; sometimes it will be scary. Remember: Fortune favors the bold. Go after what you want. Ask for what you want. There will be MANY times in your life when you don't know what to do; remember that being passive is always a bad choice. This is closely related to courage (Definition: Being afraid, but doing it anyway.) but courage is useless if not applied to getting what you want.



Things to Teach Kids Before They Leave the House

6. BE GRATEFUL: Don't take pride in things you have no control over. You are good looking and smart (and you have a really cool dad). But you didn't work for these things. They are gifts, so you should be grateful for them, not cocky. Be proud of the accomplishments that you work hard for, and earn. Be proud when you do the right thing, especially when it was hard. Be proud when you are kind. Consider taking 60 seconds every day when you wake up to sit on the side of your bed and count your blessings. (count me twice ;)

7. HAVE FUN: Don't forget to be joyful; not everyday can be like a vacation, but hard work pays dividends and one of them should be a regular feeling of joy. And don't forget to share your joy with the people you love.

8. FAIL OFTEN: It's feedback. And feedback is the breakfast of champions. Don't feel bad about failing (unless it's failing to be kind). If you are not failing a lot, then you are not doing enough.

9. BE KIND: Everyone is fighting a battle. And most people you meet are less attractive, well educated, financially comfortable, confident, don't have two loving parents, etc., than you. And you can't tell by looking. So cut them some slack. You are tough, and "can take a punch without being knocked down." Just because someone lashes out at you emotionally does not mean you need to return the unkindness. This will be hard sometimes. And you'll fail sometimes. When you fail at this, feel bad and make amends.

10. COMMUNICATE WELL:

A. EYE CONTACT: This is how humans make real connections and communicate without words. Learn about this. Practice this every day. Read *The Power of Eye Contact*.

B. POSTURE / BODY LANGUAGE: Your posture is a reflection of what's going on inside you. Your posture impacts how you feel and perform. Others learn about you and make judgments based in your posture. Watch the TED Talk on this subject. Consider being evaluated by a chiropractor who uses the Gonstead method.



Things to Teach Kids Before They Leave the House

C. CONVERSATION / SMALL TALK: If it does not come naturally, then learn to do this. Be interesting by being interested in your conversation partners. Read *The Fine Art of Small Talk*.

D. REMEMBER NAMES: Don't say to yourself "I'm bad with names." Get good at remembering people's name (see *Moonwalking with Einstein* 13%). Read *How To Win Friends and Influence People*.

E. WRITING: Learn to write clearly. People make judgments about you based on your written communications including email. Make your documents attractive; it's a reflection of who you are these days. In general, write in short sentences with small words, in a way that everyone can understand. Be able to summarize long or complicated Information in a simple, sensible way. Read *How To Write*.

F. PUBLIC SPEAKING: It's scary, but worth it. And the only way to get over any fear is "graduated exposure therapy" so take speech in school, and join Toastmasters. This is something you have to do; no amount of reading will help until you get out there and do it.

G. NEVER ASSUME you know what someone is thinking, always check for understanding. (ie, BLUE: Navy Blue, Baby Blue or Royal Blue?)

H. LEARN TO "WORK A ROOM": Really. If you are not comfortable approaching and meeting people, then work to get that way. Remember: Exposure therapy will conquer any irrational fear.

I. COLD CALLING: This is the most effective way to learn or get almost anything. Just ask Uncle Shaun. **PICK UP THE PHONE!** Call someone and ask for what you want; you'll be amazed how many people will say yes.

11. MEDITATE: Every study of the mind and body proves meditation is the key to health and peace of mind. Learn it. Practice regularly. It's better medicine than "medicine" for much of what ails the modern world. Read *Meditation As Medicine*.

12. SPEND LESS THAN YOU MAKE: Save 10% Give 10% and Live on 80% or less. Learn financial Mastery. Handle money well. Learn how to know



Things to Teach Kids Before They Leave the House

it, invest and MAKE IT! Learn to read a profit and loss statement, understand a balance sheet, how to create and stick to a budget, and how to handle cash flow. If you handle your money well, ESPECIALLY the consumption part, you'll never have to do something you don't like for very long. Think about that. It's REALLY important!

13. EAT AND DRINK MODERATELY: You are what you eat and drink. Americans eat and drink too much. Don't get into that bad habit. You come from a long line of people who ate and drank too much; so much that some of their lives were ruined. Be careful. It's easier to eat poorly than well. Exert the time and money to nourish yourself. You are worth it.

14. CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS: Exercise emotional control so you can be effective in all the roles you play.

15. DANCE: It's fun. Don't miss out because you feel silly or shy. It will connect you with others. Take lessons or practice with Mimi on some of the basic steps you should know. Learn some basic updated dancing for school functions and parties.

16. DEFEND YOURSELF: Emotionally, intellectually, and physically. Take a class. Know basic skills to keep yourself out of a bad situation to begin with. NEVER go to dangerous places alone, NEVER! Safety in numbers (groups). Make sure someone ALWAYS knows where you are and when you are returning. Keep a cell phone CHARGED and with you at ALL times in case of an emergency.

17. MANAGE TIME: What you spend each day doing is important because you exchange a day of your life for it. Spend a whole day with Franklin Covey learning how to use a planner (I'll pay).

18. READ GREAT BOOKS: The smartest people in the world have always felt compelled to memorialize their hard work in books. Don't let their hard work go to waste. You can spend your down time with "anesthetic" (TV) or "quality nutrition" (great books); make a good choice.

19. STAY ORGANIZED: How to create and maintain a file system for your important stuff. Read a book or two about it, including To Do, Doing, Done. Master the fundamentals of a work breakdown structure (Read the



Things to Teach Kids Before They Leave the House

"work breakdown structure" Wikipedia article. Also see Project Management).

20. LEARN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: I teach a class. Take it. Learn to professionally manage the scope, budget and schedule of big projects, and how to create a sensible work breakdown structure. You'll be rewarded handsomely.

21. HAVE GREAT SEX: Be patient and thoughtful with every aspect of sex. If your partner feels bad about it before, during or after, then it was the opposite of great. "Have great sex" does NOT mean "have a lot of partners." Sex is very powerful; both for good and bad. Sex can elevate your best days. Sex can cause your worst days. Don't take it lightly. Don't use people. And like all important things in life, take some time to learn to do it well (also see above Always Do The Right Thing, Be Assertive and Read Good Books).

22. COMPETE: Everyone, especially men, must compete to have the best things in life. It's a fact. Get comfortable with this fact. Thrive on it.

23. BE A SAFE DRIVER: Never drive in the blind spot of another driver. Pay attention. Don't drive in the slow lane. The best lanes are in the middle (especially in the rain as water collects on the sides of the road). Anticipate what other drivers may do. Think ahead. Talk to Uncle Shaun about this.

