emotions have a way of creating a mental fog that prevents people from thinking through issues rationally. As we have explained, this effect is greater in teenagers since the rational part of their brain is still developing.

Imagine a group of teenage boys who think it would be cool to see who can throw a rock the farthest. Each of them picks up a smooth stone and throws it without thinking. Suddenly, there is a horrifying sound of glass shattering. The neighbor’s kitchen window is broken, and the boys take off running. In seconds their emotions shifted from excitement, fun, and challenge to fear, embarrassment, and dread. Now they wonder, What are we going to do?

In many instances the rational part of the teenage brain kicks in after the damage is done. This same process affects teenagers’ selection of friends, dating practices, choice of music, and use of technology.

However, from a Christian perspective, information about the brain and its development should not be used to excuse sin. The brain cannot be the scapegoat for heart issues. Jesus clearly told us that sins of the heart defile a man:

---

**Figure 4.1**

(Adapted from Bradberry & Greaves, Emotional Intelligence 2.0)
The indulgent parent is low on control and high on involvement. The authoritarian parent is high on control and low on involvement. The authoritative parent is high on both control and involvement. The uninvolved parent is low on both control and involvement.

Discussions of parenting styles often center around parenting young children or teenagers, but understanding and awareness of different parenting approaches are also relevant to parenting young adults.

Parenting an adult child can feel overwhelming, and many parents are uncertain how to begin. The transition from parenting to mentoring is a process that includes establishing boundaries and expectations, and resolving conflict. We will examine each of these elements as well as the importance of partnering in spiritual growth and preparing for the future. Finally, we will discuss the emotional and mental battles of young adults and when and how to make an intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Control</th>
<th>Low Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Involvement</td>
<td>Authoritative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Involvement</td>
<td>Indulgent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## POSITIVE STEPS FOR SINGLE PARENTS

### Organization
- Make “to-do” lists
  - Pare them if necessary
- Simplify tasks
  - Easy-to-prep food
  - Combine errands into one trip
- Plan ahead
  - Lay out clothes the night before
  - Pack book bags, lunches the night before
- Get organized
  - Use your smart phone, fridge board
- Use your time off to your advantage
  - Precook, freeze meals
  - Perform car maintenance
- Enlist help
  - Delegate tasks when appropriate
- Prioritize activities
  - Learn to say “no” when needed

### Managing Family Responsibilities
- Make reliable care arrangements
- Use a mix of paid, volunteer caretakers
- Plan for the unexpected
  - Have a “lifeline” or back-up care plan
- Spend quality time with loved ones
  - Helps you and your child
- Keep communication lines open
  - Ensure your child can reach you
  - Ensure you, caretakers can reach each other
- Develop a united front
  - Caretakers should know, follow your rules
  - Keep discipline style, expectations consistent

### Spending Quality Time Together
- Spend one-on-one time with your child
  - No distractions or others involved
- Enjoy relaxed, quiet time with your child
  - Walks, bike rides, etc.
- Establish rituals
  - Special meal night, etc.
- Let your child see your fun side
  - Hobbies, interests, laughter
- Develop common interests
- Allow your child space
- Set up rules for mutual respect
  - Tone of voice when speaking
  - Apologizing when wrong
  - Listening without interruption

### Household Management
- Use a family calendar
- Keep track of all appointments in one place
- Review commitments weekly to plan
- Set up a central command station
  - Mail, keys, things for next day in one place
- Reduce clutter
  - Save time by not looking for things
- Use checklists
  - Grocery lists, chore lists, etc.

---

11 *Single Parenting*. Life Event Management Services #7574; US Department of Health and Human Services; 2011 (used with some adaptation).
Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focusing on the Positive</th>
<th>Communicating about Being a Single Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your family</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents often form strong bonds with child</td>
<td>Talk early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your child</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for growth, maturity, independence</td>
<td>Children typically more aware than we think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your coparent</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model the respect that you wish to receive</td>
<td>Initiate the conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find ways to cooperate when possible</td>
<td>Seek appropriate, safe times to talk openly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate clearly and effectively</td>
<td>Be open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yourself</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved organization, self-reliance</td>
<td>Your child should feel safe to express feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tailor the message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider developmental stage, maturity of child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicate well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be encouraging, supportive, and honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be patient; listen without interrupting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Taking Care of Yourself**

Practice Sabbath

Prayer, Bible reading, quiet time with God

Set aside time each day to recharge

Eat a balanced diet

Avoid consistently eating from a bag or on the run

Exercise regularly

If time is an issue, make routine choices that increase physical activity

Establish good sleep hygiene

No eating or screen time while in bed

Adjust schedule as necessary to accommodate six–eight hours of sleep per night

Establish a good support system

For your child (mentors, friends, extended family)

For you (support groups, fellowship networks)

Develop a social life separate from your child

Seek help when needed

Pastoral support

Professional counseling
Cindy Miller

intentionally damaged will follow the same cycle. Even couples who are relatively healthy may see themselves moving through this cycle as they develop a deeper, richer, mature love. This relationship cycle is repeated in every type of relationship. Some use the cycle in family relationship work, others review the cycle to determine where they are stuck in their relationship with God. Couples can use this cycle to pinpoint what has gone wrong and make intentional choices that will restore the marriage.

**Figure 8.1 The Relationship Cycle (Miller, 2004)**

**RELATIONSHIP CYCLE**

- Transformation
- Infatuation
- Vows
- Expectations
- Disappointment
- Distance
- Revelation
- Repentance
- Reconciliation
- Reflection

**INFATUATION**

During the attraction period of early courtship, a couple often view each other through the lens of romantic passion. Both partners may believe they have found the perfect match. Each may view the other as more emotionally healthy than they
All this effort should lead to transformation in the heart of each spouse and in the marriage. With a transformation in the heart and marriage, there should be evidence of spiritual maturity. Maturity enables us to accept influences. “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17, NIV). At the same time, while we both influence and are influenced, we must release the work of change to God.

The process is more circular than linear. In other words, relationships will go through this process many times, and each time couples will experience a deepening of commitment to each other, a more mature love, and higher levels of marital satisfaction. This cycle is repeated in every relationship. However, if not done well, it will lead to the aborted cycle.

Figure 8.2 The Aborted Cycle
### Figure 12.1 Content and Intent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEGATIVE CONTENT, NEGATIVE INTENT</th>
<th>POSITIVE CONTENT, NEGATIVE INTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOSSIP (TITUS 3:2-4)</td>
<td>FLATTERY (PROVERBS 29:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLANDER (EXODUS 20:16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIES (REVELATION 21:8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELITTLING (RAILING) (I CORINTHIANS 5:11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REBUKE (ECCLESIASTES 7:5)</td>
<td>ENCOURAGEMENT (SEE COMMENT BELOW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENTREATY (I TIMOTHY 5:1)</td>
<td>COMFORT (I THESSALONIANS 4:18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BLESSING (ROMANS 12:14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDIFICATION (I THESSALONIANS 5:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GRATITUDE (I THESSALONIANS 5:18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVE CONTENT, POSITIVE INTENT</td>
<td>POSITIVE CONTENT, POSITIVE INTENT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Benefits of Gratitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Vocational</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved sleep</td>
<td>Better management</td>
<td>More socially outgoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduced illness</td>
<td>Improved networking</td>
<td>Healthier marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased energy</td>
<td>Goal achievement</td>
<td>Deeper relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased exercise</td>
<td>Increased productivity</td>
<td>More friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Longer life</td>
<td>Improved decision-making</td>
<td>Kinder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More relaxed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More positive mood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More resilient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better memories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less envious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less materialistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less self-centered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More optimistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More spiritual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More socially outgoing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix B
Paul warned the Christians of Galatia: “If you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!” (Galatians 5:15, NKJV). Martin Buber (1961) said, “What is within strives over and over again toward becoming language” (p. 355). When our family members hear our inner selves being expressed in our communication with them, they should hear love and support, rather than injurious thoughts.

So regardless of content, our family communication must have the proper, positive intent. It should be honest and open, and edify and instruct the hearers. In many areas of research, we learn a great deal about the normal by examining situations of extreme challenge—the practice of family communication is no exception. Emerging from current research is a model of family systems outcomes that emphasizes the crucial nature of family communication for children who are exposed to traumatic events. In secondary school students referred for counseling, problem family communication tended to be associated with the development of post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as with symptom severity. In contrast, open family communication tended to shield children from the development of PTSD, and to foster resiliency (Acuña & Kataoka, 2017):

These two principles of family communication—reliability of truth and constancy of purpose—should naturally flow from the spousal relationship into the parental structure that facilitates a...
Communicating with the Family

Our communication should be compassionate and centered on the growth, development, and maturity of the family members with whom we speak. However, as parents, we do have to work at it, because such communication may not come naturally. Research has shown, in fact, that compassionate communication that individuals normally engage in may be lacking when they communicate as couples, owing to marital pressures (Newberg & Waldman, 2010).

During a typical day, a father will speak about seven thousand words; a mother, thirteen thousand (Bowers, Perez-Pouchoulen, Edwards, & McCarthy, 2013). These words shape the environment of our home and determine what type of parenting our children experience. Jesus taught that we would give account in judgment “for every idle word” (Matthew 12:36, NKJV). The Greek word translated as “idle” in the text is argos; it denotes being “useless” or “unemployed” (Strong, 1995). With respect to the words we use to shape our children’s lives, what job descriptions should we give to our speech? How should we communicate effectively, and what environment should our words help to create?

When exploring parental communication, classic research by Diana Baumrind (1991; 1978; 1967) identified two domains—demandingness (control) and responsiveness (acceptance)—that can be utilized to conceptualize four distinct parenting styles:

- **Permissive**
  - “Have it your way”
- **authoritative**
  - “This is the way . . . let’s discuss it”
- **Authoritarian**
  - “My way or the highway”
- **Neglectful**
  - “You’re in the way”
### PRO TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION

#### Establishing Healthy Communication Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Managing Emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t interrupt</td>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathize</td>
<td>Seek to understand reasons for actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show respect</td>
<td>Self-control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve judgment</td>
<td>Consider results of actions before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen for what isn’t being</td>
<td>taking them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>said</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use (and observe) body language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Talking

| Use “I” phrases (they’re less threatening) | Relaxation                           |
| Encourage open-ended conversation         | Learn to take deep breaths; slow     |
| Restate what has been said                | down                                 |
| Respond, rather than reacting             |                                        |
| Be specific; stick to the discussion at   | Problem-solving                      |
|  hand                                     | Seek the underlying cause of          |
| Avoid lecturing                           | emotion                               |
| Be positive; seek to outweigh criticism   | Positive thinking                     |
|                                           | In conflict, assume positive intent   |

**Notes:** Single Parenting. Life Event Management Services #7574; US Department of Health and Human Services; 2011 (used with some adaptation).
### Resolving Conflict

- Determine underlying cause of the conflict
  - Best approached prayerfully
  - May require professional help
- Pay attention to patterns
  - Consistent themes require work
  - Random conflicts may indicate attention-seeking
- Don’t attempt resolution when emotions are high
  - Table the issue; agree to revisit later
- Set up routine times for discussion
  - Family council to set goals, discuss rules

### Building Self-Esteem

- Sincerity
  - Use specific, meaningful praise
- Security
  - Love, stability should be foundational
- Involvement
  - Supporting one another in activities denotes value
- Belonging
  - Engage with a community of caring people
- Purpose
  - Explore God’s plan for each family member
- Trust
  - Keep promises to others
  - Trust them to keep promises to you
- Responsibility
  - Help each family member to develop in his/her role
- Decision-making
  - Support agency of each family member
- Acceptance of failures and mistakes
  - Frame them as learning opportunities
- Use the moment to demonstrate consistency of love
Structure, Limits, and Discipline

Parents are parents; children are children

A family is not a democracy; parents should lead

Set clear expectations

House rules may be posted as a reminder of what is to be done, not to be done

Be consistent

Predictability is nurturing for children

Follow through with consequences

With rewards

With punishments

Be proportional

Avoid magnified consequences for small achievements or offenses

Pick your battles

Respond; don’t react (or worse, overreact)

Don’t forget positive feedback