

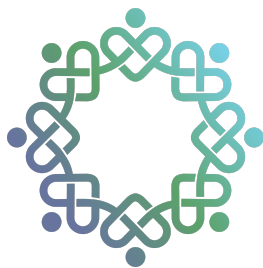
A ROADMAP

Real and Practical Ways Parents
Can Connect and Love Their
Children Well



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John 15 Academy's Roadmap

Real and Practical Ways Parents Can Connect and Love Their Children Well

by Janet Newberry

Do you ever feel lost in the world of parenting? If so, you're not alone. Parenting can feel like a long journey. What's important in a day spent with your infant seems to change when your baby becomes a child. The world tells us adolescence comes after childhood, and there doesn't seem to be any good way to lead anyone through adolescence.

The parenting journey is noisy. It's crowded and lonely, all at the same time. You get pushed around, sometimes by the ones you're trying to lead. You have thousands of decisions to make and a seemingly endless number of voices telling you which way to go. That's a lot to sort through - and tomorrow, there'll be more.

Together, there is great hope. John 15 Academy is here to help! We know a clear roadmap can help you go from uncertainty and chaos to confidence and trust. So we're proud to present *John 15 Academy's Roadmap - Real & Practical Ways Parents Can Connect & Love Their Children Well*, by Janet Newberry.

We've identified key foundational truths in the parenting journey and mapped out five powerful paradigm shifts you can make to build a culture of love and trust in your home.

Let's begin with the end in mind.

Where are we going? Where are we leading our children? Are they following our lead? What are some ways of relating that will encourage them to trust us so they will follow us instead of the culture - or their peers?

Let's start with these words from one of the most powerful books on this topic of the parenting journey from our friends at Trueface, [The Cure and Parents](#). Thank you, Bill and Grace Thrall, Bruce and Janet McNicol, and John and Stacey Lynch.

Parenting is about learning “...how to earn our children’s trust so we can receive the wonderfully transformative privilege of

- *giving our children love*
- *teaching them truth, and*
- *providing them guidance.*

(...) Because God’s primary goal is earning my trust so He can love me and increasingly mature me, correct my behavior, and free my life, I will attempt to offer the same for my child.”

Maybe you’re thinking right now: “That sounds beautiful – and still fuzzy. This is hopeful – and still unclear in practical ways.”

It is. Love is messy. Love takes the long road. The key ideas in this book – including the practical action steps we offer – are not a recipe for creating perfect children. Instead, they are a roadmap from the land of perfection to a kingdom of love and deep satisfaction.

Love is the fuel of maturity. Not fear. Not control. Love offers what perfection doesn’t. Freedom. Love is a safe place to grow up. Our roadmap begins and ends in this safe place.

These paradigm shifts are more of a dance than a prescribed sequence. Choose one – anyone – as a place to start. Give yourself permission to walk a new road. Take a deep breath and pray for your children to follow you on the loving road of freedom.

Paradigm Shift #1

The goal is connection, not perfection.

The road we get to lead our children on is a relational road. It is the “Follow Me” road rather than the “Be Good” road.

The key truth on this “Follow Me” road is this: **It is not in our perfection that we find intimacy,** no matter what the marketing world tempts us to believe. **It is in the safety of our sharing our imperfections and our God-given needs that we experience love.** Connection is the place of deep satisfaction.

Connection is the place where maturity happens and capacity is built. The “Follow Me” road changes everything, giving us the freedom to both mess up and grow up.

Here are a few symptoms you may notice if your children believe the goal is perfection instead of vulnerability and connection: hiding, blaming, bragging, justifying, or numbing.

We all need experiences that transform us - and these experiences don't happen when we're alone. We need opportunities to participate in real life and learn *with* someone we trust who's teaching us precepts and causes and effects at the same time we're experiencing intimacy, safety, and deep satisfaction.

On the "Follow Me" road, our needs and imperfections are not a cause for fear and shame; rather, they are the doors we open to let love in to have its effect. Love literally makes it possible to mature.

We don't have to hide our real needs. We don't have to pretend. We get the pleasure of loving others and meeting their needs, too. This life is what we are created for. This is living!

What does Paradigm Shift #1 look like and sound like?

Love looks like *moving toward* the one who is struggling instead of moving away. "Go after" the one who is having a hard time - not to tell them they are wrong, but rather to tell them they are loved. Offer the love that helps them instead of fear or control.

Let it be okay to mess up. Let messing up be an opportunity to receive help instead of condemnation or shame. Celebrate when your children let you help them and follow you back to emotional stability and a willingness to try again.

When their ship is in a storm, we get to be the anchor (not their rescuer). We get to offer strength because they need more resources than just their own. We get to model the kind of relationship God offers us. We want them to depend on Him - and that starts with us being dependable to them.

Apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5b, NIV)

We're tempted to believe the struggle will continue if we don't punish our children - or if we keep helping them. The opposite is most often true. And, honestly, our children can take advantage of love or law. But our children's struggles today will offer us many opportunities to offer them love and build trust.

This paradigm shift may look like -

- **A calm response to spilled milk or a painful report card instead of an angry one.** This may sound like, "I love you. Let's clean up this mess together." It may sound like "I love you. How can I help?"
- Starting our responses with **"I love you"** offers our children commitment, significance, and affirmation. It communicates **"I'm for you"** and **"I'm here to help you."** Fear causes more spilled milk and bad grades than love does.
- **Letting our children see us living lives of humility, trusting God and others with our own struggles.** Seek out personal friendships that offer wisdom when you struggle, too. This is

very different from living in an echo chamber with people who just agree with us in the places of our greatest struggles. Humility is very different than defending or justifying our immature habits.

- **Humility may sound like a calm response to a personal mistake instead of negative self-talk.** “I need to take a walk” or “go for a jog.” “I need to be reminded of who God says I am, no matter how many mistakes I make. I need to listen to wisdom and hope instead of lies and excuses.”
- Let your children hear you having a conversation with a trusted friend – admitting a personal struggle and listening and receiving affirmation. Shame causes more trouble than love does. **Choose to love yourself well. Trust others to love you, too.**
- Because this is the “Follow Me” road, we get to live lives of integrity and **model asking for forgiveness when our own life example is one we don’t want our children to follow.** Remember, the goal is intimacy, not perfection – for us, too.
- **Asking for forgiveness and doing the work it takes to rebuild trust is a way to reconnect.** Our children will learn this valuable and powerful reconnection dance because we model it for them – and we practice it together, often.

TAKE ACTION. Together, there is great hope. Choose one or more of these additional resources to help you lead your child on the road to connection rather than perfection.

- Linger in this blog – [“Why You Should Choose Vulnerability”](#)
- Listen for humility in this podcast episode, [“Exchanging Lies For Love”](#)
- Watch this video – [“Love is the fuel of maturity.”](#) Even better, watch this video with a friend or a small group. Connect and wrestle with the ideas together.

Paradigm Shift #2

**The goal for our children is to grow to be young adults,
not adolescents.**

Can you imagine a world without a season of life called adolescence? Honestly, you don’t have to look too far back in history to discover that adolescence hasn’t always been the stage we experience after childhood. Check out this graphic for the use of the word over time.

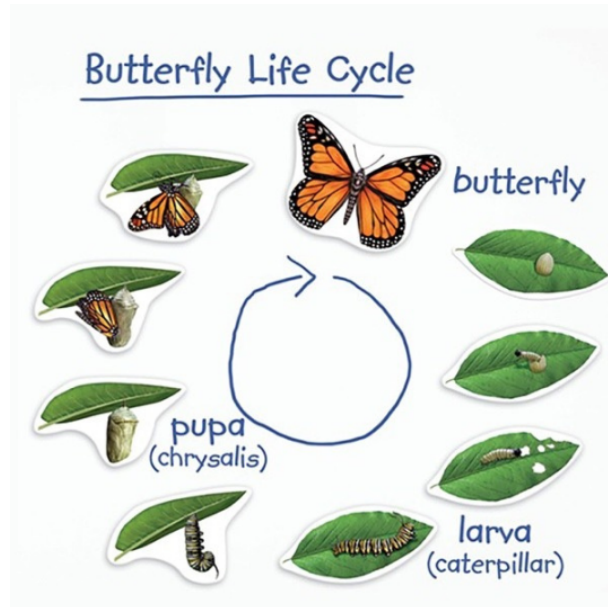
Use over time for: adolescence



In the beginning, God designed humans to move through these stages in real life: **infant, child, adult, parent, and elder**. We're not created to linger in a season of adolescence. Adolescence is a time of treading water, not growing up.

To help us climb out of the matrix of adolescence, let's first consider the life cycle of a butterfly. We have all perhaps learned these four stages:

egg – larvae (caterpillar) -- pupa (chrysalis) -- adult (butterfly).



Imagine for a moment that adult butterflies began to worry about caterpillars working too hard to spin a cocoon. Or imagine that caterpillars began to be fearful of the messy stuff that happens inside a chrysalis.

What if butterflies somehow started encouraging young caterpillars to keep eating longer and added a new stage of adolescence to this life cycle?

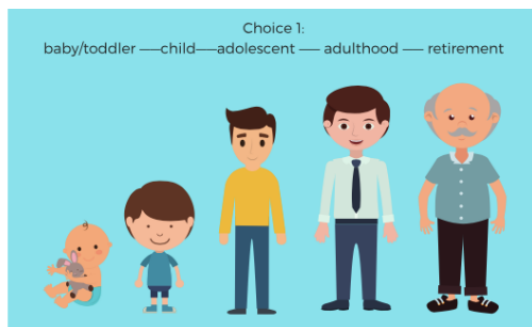
If we can wrap our minds around how weird and destructive this would be for caterpillars and butterflies, we can begin to unpack what's happening with our children - just in the last 100 years.

Only recently have parents had two primary paths to choose from as they raise their young and point them toward a secure future. Because we were unaware of all the experiences children needed - and because some events in history created [a perfect storm](#) that interrupted maturity, primarily for baby boomers, these two choices didn't become obvious until we could map out choice 1 in hindsight.

Choice 1: baby/toddler — child — adolescent — adulthood — retirement

Choice 2: infant — child — adult — parent — elder

Choice 1 is the life cycle of a person living stuck in a performance/pain relief cycle - like working in a factory or a coal mine. Thanks in part to the Industrial Revolution, life became a series of transactions, and our lifestyles began to be developed based on consuming instead of contributing.



For adults, this life cycle looks like spending a hard day at work to earn a paycheck, living for TGIF, or dreading Monday. It looks like collapsing in front of the TV or another screen. It looks like an addiction of various kinds to numb the pain: eating, drinking, shopping, porn...

"I do so I can get" replaced "I do because I am," or "I do because I care," or "I do because I trust."

When we believe that transactional relationships exist only in work environments and retail exchanges, we fail to notice all the other ways transactional relationships replaced transformational relationships - until now, when we're wondering why our children are struggling to mature.

During the younger years, this **Choice 1** life cycle sounds like, "Eat two more bites and you can have dessert." We learn to perform to get what we want - or to get something we need. In standardized education, children must perform to earn - grades, stickers, prizes, and privileges.

Children perform all day - like their parents, and soon everyone feels uncomfortable instead of fulfilled at the end of the day. Work is a grind instead of purposeful and personal. The grind

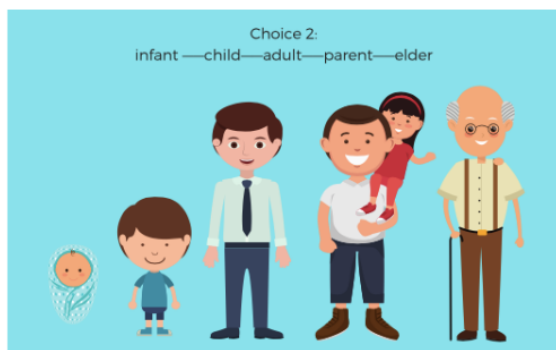
is painful. Pain often lies, especially in the stories we tell ourselves about God, ourselves, and others.

We need a break. We need to reflect. We need time to talk to God and others about what's helping our kids and what's hurting them, but everyone is racing so fast to achieve the American dream. We're afraid if we slow down long enough to experience restoration, we'll get behind.

So we keep pushing - ourselves, each other, and even our children.

Choice 1 is on the "Be Good" road we wrestled with in Paradigm Shift #1. It is a life of transactions. I perform to earn. I'm sometimes earning pain relief. I'm sometimes trying to earn love.

Choice 2 is our original design. It is the life cycle of a person living real life - the life we were created to enjoy in the beginning. I get what I need because I need it. In the experience of trusting the love that meets my needs, I become a mature me!



Choice 1 is experienced in a world I must pay for. I pay with my good behavior, my compliance, my skills, my talents, my standard-meeting performance, and my personal success. The more I perform and pay, the more I get - even if vulnerable relationships are not a part of my story.

Choice 2 is experienced in a world where mature others invest in me. I receive priceless gifts like affirmation, direction, correction, wisdom, attention, significance, and purpose. Receiving these gifts does something in me that money and my good behavior can't buy. Transformation is priceless - and it's the only way I'm going to grow up.

Life by design is sustained in relationships that help me mature. This life is lived in **JOY**. In work and leisure, **"It is good to be me here with you!"**

Adolescence happens when we require our children to earn what they want instead of inviting them to receive what they need. **Adolescence happens because we give our kids the stuff we can pay for, but we don't give them enough of the priceless stuff.**

Without receiving the love they can't earn, they'll get older, but they won't mature. Becoming a young adult is a transformational experience, and we cannot pay for transformation.

Transformation is priceless. We can't buy maturity.

Transformation happens because we trust and experience love. We discover our God-given identity and move into vocations because we know who we are, not just how much money we want to earn. We find deep satisfaction in relationships, and we delight in meeting the needs of others, too.

Life by design is on the "Follow Me" road we discovered in Paradigm Shift #1. ***I receive all I need to become who I am.***

I am offered good, true, and beautiful, and I develop a hunger for real life lived in truth, not fear. I develop relationships of trust with those who are leading me and with those I am leading, too.

Because I am growing up - and I know who I am - I discover the real me enjoys working, creating, restoring, designing, building, and leisure. I work hard because I know who I am and act like the real me. I enjoy rest and restoration, too.

What does Paradigm Shift #2 look like and sound like?

During the younger years with our children, this life looks like helping them trust and receive the love that meets their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. **It looks like leading our children and teaching them to do the real work of the home - and the world - alongside us.**

At home, this life looks like cooking, mowing, gardening, making beds, doing laundry - together. Our children get to learn how to do real work that offers them significance in the real world. Real life feels natural instead of so much like a chore. And working together provides time for priceless conversations.

As they grow up, it looks like our children helping others learn to do real things, too. Our children begin to know their strengths - and find deep satisfaction in loving others and meeting others' needs.

They help their siblings learn to read. They help them with their math homework. A young adult notices when Mom is beyond capacity and steps in to cook dinner or do the laundry. Without being asked, a young man mows the lawn so Dad can take him fishing on Saturday morning - or to watch a game.

Life flows in relationships that meet real needs. We are created to love one another.

The ditch of adolescence offers our children a season of self-focused preoccupation. This season is not serving them well. **Adolescence requires more and more pain relief because**

selfishness is painful. We are created to love and be loved.

Our children breathe in our beliefs about work – and working together.

- Work will be an opportunity to act like who we are – creators, restorers of beauty, gardeners, builders, designers, etc.
- Work will be a chance to connect and engage in conversation.
- Or work will be a chore that must be done perfectly or drudgingly, so I choose to do it myself – and then complain about it.

Work was not created as a punishment or a curse. We are workers because God is a worker and we are created in His image. We find deep satisfaction in restoring order to chaos and creating new things. **Working is in our DNA.**

Relationships are in our DNA, too. Our children grow up to be young adults when we include them in real work instead of just giving them chores they can do alone to earn money or a sticker.

TAKE ACTION – Together, there is great hope. Choose one or more of these additional resources to help you lead your child on the road to becoming an adult – instead of wasting years in the ditch of adolescence.

- Linger here – [The Birth of Adolescence](#)
- Consider this, too – [Making Adolescence History](#)
- [Watch this video](#), originally created as the first lesson in an online group experience called *Can We Come Home Again? Loving Your Child On The Road To Maturity*. Write down your questions and considerations and share them with a friend or small group.
- Find a friend or two who will take this step to live in the real world and the real life cycle with you as a family. Creating cultural change is vital and difficult. A community can lend you strength. **Declare your home an “Adolescence Free” home. Be sure your children know they get to grow up to be young adults. They don’t have to get stuck in adolescence.**

Paradigm Shift #3

Trade transactional relating for transformational relationships.

This Roadmap ebook started with a quote from one of my favorite books about the journey of a family growing up together. In [The Cure & Parents](#), early in Episode 1, the characters are setting off on a family vacation, arguing in the car. Dad insists on playing a parenting podcast because there are no good radio stations in the California desert.

The first words from the podcast narrator are startling:

When your children are young, being the parent carries enough control to handle them. But if you don't grow up as they grow older, your immaturity will stunt their maturity at the level of your own. And no measure of control can handle that. (p. 4)

This Roadmap paradigm shift starts with the C-word – control. Even if we don't admit it, we love it. When we don't have it, we crave it. When we're out of it, we sometimes go crazy – especially as a parent.

When we lose control, we freak out. We do weird stuff like ignore the behaviors we don't like or manipulate our kids with stuff that's not even good for them. Our unintentional goal is for them to cooperate with the script we're writing in our heads that tells us we're in control.

And our friends who wrote [The Cure & Parents](#) are absolutely correct. When our kids are young, we can pretend to be in control until we bring them home from the hospital. Lol! Maybe it's more accurate to say we can tell ourselves it's possible to be in control when our kids are young – and we'll believe the lie for a while.

As our children get older, most of us stop lying to ourselves. It doesn't take too many sleepless nights or temper tantrums to bring at least some truth from our humbled and tired stories. "This child is out of control!" is the confession of many a frustrated and caring parent.

The weird and counter-intuitive thing about out-of-control children is that they are a gift from God. He knows it's easy for us to deal with the compliant kids and the ones who seem to do things right for no reason at all. God also knows we don't know what to do when our children step outside our comfort zone.

And God knows our comfort zone is too small. He knows that our children will never experience the intimacy of love or the exhilaration of freedom if our goal for them is simply compliance with the standardized performance expectations of this world.

God's not concerned about children measuring up. God's delight is helping children grow up! He doesn't want us to be limited by the daily motive, "How do I get what I want?" God wants us to live truthfully in a big world with the motive, "How do I act like who I really am?"

Childhood is about FORMation, not ACTing. When we cooperate with the FORMation of our God-given stories, we behave differently than when we ACT outside of the stories that are meant to FORM us.

Here's a fun reminder to help you distinguish between these two primary ways of relating with our children. FORM and ACT are in the words transFORMation and transACTION.

TransACTions are what we can achieve on our own. TransFORMations require a trusting relationship with someone who gives us something we need so we can do more than achieve – we can mature.

You'll know you're asking your child to ACT when you use behavior modification language. "If you do ____, you'll get ____." This statement implies that the child CAN already do what we're asking them to do. If that's true, we're offering a prize simply to control their behavior. There's no FORMation required.

If the child CAN NOT do what we're asking them to do - because they're dysregulated, out of capacity, or simply because they're immature, requiring them to conform *will not* help them learn to self-regulate, *will not* increase their capacity, and *will not* help them mature.

We may get what we want. We may give them what they want. But we will be teaching our children to conform to the patterns of this world and missing an opportunity to walk with them in an experience that transFORMs them into the person God created them to be.

What does Paradigm Shift #3 look like and sound like?

These two triangles will help -

TWO WAYS OF RELATING

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One way builds trust and FORMs a child from within with love. The other way teaches a child to ACT so they can earn and consume, without helping them discover their true heart.

In the first triangle, the parent sits in a place of control, and the child must navigate life in ways that please the person in control. This sounds like, "If you finish your math, you can play your computer game."

Transactions can be implied, even when they're not spoken out loud. Children learn, "If I don't strike out in the game today, there won't be that shameful silence in the car on the way home." Children also perceive, "If I'm good enough, maybe Mom and Dad will stop fighting."

Transactional relationships teach children that good things happen when you make good choices and bad things happen when you make bad choices - so children try really hard to

be good so they can control their world. Or they give up and try really hard to rebel because they're convinced they'll never measure up.

In a "be good" world, there's no room for grace so there's no room for growth. Shame speaks louder than truth and children get older listening to the voice of fear instead of the voice of Love.

In the second triangle, parents abide with their children and help them look at life with more wisdom and capacity than the child has on their own. Abiding means sharing strength. Abiding means togetherness. Abiding means connection.

This looks like sitting next to your child instead of standing over them or sitting across the table from them while they're doing homework. It looks like joining them in the kitchen when they're dysregulated, but they know they have to unload the dishwasher before they go out to play.

Simply sharing a kind or funny conversation lends them strength so they can do the thing they don't want to do - not because they're conforming to a rule, but because they're a real person living a real life with other real people who really care.

This sounds like, "How can I help you with your math?" and "Let's clean up the kitchen together." At the end of a long day, it sounds like, "I've had a hard day so I'm going to go for a walk. You've had a hard day, too. Do you want to go on a walk with me? Or what will help you [complete your stress cycle](#) before you go to bed?"

Our children can learn to live in transformational relationships because they see us modeling this healing and maturing way of life. They watch us make choices based on convictions, not convenience. They listen as we have difficult but meaningful conversations with friends and mentors.

When we live from our true identity in Christ instead of simply grinding through each day in a performance and pain relief cycle, our children breathe in an atmosphere of "I do because I care," "I receive because I need," and "I give because you need." They learn that **together, there is great hope.**

TAKE ACTION - Choose one or more of these additional resources to help you trade transactional relationships for transformational relationships in your home.

- Listen to this LOVE IS FEARLESS podcast episode with your spouse or small group - [A Tale Of Two Wineskins](#). Share a meaningful conversation about your thoughts and your questions.
- Before our podcast was called LOVE IS FEARLESS, it was called BRAVE LOVE. Episode #41 is still one of the most downloaded episodes, especially for parents who are changing their

paradigms about childhood. Listen now to [*If I Don't Manipulate, How Do I Get My Kids To Do The Right Thing? Part 1*](#). You may decide to listen to [*Part 2*](#), too!

- Read Janet's book, [*Education by Design, Not Default - How Brave Love Creates Fearless Learning*](#), especially chapter 7, *Where Do We Begin With Young Children?* and chapter 8, *Where Do We Begin With Older Children?*

Paradigm Shift #4

Trade "be good" for "be loved and be you."

Paradigm shift #4 is your child's part of the mind shift, but they can't do their part without you.

Consider for a moment the sweet innocence of a brand-new baby. When babies are born, they're completely helpless - and we respond with the love that helps them. It's beautifully natural to meet their needs.

Newborns have no concept of what it means to "be good." They cry, and we hold them. We nurse them. We put them in beds built to keep them safe. We even wash their clothes in special detergent to protect their delicate skin.

We'd never consider putting a behavior modification chart in a newborn nursery. Loving comes easy when babies are small. They need. We provide. Because they trust us, they grow! That's transformation!

But somewhere along the way, fear interrupts this love story. When they don't stop crying, we get afraid something is wrong - with us or with them. If we don't talk to God about our fears, we'll self-protect or self-promote. We'll yell at our spouse. We'll pull away from well-meaning friends. We'll doubt ourselves.

When our children find their voice, they learn to say "No." We're so used to being manipulated by the world around us that we become indignant that this child might try to manipulate us, too. We start bargaining and bribing.

The older they get, the less we give them what they need. Instead, we give them what they deserve. We give them what they want even if it's not what they need so we can make them do what we want. This is the hinge in their stories when our children begin to spend more time in the kingdom of the world than in the Kingdom of God.

It was the hinge in our own stories, too. We can't give what we didn't receive. If we lived alone in our stories, the voice of fear held the pen. What we thought was normal was not God's truth. So, we get to let God redeem our childhood while He's inviting us to play a part in redeeming childhood for our children.

God's design for childhood relies only on the power of Love. Love casts out fear. His design for parenting is much like His plan for bringing life to a man formed from the earth. The **life-less** form **needed life - and God gave** him breath. **Adam received** God's breath, and the Sculptor's design on the lifeless ground in the garden suddenly made a man alive in the garden.

You've heard this story before, but don't rush past God's plan for raising children. **Those created in His image need His touch.** When we trust and receive, we come alive. We live free and purposeful stories! Our children can, too.

Those created in our image need our touch. They need us to give them what God gives us so that one day, they'll trust Him to love them, too. When they trust and receive, they come alive. They live free and purposeful stories when we give them the love that meets their needs.

But sometimes, our children are like us in ways we wish they weren't. Like Eve, we're afraid of missing out. Instead of receiving God's protection, we refuse it. Our kids do, too. Instead of receiving God's wisdom, we lean on our own understanding. Our kids do, too. Instead of running to God when we've made a mistake, we listen to the voice of fear and run away.

Our kids do, too.

Living too long with our fears makes things worse instead of better. In our performance-based culture, **we fall for the lie that we can behave ourselves to get out of our mess.** "If I just try harder," we imagine. "When I'm good enough," we dream.

We work to earn and sometimes succeed. But whether we succeed or fail, transactional living does nothing to carry away the lies we've learned from the voice of fear. It's not until we remember God is a good, good Father who never gives us what we deserve but instead who generously gives us what we need that we experience the power of being a child in the Kingdom of God.

Like newborns, God preferred it when we had no concept of what it means to "be good." He never puts a behavior modification chart in our rooms.

His plan has always been to meet our needs. When we have a question, He has an answer. When we need protection, He holds us close. He makes a way when we see no other way.

And we'll miss His story for our lives if we don't trust and receive His love that meets our needs. We'll make up our own truth instead of trusting His. We'll make up our identity instead of growing into the person He created us to be when He knit us together in our mother's womb. Our children will, too.

They'll grow older but not more mature because they're more comfortable listening to the voice of fear than they are to the voice of Love. Their brains will adapt and conform but won't

flourish and find fulfillment. Our children may meet the standards we're asking them to jump through, but if we don't meet their needs, their stories will be touched more by trauma than transformation.

What does Paradigm Shift #4 look like and sound like?

For parents, it looks like -

- **Participating in our own healing.** Only transformation can redeem what we learned in a culture of fear instead of love.

When I was writing this ebook, I was 61 years old. You would think by now that I'd have finished cleaning out the closet of old beliefs that don't serve me well, replacing them with true beliefs that do.

But I'm not. Who knew transformation was a lifelong adventure? Lol! The more I linger with Father in the power of His Love and the new discoveries about attachment theory, the more hope I find in trusting that today will offer fresh opportunities for truth-telling.

A habitual behavior that doesn't match with my God-given identity will bubble to the surface. Father and I will take time to find the part of my story that started that behavior. The story will probably be about a time in my life when I thought my caregivers would meet my needs if I met their standards. (Can you see the roots of my religious home?)

Father and I will sit with the story long enough for me to name the fear and the lie that built the coping mechanism I've used for decades. Then, I'll give God permission to demolish that neural pathway and build a new one with His truth and His Love.

Transformation works like this, I've discovered. I get to keep growing into the identity God formed in me from before the beginning of time. When He looks at me, He sees me whole - and He helps me on the journey to get there.

For parents, it sounds like -

- **Humility** - Love is a process of meeting needs. Needs don't make us weak. Needs make us human. Learn to be comfortable asking for help. This LOVE IS FEARLESS episode can help. [#75 - HUMILITY - WHERE HEALING BEGINS](#)
- **Vulnerability** - Find a few safe people who are participating in their healing stories, too. Give them permission to help you see what you can't see for yourself. Ask them, "How am I impacting you?" because they will speak the truth in love, not shame, and because you can hear them in love, not shame, too. This blog post can help you discern the vital difference between vulnerability and transparency. [WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE VULNERABILITY](#)
- **Truth-telling** - While I was writing this ebook, I was binging on Jaime Winship podcasts. He's teaching me about confession, repentance, and formation. [Jaime says](#), "To be stuck means I believe two things about life. One is, "I'm powerless." And two is, "I'm alone." When a person is in a situation where they're powerless, they're stuck. Pour your heart out to someone greater than yourself. Talk to your trusted community. Talk to Love. Talk

to God. Confess that you're carrying a rock, sinking with it, and letting it go. "The way I had this mapped out...I'm releasing it so that the new can come and the transformation (the reordering) can come. Thy will be done." The reality is Life is for you. God is for you. Then trust His reordering. There's joy ahead of you."

For children, paradigm shift #4 looks and sounds just like it does for us as parents. Our kids can't make this shift unless we do, especially when they're young enough to live with us in our homes. It's not just a tagline, friends. Together, there is great hope.

TAKE ACTION - Choose one or more of these additional resources to help you trade "be good" for "be loved and be you."

- John Lynch is a key catalyst in my own transformation story. John joins Doug and me in this LOVE IS FEARLESS episode, which is still the most listened-to episode in our podcast history. Listen to this episode at least once and then discuss it in the safe community you create for yourself and your family. [WHY LOVE IS THE ONLY WEAPON AGAINST SELF-SABOTAGE](#)
- These LIF episodes offer inspiration for this paradigm shift, too. [#124 - HOW DO YOU WRITE A LOVE STORY?](#) And [#125 - HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD LIVE A SECURE STORY](#)
- Transcription is a powerful tool for transforming your mind. Transcription simply means copying - word for word. My transcription journal is a green leather book I bought before a trip to Washington, D.C. In it, I copied all the inspirational words etched in the marble doorways of the Library of Congress. I copied Washington's prayer at Valley Forge on my visit to Mount Vernon. At the Lincoln Memorial, I transcribed parts of his Second Inaugural Address. I took the time to receive these words and savor them as gifts of truth and inspiration. Transcription is a life-giving discipline for parents and children.

Invest in a beautiful journal and begin to let the discipline of transcription inspire your mind. Start by copying this passage about the gift of affirmation by [Trueface](#).

Affirmation calls out our true identity.

The world is constantly telling us who we are and who we aren't. Most of those messages aren't good ones, and certainly not God-centered ones. We need help to remember who God says we are.

Affirmation is one of the most powerful ways we do this for each other. We call out the good that we see in another. We protect them by reminding them of what we see in their true selves.

Perhaps you have a friend that you have walked with for a long time, and you have seen their courage time and time again in the face of difficult choices. If they find themselves in a season of anxiety over a decision, affirming the courage that you have seen and experienced in them can be incredibly powerful.

A mother worrying over her relationships with her kids can be deeply blessed by someone affirming the gentleness and wisdom they see in her. A teenager struggling to navigate their peer group can be bolstered by affirming the uniqueness and vibrancy their parents see in them.

Affirmation helps us remember who we are when the world calls us to forget. We get the wonderful privilege of protecting each other, reminding each other, and calling out the good that Christ has already formed within us. @ TruefaceLife

Paradigm Shift #5

Believing the truth today is more important than trying to control the future.

Paradigm shift #5 is another step away from the kingdom of the world into the Kingdom of God. Consider this quote from [*Education by Design, Not Default*](#) -

Every child in the United States is selected to be a performer; there is no choice but to find their place in the standardized line. Strong ones get to be first; strong ones get to stay first. Schools are counting on their scores. Parents are counting on their grades.

Our country is depending on the performance of our children. Our economy demands we win the competition with other countries. Some children enjoy the training. Many are overcome with the anxiety experienced on the thirteen-year climb from preschool or kindergarten to graduation.

We tell the children that performing well is the road they must travel to live happily ever after. "Get good grades so you can get into a good college so you can get a good job so you can buy a big house and have children and teach them to get good grades..."

I think more children can sing this song than can sing our national anthem. It is a belief they wrap their lives around because it is a belief we've wrapped our minds around.

We've convinced our children they are the god of their future, and if they create enough worth for themselves, they'll create enough life for themselves. (p. 9)

In the Kingdom of God, we are created to enjoy a big world and grow up because we trust Him and others to help us, not because we get everything right all by ourselves. That's very different from the kingdom of the world, where we're programmed to expect our children to get everything right, so we have no choice but to offer them a standardized childhood.

The impact of living in an unreal world can be detrimental. Our children may believe they are perfect (or the best) when there is still much to learn. They may lose a personal sense of significance in a bigger story or develop a fear of risk - having lived in a small, pre-digested world where 100% is always the required standard.

The life we often offer our children can look almost like a sheet of graph paper with rows and columns of little squares. Today's goal is to color in today's box - 100%. At school, the standard is to make a 100 on spelling, math, reading, history, science, etc.

At home, we want our children to wake up in a cheerful mood, get dressed on time, be pleasant at breakfast, behave in the car, not move their clip or change their color at school, come home in a good mood, do their homework with a smile and with ease, be the best after school at baseball or dance or soccer...

OK, perhaps I'm exaggerating. Forgive me and please stay with me in this analogy. Think about our own day-to-day lives.

As a mom, this may look like getting up early enough to have coffee with your husband, working out and showering before the children need to wake up, having a warm healthy breakfast prepared, sending them to school with a smile and a healthy, creative lunch that includes crust-free bread cut in a creative new shape today - and a Bible verse written on a love note in their lunch box.

As a dad, this may look like waking up early enough to work out and make coffee before your wife gets up, bringing her coffee in bed and encouraging her to enjoy her time alone at the gym before the kids wake up, driving politely to work during the traumatic commute while listening to a Christian podcast, being more than prepared to exceed expectations on all your performance goals, and leading the community service project for your department.

Because coloring in the box doesn't seem to be enough - or because we don't find it personally satisfying, we keep adding more and more requirements to earn the right to color in today's square, declaring we've been 100% perfect today.

If I don't color in my whole square today, I start comparing mine to yours. At least if I did better than you, I might feel better. Or not.

We all go to bed knowing that tomorrow has its own square to color in - perfectly. If I don't - or my child doesn't, we start tomorrow "behind." If there comes a time when we string more than a few boxes together that prove we're "behind," unmet needs often become long-term issues, at least in our own minds.

Can I give you permission to throw away the graph paper and the small world life? We will never be satisfied with this life, even if we succeed at perfectly coloring in all the squares! We were not created for this life.

The life we are created to live – and offer to our children – looks most like a blank canvas rather than a sheet of graph paper. The life we are created to live gives each of us time to grow up and fully become the person we are created to be, in all of our uniqueness and giftedness – and with real needs, too.

“Becoming” doesn’t happen in 100% increments every day. **It is impossible to standardize childhood in the Kingdom of God.**

Most days, we contribute something of color and create a part of the picture. When we are loved well, and our real needs are met, our picture starts to come into focus.

Some days, we rest, look, and look again at how the real picture turns out. We discover our own true shape and identity, how we fit into the story of our family, and the story of our world.

When trouble comes – and it will – we also learn to paint with dark colors. We learn they make a powerful background and can help us find borders. We experience the power of God. God can use dark seasons as backdrops for grand scenes of restoration and miracles.

We discover how other people add colors to our story and we learn we can choose how we let them impact and influence our journey.

We need others so we don’t slip back into the kingdom of the world paradigm that convinces us that “more right behavior + less wrong behavior” is the recipe for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We’re not designed to focus on the “more right behavior part,” so we often try to keep the list of our “wrong behavior” as short as possible.

If we screw up in the kingdom of the world, we’re embarrassed to talk about it. Or we’re afraid. Listen to how we shame people to make sure their stories sound worse than our own. Ugh. We still use the compass handed to Adam and Eve in the garden by the Serpent, not God. God said, “Eat from every tree” but we focus on the “except one” part of His instructions.

What if we use a compass oriented on the first four words of God’s instructions instead of creating a navigation system that depends on the last two? When I look at the life of Jesus, His personal life navigation system was not built on avoiding evil or trying not to do the things that other people thought were bad.

Jesus’ navigation system was “to do the work of His Father.” Father’s work is redemption and healing. He does it by bringing light to dark places, not avoiding them. Jesus walked toward the broken, not away from them.

God is the creator of the Universe, and the Universe is still being created. His mercies are new every morning. What if today, we put ourselves in the path of God’s oncoming goodness and beauty? What if that’s what it means to abide in Him?

What if peace is the gift of wallowing in the good instead of avoiding the bad? What if wallowing in the good stuff is how we mature into being creators of goodness and beauty,

too?

What if goodness and beauty are what we're supposed to taste and see? What if metabolizing goodness and beauty is what heals us and matures us into creators of goodness and beauty, too?

What does Paradigm Shift #5 look like?

- When we attempt to build a big life measured in small, perfect squares, we build a life defined by outcomes. Real life - not an Industrial Revolution-type life - is defined by receiving what we need to become who God says we are. Instead of living every day defined by outcomes, we get to live every day defined by identity, integrity, and relationships of trust.
- **Real life looks like messing up sometimes** because we're risking something bigger than we can handle on our own. We're trying something big, grand, and meaningful, not because we can do the big thing all by ourselves, but because big things matter in the grand scheme of life.
- Real life looks like life lived in relationships rather than independent perfection. One of the best ways we can love our children is with our presence. **Our presence lends them strength**, especially when they trust we are with them to help them, instead of because we're mad at them or judging them - or because we don't trust them. When our children mess up, they need us to protect them from shame, not from consequences.

Paradigm Shift #5 sounds like -

- Reminding each other who we are when we struggle and that our struggle isn't our identity. Real life doesn't offer labels or draw two circles we call "us" and "them."
- *"I am so proud of you for being you and daring greatly. I know you don't have it all figured out yet, and that's okay. I always want you to know that I know and trust your heart. You are discovering and growing - and your capacity is growing, too. I'm for you. I'm here to help you."*
- When a child is learning to make up their bed, unload the dishwasher, or read a real book, it will take a while to get it right. As a parent, we can say, *"Wow - you're getting better at this! You're learning how!"*
- We can ask, *"Is there something here I can help you with?"* or *"Can I help you with straightening this part out?"* or *"Watch how it works if you do _____, too."* or *"Can I help you with the words you're still learning to figure out by yourself?"*

Our words create a world for our children and families - either the real world where it is safe to learn and grow or a matrix where everything must be perfect, or at least we must pretend like it is - or we give up and stop trying.

When children struggle with cleaning their room or cleaning the kitchen, use the opportunity to say, **“Let’s do this together.”** When the struggle is homework, maybe just staying focused to get it done, **sit with them at the table.** Don’t do all the work for them. Enabling is not the goal. Enabling doesn’t build capacity; enabling often distracts our children from their true capabilities. The goal is connection and building trust. Love builds capacity.

Enjoy the time together. Engage in conversation as you work side by side. We sometimes worry that our children will always rely on us to do the work with them instead of growing up in the way they can do the work independently. Perhaps a bigger concern is that they will just comply – and eventually rebel.

Independence is not the goal. Dependability is what we desire. When our children can do things alone, it’s time for them to help someone younger or less mature. Capable children become dependable adults. Children learn and then learn to help others learn, too. This is love.

Our goal is responsibility and leadership rather than “divide and conquer.” The atmosphere in our homes will be that of love and care – or something less. Our children will learn responsibility and leadership from us, or they will learn to divide and conquer. Too often, we learn to conquer each other.

TAKE ACTION – Together, there is great hope. Choose one or more of these additional resources to help you make this paradigm shift from trying to control the future to believing the truth today.

- Linger in this blog – [SCHOOL AT HOME WITHOUT FEAR](#).
- Display a blank canvas on an easel, on a shelf, on your kitchen counter, or on your nightstand. Let this be a visual reminder to live a life of adventure in a big world. God only paints masterpieces – and He has a plan for you!
- Watch this free video that offers more about raising our children to connect in relationships of trust and experience the practical change that happens when we love one another. – (<https://vimeo.com/255300421>)
- Find wisdom in this [podcast conversation](#) with Jaime Winship. He reminds us, “You need to live in the present moment with the future in mind. The stronger your sense of identity, the easier that is to do. So in the present tense, instead of just avoiding something for moral reasons, you’re actually making decisions knowing what the future has”.
- Add these gifts of inspiration to your transcription journal –

God is a God of the Present ~ Henri Nouwen

“The real enemies of our life are the “oughts” and the “ifs.” They pull us backward into the unalterable past and forward into the unpredictable future. But real life takes place in the here and the now. God is a God of the present.

God is always in the moment, be that moment hard or easy, joyful or painful. When Jesus spoke about God, he always spoke about God as being where and when you are. "When you see me, you see God. When you hear me, you hear God."

God is not someone who was or will be, but the One who is, and who is for me in the present moment. That's why Jesus came to wipe away the burden of the past and the worries of the future. He wants us to discover God right where we are, here and now."

"If I were your enemy, I'd seek to dim your passion, dull your interest in spiritual things, dampen your belief in God's ability and His personal concern for you, and convince you that the hope you've lost is never coming back—and was probably just a lie to begin with." ~

[Fervent](#), by Priscilla Shirer.

Thank you for trusting [Janet Newberry](#) and [John 15 Academy](#) in your parenting journey. I've shared several quotes from [THE CURE AND PARENTS](#). It's a powerful resource. I'll conclude this ebook with another gem from these friends:

*"Maturity and lasting behavior change
do not happen by coercion or technique*