

Pay Attention! It's Your Most Important Job

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By Audrey Burton

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Anyone can become a parent; there are no tests or interviews to pass. Children can become parents, mentally disabled people - it's even possible to become a parent while in a coma!

When my mother, who is a truly great parent still, became a mom the first time, she was 19 and had very little experience with children. The hospital gave her 1 piece of paper with instructions and sent her on her way. Dolls come with more instructions than that!

We sometimes take for granted all the information at our fingertips today that didn't exist as recently as 30 years ago. When I was a baby, if it wasn't in Dr. Spock's book, Mom was on her own. Today, parents are overwhelmed with information, often conflicting, and are often, as my mother was, on their own, but with more opportunities to make an informed decision.

I have been approached many times for advice on parenting by not only parents, but also prospective parents thinking ahead. The advise I always give is: Pay Attention.

As our children grow from the highly tactical stages into more strategic years, paying attention becomes more critical. Pay attention to who their friends are, starting at an early age. You can learn a lot about your own child by getting to know their friends. You may also want to limit exposure to some kids - you're allowed to do that. (I've been known to say that I didn't want a child at my house, but always give a reasonable reason why.)

Also, talk with your children. The subject matter isn't always important during the younger ages, but keeping those lines of communication open will become more critical as they grow. When they have a problem with another child, role play with them. You be your child and have them play the part of the 'perpetrator'. You'll be teaching them how to handle their own problems as well as good communication skills. Keep in mind that a 7-year-old doesn't always have the vocabulary they need to express themselves - you need to teach them.

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Pay attention to what your child reads and the language she uses. Get to know her teachers and principal. Talk with other parents about their experiences for comparison. Pay attention to what your children wear, what their friends wear and current fashion. Keep it weather appropriate and pick your battles. Too much belly showing may be inappropriate for a 10 year old. Watch for gang-type clothing or accessories. These choices in our young children can be indicative of a problem requiring your intervention, so pay attention.

As your children grow older, they still need you to demonstrate that you care by setting strong boundaries on their behavior. My mother never needed to enforce much of a curfew on me since all my friends had them and there wasn't much going on late in Rapid City, SD. She insisted, however, on knowing where I was and who I was with AT ALL TIMES - even after I had my own car.

Pay attention to how your children spend their money - start young. Teaching fiscal responsibility is

one of the most important items on your job description. Modeling irresponsibility and debt acquisition will not help your kids grow into fiscally responsible adults. Teach your boys and girls how to save, shop for the best price, budget, work, balance a checkbook, invest, etc.

Along those same lines, teach your children to cook and clean, and require some of these jobs as their contribution to the family team - and start early here, too. My 8 year old began cooking this year - canned soup and Kraft macaroni and cheese! Model good eating habits and teach them to do menu planning and grocery shopping. When they leave home, you will want them to do their own laundry - trust me!

The bottom line is: You are preparing human beings for adulthood. If your offspring are happy during the process, that's wonderful, but not the primary directive. Being happy all the time is simply not realistic anyway. When they leave you around age 18, they need to know how to get along with people, get and hold a job, manage their money and their time, be responsible for their behavior and potentially lead others.

There is much, much more to parenting than I can write here. Please feel free to contact me for a parenting discussion any time!

Audrey Burton, Business and Life Coach. Audrey is a caring, but no-nonsense coach. Audrey's ultimate goal is to help women to be happy with their work and life. She keeps you focused and motivated by helping you set priorities according to only your agenda. To sign up for her free, monthly email newsletter and to better understand how she works, visit her website at

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How To Land A Gig As A Magician: When Reality Strikes

By Preston Houer

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Magic is the art of diverting the attention of the audience by creating an illusion that amuses them and creates an impact that something extraordinary had been performed. The act is definitely entertaining. Nevertheless, the reality is that it is just an illusion.

However, the income that the magicians derive from performing such activities is not an illusion. It is real money. They use the money that they have earned to buy their necessities in order to survive.

What most people sometimes forget is that magicians are people, too, who need a job to earn a living. They do not have powers like what they appear on stage to create money and make it appear on top of the hat.

That's why it is important for every magician to know how to increase their bookings because it is the only way they can increase their incomes.

For people who want to know how to land a gig as a magician, here is a list of some tips that can be used:

1. Print ads can do the job.

If a magician really wants to increase his bookings, one way to advertise his craft is to place a "one column inch" advertisement in the newspaper. This size is already enough to catch the attention of people who are trying to find magicians.

Best of all, with this size, the price "magicians" have to pay is very affordable.

2. Perform your best on every show.

It is true, indeed, that people will cease patronizing something if they have found out that it's not worth their money. For magicians who want to always have bookings waiting for them, it is best to stop counting their schedules and pay attention to their presentation.

It would be better if they will hone their skills and improve their craft so that they can always have the best entertainment they can provide to their audience. From here, bookings will soon follow. This is because one of the most effective forms of advertisement is through the "word of mouth."

If people like what they see they will talk about it. Their praise will spread among peers and social groups, which in turn, will reap more bookings.

Boiled down, there's no secret in marketing the business in order to earn a booking. What magicians should always remember is that it is important to improve their skills in order to earn a booking because it is through their performance that the next show will follow.

Preston Houer has been involved with the art of illusion and sleight of hand for over 30 years. Let Preston show you how to Have Fun With Magic. Visit His Site Today!

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