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A DESCRIPTION OF PARENTING

Here is a description of how new parents felt about their new parenthood: "...our own shock at the various moral and bodily issues of parenthood, and our assorted resolutions about how to usher her, relatively undamaged, into a life of love and wages."

This quote is from a work of fiction, "A Home at the End of the World," by Michael Cunningham, who wrote "The Hours." I find that sometimes fiction clarifies the crux of an issue better than a scientific definition does.

The bodily issues of parenting are relatively easy to figure out. We learn how to feed and bathe and diaper pretty quick. But how do parents best deal with the moral issues of parenting and how do we manage to keep our children relatively undamaged? Actually I think it is by wrestling with and thinking about our moral responsibilities to our children and our commitment to not damage them during the process of parenting.

Think about the kind of parent you want to be, ponder about all the moral teachings you want to impart, look at and listen to your children. Don't parent on automatic pilot.

Sometimes we get so busy "doing" that we have no time to think and ponder. One thing I use to get me pondering is fiction. Confession: I am a fiction addict. Good, not junk, fiction is my major relaxation recreation. An intellectual snob of my acquaintance once said he had no time for fiction because he was too busy learning about the world from nonfiction. I learn about LIFE FROM LITERATURE. And I think about the big questions like what kind of parent do I want to be from coming upon a quote that clarifies my thinking.

So how about limiting TV for yourself as well the children? You can use the time you would have spent mindless in front of a screen thinking in front of a good book!