

## Wise Parent: The Essential Guide to Raising a Child

**Dean Michaels**

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Every parent wishes to act wisely in raising their child, and a multitude of books have been written to assist them in the endeavor. In *Wise Parent*, Dean Michaels, a lawyer and student of wisdom teachings, composes 100 meaningful principles that encompass nearly every aspect of how to nurture wisdom in a growing child. *Wise Parent* is a book one could read during pregnancy to set a baseline, and then pick up often throughout the parenting years for reinforcement and contemplation.

Unsurprisingly, many of Michaels' tenets focus on the character traits and behaviors a parent needs to develop to be a good role model. His suggestions are straightforward and axiomatic, but their predictability does not detract from their value. For example, #10 is titled, "Your Own Difficulties Do Not Justify Straying from the Path of Wise Parenting," #17 states, "Better Person, Better Parent," and #35 reads, "Be Positive and Happy—or at Least Act It—as Much as Possible." Reminders of simple truths, especially in the chaotic throes of day-to-day life, can be a priceless gift, and Michaels shares this reality well.

From exposing children to exotic foods, the arts, and different cultures, to setting boundaries, being consistent, and never humiliating one's child, Michaels imparts the fundamentals with clarity and skill. Stating an obvious 100 different parenting suggestions might come off as unnecessary and tedious, and though some of *Wise Parent's* offerings feel redundant, one can argue that good advice always bears repeating.

Michaels' writing style is gentle yet firm. Unfortunately, there is little acknowledgment of how difficult some of his axioms might be in practice. "Shield Your Child from Popular Media and Overconsumerism," he admonishes in #43, will be seen by many readers as somewhat impractical in modern society. This tendency toward naivete asserts itself again in #80, "Teach Your Child about Sex," wherein nothing is written about alternatives to heterosexuality. Telling girls not to "tease or provoke boys" because they have "stronger sexual urges," and instructing boys to "treat girls with respect and to never do anything against a girl's will," reinforces unhealthy stereotypes.

*Wise Parent* is a very well written and thought-provoking book that will make an excellent gift for a new or existing parent. Reading and discussing the principles with older children is also a recommended practice.

PATTY SUTHERLAND (September 28, 2011)

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