

**Parent-leadership: 3 Insights
from the Aspinalls' Parenting Class
Based on Work with Author and
Psychologist, John Rosemond**

By Jim and Michele Aspinall

Most believe that for any problem there is a right method or technique to solve it. Are your children misbehaving? Just get a good parenting book. Need advice on how to discipline your children? A quick Google search is sure to yield numerous blog posts and videos on parenting. Sift through all the parenting techniques available, and choose a method that is appropriate for your child's age, the duration of problem, etc. Problem solved? *Not exactly.*

Having a method is good. But no method will work for long if you don't adopt *a leadership attitude*. Here are just a few insights from the most recent Parenting class led by Jim and Michele Aspinall on **1) the relationship**, **2) the talk**, and **3) the nourishment** involved in parent leadership.

1) The Relationship

The Parent-Leader and the Child-Disciple

Again, no discipline will work for very long if you don't establish yourself as a leader. "**Leadership Parenting**" means how you present yourself to your children: You must act self-assured, calm, confident, cool under fire,

compelling, interesting. You radiate authority. Most importantly, you act like you know what you are doing. With this, your children will also feel that you have their best interests at heart.

Your actions should exude 4 attributes:

- You act like you know what you're doing (You are decisive).
- You act like you know where you're going (You have a vision that guides your decisions).
- You act like you know what you want your child to do (You are assertively direct: you don't beat around the bush when it comes to giving instructions).
- You act like you know your child is going to obey and/or live up to your expectations (You are positive, optimistic, self-assured, and inspiring: you bring out the best in people).

And with you as the leader, your child becomes... *your disciple*. A **disciple** is someone who subscribes willingly to the authority of his or her teacher, who believes that the teacher speaks the truth, and that by following the teacher, his or her life will be greatly improved.

A **child-disciple** then, is defined by four qualities:

- He knows he can rely on his parents (trust).
- He looks up to his parents (respect).
- He follows their lead (obedience).
- He subscribes to their values (loyalty)

2) The Talk

Communicating effectively as a Leader

Effective leaders are characterized by their communication skills. Confident, decisive and concise communication inspires the child-disciple to trust in your leadership.

The Communication is Confident.

- Parent-leaders are masters of inspiring, authoritative speech (what Rosemond calls Alpha Speech). When they talk, no one doubts that they know what they're talking about. They say what they mean and mean what they say.

The Communication is Decisive.

- Parent-leaders know what they are doing (or at least act like it): their decisions arise from conviction, not reaction, and can be relied upon.
- They tend not to give explanations for the decisions they make, and when they do express their rationale, they do so concisely (When someone in a position of authority explains the reason behind an executive decision, he runs the risk of conveying that he's not quite sure of himself).

The Communication is Short and Sweet.

- The fewer words a parent gives when giving instructions or conveying expectations, the more likely it is that the child will obey.
- This highlights the 4 most powerful words in parenting: "Because I said so". This is a statement of leadership. You are simply saying to your child that, as an adult here, I do not need to justify my answer to you.

3) The Nourishment

Is Your Child Getting Enough Vitamin N?

Finally, be certain that you are giving your child regular, daily doses of VITAMIN “N.” This nutrient consists simply of the most character-building two-letter word: **NO!** If you haven’t already started, you can begin by administering vitamin N to your child’s in the following ways:

- Turn their world right side up by giving them all of what they truly need, but no more than 25% of what they simply want.
- Don’t do for your children what they are capable of doing themselves. Say, “You can do that on your own.” This encourages the growth of perseverance and self-sufficiency. When the child says, “I can’t,” don’t argue. Just say “Well, I won’t.” You’ll be amazed at how creative and resourceful children can be under the right circumstances.
- Don’t always rescue them from failure or disappointment. Remember that falling on one’s face can be an invaluable learning experience.
- Remember that just because a child doesn’t like something doesn’t mean it shouldn’t happen or exist. For children to grow up requires that parents resist the temptation to constantly protect them from the discomfort of having to divest dependency.
- Don’t worry about treating children “fairly.” Remember that, to a child, “fair” means “me first” with the biggest and best of everything.
- Don’t overdose your children emotionally by giving them too much attention or too much praise. If you pay too much attention to your children, they have no reason to pay attention to you.

To recap, a parenting method is like a tool: having no leadership mindset is like holding the tool with a loose, greasy grip that renders it ineffective. Whichever parenting method you choose should be undergirded with *an attitude of leadership* aimed at helping your children become the best people they can be. It starts with love and leadership, and it culminates with your children leaving home and showing you what a good job you did.

Jim and Michele Aspinall are parents of two children, 11 and 8 years of age. Michele is an AMI trained teacher at the primary level and pioneered Countryside Montessori School's All Year Montessori program. She has been working in the classroom for nearly 25 years. Her husband Jim is the Director of Operations at Countryside Montessori School. After taking a weekend long Parenting Retreat led by John Rosemond, they brought what they learned to the parent community at Countryside and now offer a weekly parenting class to the school community.