

The Power of Connection: Nurturing Growth Through Check-Ins

At the end of a conference, a Sage was asked why they emphasized humility. The Sage replied, "Because I do not know everything. You, my wise friend, possess insights I wish to learn from." This underscores a fundamental truth: we thrive through connection. No one is an island. We need the wisdom, experience, and support of those in our orbit to grow, brainstorm, and navigate challenges.

Therefore, regardless of age, status, or ability, it's essential to cultivate habits that foster self-reflection and connection. Consider these strategies:

Investing in Yourself:

- **Seek regular feedback:** Proactively solicit input from your supervisor on your performance and development.
- **Engage with mentors and coaches:** Maintain consistent communication with your mentors or coaches for guidance and support.
- **Focus on a plan:** Focus on areas where you want to see growth (education, career, well-being).
- **Review and Refine:** Regularly revisit your plans and ask, "What can I do differently to achieve my goals?"

Extending the Circle: At Home

- **Connect with Your Partner:** Ask, "What are your current goals, and how can I support you?"
- **Establish a Shared Family Goal:** Similar to a military mission, define a family objective for your current life stage. This could be anything from saving for a vacation to completing a home improvement project.
- **Revisit Your Family Plan:** Take time to reflect on your family's long-term vision and adjust as needed.

Understanding Your Children:

- **Observe Peak Performance:** When does your child feel most energized and engaged?
- **Discover Their Aspirations:** "What are your goals, big or small?"
- **Offer Guidance:** How can I support you in achieving your goals?
- **Address Challenges:** Are you facing any difficulties at school? How can I help?
- **Listen and Observe:** Pay attention to their struggles, successes and needs.

Soliciting Feedback from Your Children:

- **Model Goal Setting:** Share a personal goal and invite your partner to do the same. This is a family exercise!!!
- **Embrace Lifelong Learning:** Discuss how your goals have evolved and encourage your children to envision multiple possible futures for themselves.
- **Schedule a Family Brainstorm:** Dedicate time for a conversation about dreams, aspirations, and how to support each other's growth.

A Call to Action: Embracing Parental Responsibility

Your role as a parent is paramount. While resources like chaplains may be available to some, your spouse and children rely on you for guidance, support, and understanding. As we begin a new year, commit to prioritizing communication, brainstorming, learning, and mentorship within your family. These efforts are invaluable blessings. Take your responsibilities seriously.