

Why I don't Brag About My Children

There are probably no less than twenty or thirty opportunities each day for me to bring up in conversation the achievements and qualities of my children. It would be so easy to do because there is so much to talk about. However, I have had a long running battle with the temptation of extolling the virtues and accomplishments of my children with family, friends and acquaintances.

Every good thing has at least ten reasons why it is good. After giving it some thought, right or wrong, here are my ten reasons:

1. I come from an unusual and rare family environment. My parents traveled one thousand miles to be married in the Salt Lake Temple. All seven children have been married in the temple. Each child's spouse is a great and wonderful person, with tremendous qualities of their own. All the boys went on missions. All are active in the church. Some have been in bishoprics. The girls and sisters-in-law have been in Relief Society Presidencies and Young Women Presidencies.

In our own family, we are experiencing the same thing. We have beautiful children that are good, faithful members of the church. They have strong testimonies of the gospel and are dedicated to building the kingdom. Two children have been married in the temple. Their spouses are great and wonderful people with tremendous qualities of their own.

As you may well know, so many families do not enjoy the incredible situation we do. Many have children that have, for one reason or another, selected the path in life. Parents are sometimes divorced. Sometimes children are inactive in the church. There's a myriad of problems that plague so many families.

I can't bring myself to talk about how wonderful my children and family is knowing that it might increase the sadness and sorrow of someone else who has not been as fortunate.

2. I truly believe that parents have a major influence on their children. How they behave and what they accomplish in life is in part a byproduct of the teachings and example of their parents. It seems like such an exhibition of pride to be speaking about how wonderful your children are. Isn't it a roundabout way of complementing on what a great parent you have been? It seems to be a little too self-centered.
3. If your children are so good, that's good enough. When something is so wonderful, typically it can stand by itself. It does not need anyone to point out how great it is.
4. It can be very annoying to an individual to listen to someone talk about how great their children are. It is almost like, here comes "Can you top this one" every time you see the bragger approach you.

5. Unfortunately, some parents feel they need to compare their children to others in the ward or school. It's unfortunate because the result is usually not good. If you tell your kids they need to be better like "Bill" or "Mary", they can feel inadequate and less confident. If they tell their kids how much better they are than others, they begin to cultivate a "better than thou" attitude. Comparisons to others are not the right approach. The best strategy is helping a child understand their potential and then make that the goal. Comparisons to an attainable goal is so much more powerful than comparing to another person.

I would not want to brag about my children and then have some parent go home and start comparing their kids to mine. It would make the child feel uncomfortable and, possibly, even resent my own child.

6. I have always believed that when you talk to people you should try to focus the conversation on the other person. People like to talk about themselves. They will always like to talk to you because it also is a time when they can talk about themselves.
7. It seems anti-thematic to the teachings of the gospel to brag. Consider the description of charity in the scriptures. It hardly fits with the idea of hoarding a conversation to talk about yourself and your family.
8. The great philosopher once said, "He who does not brag about his family has the strength of ten men".
9. Praise your children privately. Just because you do not publicize their great qualities and achievements, does not mean you should not express your happiness for them making good decisions in life.
10. Maybe there is nothing to brag about.

Mom and I have been greatly blest. We love each of our children and think they are the best in the world. We look forward to a lot of joy and rejoicing in our posterity.