

## **Kids These Days: Resolutions for Good Parents, Sons and Daughters**

By Dr. David Rideout

It's time to take the dog-eared calendar off the wall—with all its notations, reminders and circled dates now behind us—and make way for a brand new year. Like the crisp new calendar, the New Year is a blank slate, filled only with possibility.

It's also a time to reflect on our lives and resolve to change for the better. Get rid of the old habits and formulate some new ones.

What if we applied specific resolutions to becoming better parents? Or better sons and daughters to our own parents? To remove the barriers that can sometimes keep us from feeling a part of a loving family?

Child development experts know that an important part of a happy childhood means having healthy and capable parents who take care of themselves as well as their children. But I would also suggest that in this “sandwich generation,” where adults are sometimes attending to the needs of both their children as well as their own parents, it means being a good son or daughter too. With that in mind, here's my Top Ten list of resolutions for us as parents - and as sons and daughters to our parents.

1. Take care of our health—eat a balanced diet, wear our seatbelt, seek help for addictions. Our children and our parents need us to be well.
2. Strengthen connections with family and friends by visiting them. Frequent contact with extended family reinforces our sense of identity and brings more loving support into our lives.
3. Find ways to express love for our children and our parents - a hug, a card, a telephone call, a meal together at a local restaurant, or a surprise gift for no special reason.
4. Rediscover the joy of reading and encourage that by recommending and sharing good books with each other.
5. Use meal time for talking – with no television or cell phones allowed!
6. Establish healthy routines like sensible bed times, regular meals, and some “me” time for ourselves.
7. Take advantage of technology that can keep us connected with those we love. FaceTime, Skype, online Scrabble, and instant messaging can be great choices to span large distances.
8. Be available to our children and our parents when they need us – even if they insist they don't.
9. Respect their right to do things differently than we might... and perhaps have different priorities.
10. Smile at the people we love. It really does make a difference!

Let's resolve to fill the pages of our 2015 calendar with joyful memories as good parents - and as good sons and daughters. Happy New Year.

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