

THE PARENTS' DEN



THE PARENTS' DEN

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank all those miscellaneous thinkers that helped me form the basis for these philosophical gems that I now share with my readers. Specifically, I want to thank my dear friend, Derek Slocum, for encouraging me to write down some of my accumulated thoughts.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I want to thank my mother and father for loving and parenting me.

INTRODUCTION

The Parents' Den is a character building and reinforcing book of values. My purpose for recording this random selection of useful values and positive thoughts is to help inspire, stimulate, and guide readers in ways that might help them and future generations.

It is important for me to note that I do not share any of these values and thoughts in any order. And, that each value or thought is designed to be individually contemplated.

Readers will also most likely notice that I have provided in **The Parents' Den** several recurring themes that have been stated in slightly different ways. These themes are the ones that I felt were particularly useful.

Feedback from several readers has shown me many different ways that they have made beneficial use of **The Parents' Den**. Some readers, for example, have simply periodically posted, for viewing, a value or thought on some prominent place such as a refrigerator or cabinet. Other readers have chosen to discuss a value or two each day with their family members during meals. And, others, still, have chosen to refer to **The Parents' Den** when they are at a loss for a philosophy that

THE PARENTS' DEN

adequately conveys a certain concept or idea they happen to be searching for.

Finally, I am certain that only a few readers will agree with everything that I have written. If, however, I have been able to inspire and/or convey anything herein that can help my readers to better their lives, then I will have succeeded. Please enjoy.

1. Be honest.
2. Learn to appreciate the things that you already have; because, in many cases, you already have the things that you really need.
3. Sometimes the best investment that you can make is in yourself because you must live with yourself for the rest of your life.
4. If you want to take something from the table of life, oftentimes you will have to bring something to the table.
5. At the end of the day, life will be about choices. Your choices.

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6. Be accountable.
7. Learn how the system works if you want the system to work for you.

THE PARENTS' DEN

8. Try to always be trustworthy and recognize that trust is a precious thing that is hard to get, easy to lose and even harder to get back.
9. Learn to invest in yourself and in others. A selfish life is often a lonely life.
10. If something is important to you, consider stopping talking about it and instead being about it.

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11. One of the largest rooms on earth is the room for growth and improvement.
12. Protect and guard your good name and reputation. Your good name and reputation will follow you. So do not let them haunt you. They should be your friends and not your enemies.
13. If you cannot change the people around you, consider changing the people around you.
14. No one can take away your self-respect if you do not give it away.
15. Much of life will be about attitude. Your attitude.

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16. Try to surround yourself with quality people.
17. Learn to be a leader and a follower. The trick is to know when to be either.

THE PARENTS' DEN

18. You can start from behind and still get ahead.
19. Get a good education. It may be one of the best favors that you will do for yourself.
20. If you really want to become great, then first learn to serve.

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21. Try to always be open to new ideas.
22. Sometimes, to get things done, you will have to become a committee of one.
23. Learn to be a world traveler; even if at first by books only.
24. Try to focus on things that make you happy and fulfilled.
25. You will always be a winner if you always try to do the best that you can.
26. Talk can be cheap. Action might be better.
27. Life is to be enjoyed, not endured.
28. Every problem is an opportunity in disguise.
29. Always go forward. Always give back.
30. Learn to view academics as an opportunity, not as an obstacle.

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31. Generally speaking, the more you learn, the more you can earn.
32. Learn to develop a *positive mental attitude* (PMA).

THE PARENTS' DEN

33. Love and have faith in God.
 34. Try to do the right things in life; sleep well and never underestimate the value of peace of mind.
 35. Strive for excellence.
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36. Try to keep your word. It should mean something to both you and to others.
 37. Be courageous. We need it.
 38. Be patient. Every flower blooms in its own season.
 39. Be a community asset, not a liability.
 40. If in doubt, first think about what God would do and then think about what you are about to do.
 41. Put God first in all your thoughts and plans.
 42. Learn to think for yourself, but always try to listen to trusted advisors such as your parents or others.
 43. Keep respect or the lack thereof in perspective. You should freely give respect but consider earning it from others.
 44. Be humble as you grow and learn in knowledge. Remember, there is always so much more growing and learning to do.
 45. There are no free rides nor lunches. Someone always must pay.

THE PARENTS' DEN

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- 46. Position yourself for the long haul. Life is more like a marathon than a sprint.
- 47. Learn to discipline yourself so that others will not have to do it for you.
- 48. Failure to prepare is like preparing to fail.
- 49. Be on the right side of the law. Or, be prepared to pay the consequences.
- 50. Make a good education, hard work, and perseverance your best friends.

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- 51. It is not what you or someone else calls you that is important, but rather how you conduct yourself.
- 52. There will always be doubters of you. The key is for you to believe in yourself.
- 53. Sometimes it is best to get seasoned before you make your big move.
- 54. Seek to get the right training from the right people and organizations. You need to get some skills to pay the bills.
- 55. Try to be solution, not excuse, oriented.
- 56. Know that your imagination and books can take you anywhere.
- 57. Preparation for tomorrow should begin today.
- 58. Consider volunteering. Doing so can help others and can help connect you to a lot of good people and things.

THE PARENTS' DEN

- 59. Perceptions create realities.
- 60. Seek self-reliance. The dependent rarely sets the terms of the dependency. * * *
- 61. Consider being goal oriented. It will help keep both you and your life in focus and on track.
- 62. Learn to know yourself.
- 63. Always be true to yourself.
- 64. Have faith in yourself and in others.
- 65. Learn to carry your own weight.
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- 66. Lead by example.
- 67. Leadership matters and so do leaders.
- 68. Be patient. Learn to delay your gratification. Good things often do go to those who wait.
- 69. Always try to maintain your integrity.
- 70. Try to avoid the streets. The streets are full of misleaders. And the streets have a winning record against the likes of you and me.
- 71. When confronted with obstacles, you can go around them, over them, under them and sometimes through them; but always keep moving forward.

THE PARENTS' DEN

- 72. Poverty is a condition and can also be a state of mind. The good news is that you can change both.
- 73. Be responsible to both you and to others.
- 74. Be dependable.
- 75. It has sometimes been said that many overnight successes have taken years to occur.

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- 76. Learn to create your own realities. Do not make the mistake of waiting for others to do it for you.
- 77. Brain power is important.
- 78. Preparation gives you an edge in most things.
- 79. Politics are important and you should seek to become politically educated.
- 80. Many people limit themselves by the way that they think. Try not to do that. ★ ★ ★
- 81. Try to be ethical in all your dealings.
- 82. You are not responsible for how you came into this world, but you are responsible for how you conduct yourself once you have arrived.
- 83. At the beginning, it is all about potential, but in the end, it is all about results.

THE PARENTS' DEN

- 84. If you think that you need to make changes in your life, sometimes a good place to start is with yourself.
- 85. Plan your work and work your plan.

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- 86. Be generous and give what you can.
- 87. Work hard and try to finish the job.
- 88. Life is like a do-it-yourself project. Thus, your life is for you to live and not for others to live it for you.
- 89. If you can somehow manage to accumulate the right set of skills and the right set of relationships, you will most likely be successful in life.
- 90. Learn to pay your dues. Some expect it of you.

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- 91. Learn to expand your capacity for work. Doing so will serve you well in many ways.
- 92. You are not a fool if you make a mistake. You are a fool if you keep making the same mistakes.
- 93. Try to let your path be mostly forward.
- 94. Spread your wings. There really is a big world out there.
- 95. Learn to teach yourself. In many cases, it may be a mistake to wait for others to teach you the things you want or need to know.

THE PARENTS' DEN

- 96. All life is precious and should be respected.
- 97. All people make mistakes. Wise people learn from them.
- 98. One trick to money is to have it work for you and not to have you always work for it.
- 99. Protect your future by keeping your present and, hopefully, your past clean.
- 100. Let your life be an example, not a warning for others.

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- 101. Learn team working skills. You cannot do it all by yourself.
- 102. Hard work does not guarantee anything, but without it, you may not have much of a chance.
- 103. Try to find reasonable pathways to a reasonable life.
- 104. Learn to maximize your existing resources and newer and greater resources will likely come your way.
- 105. These days, good might not be good enough. You may have to bear down and work even harder to get to where you want to go.

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- 106. You cannot run from your past because it usually has a way of following you. Thus, try to live a clean life so that if, or when, your past does catch up with you, it will reward, rather than embarrass you.
- 107. A little determination can go a long way.

THE PARENTS' DEN

- 108. No one should have higher expectations for you than you should have for yourself.
- 109. Culture: what you believe, what you value, and how you live, matters.
- 110. Stay ready for your moment through preparation.
- 111. Sometimes in life you really should take one step back to take two steps forward.
- 112. It is better to have an opportunity and to be prepared than to have an opportunity and not be prepared. So always be prepared.
- 113. Applying focus, discipline and effort can oftentimes equal success in many endeavors.
- 114. Try to treat people right and you will mostly be all right.
- 115. Do not just be a big thinker. Learn to be a big doer.

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- 116. Personal responsibility and self-discipline are two important keys to your success.
- 117. You can learn to solve many of your problems by identifying them, isolating them and then by eliminating them.
- 118. Some people live in the past; some live in the present and others may live for the future. The choice is yours.

THE PARENTS' DEN

- 119. There are 168 hours each week. Each of us is equal in this regard. It is how you use these hours that counts.
- 120. Try to keep life in perspective and recognize that our greatest hopes or our worst fears are seldom realized.
- 121. Consider using a things-to-do list. It will help you keep your life organized and in better focus.
- 122. Consider purchasing some land.
- 123. If you are not able to do big things in a big way, consider doing little things in a big way.
- 124. You can usually improve on any given situation if you approach it with energy, passion, and commitment.
- 125. When the going gets tough, the tough should get going.

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- 126. Learn to respect the beliefs of others.
- 127. If you want to succeed, you should be willing to work at it and be prepared to overcome obstacles.
- 128. You will generally be supported by others if they see that you are making a difference in other people's lives.
- 129. If you change the way that you look at things, things will seem to have changed.
- 130. Learn to use the things that you already have to get the things that you want.

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- 131. Generally speaking, and perhaps in most cases, things do not just happen; you will instead have to make them happen.
- 132. There is an answer to just about every question. You just must be willing to seek it out.

THE PARENTS' DEN

- 133. You need to put yourself in a position to win in the game of life.
- 134. Learn to win within the rules.
- 135. Everyone eventually dies. The question is, how many of us really live?
- 136. Many things can work for you if you work at them.
- 137. Learn to watch your body language and your tongue.
- 138. Try to support those who support you.
- 139. In any given situation that requires leadership, if you do not see a leader, consider being a leader.
- 140. Think long and hard before deciding to burn a bridge.

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- 141. Sometimes you really do have to give a little to get a little.
- 142. Try not to get discouraged because there is always the opportunity to improve upon your position in life.
- 143. Try to avoid overreacting. Things are often not as bad as they first may seem.
- 144. Life is not like a dress rehearsal. To the best of our knowledge, you only get one shot. So, try to make your life as meaningful and as giving as possible.
- 145. Arm yourself with information and knowledge. If a person can outthink you, he can most likely outlive you.

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- 146. Life can be short. So, enjoy it while you can.

THE PARENTS' DEN

147. Your life should mean something to both you and to others.
148. You can overcome your fears.
149. Do not let the pressure get you down. Many precious things such as gold and diamonds have formed under intense pressure.
150. There will always be an opportunity to improve upon your position in life. All you must do is to look for it.
151. Learn to develop an exemplary work ethic and compassion for the common person. These traits will serve you well.
152. Read, read, read. And consider reading some more.
153. Before you begin complaining about all the things that you do not have, consider feeling blessed about all the things that you do have.
154. When conducting business, try to always be first in quality and in service.
155. Learning how to work is important. There is the saying that if you first learn how to work, then you will never need work. In other words, always try to give 100% on any task, no matter how large or small.

THE PARENTS' DEN

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- 156. Sometimes when you need to reach a goal, a good strategy to employ is to reach an even higher goal. This way, if you shoot for the moon, you will most likely hit a star or two along the way.
- 157. The easy street is not always the best street. Just as that overnight money might be that lose your life money.
- 158. Learn to develop a thirst for knowledge.
- 159. Look for ways to succeed; not for reasons to fail.
- 160. If you keep your nose clean and your head to the grindstone, remarkable things can be achieved.
- 161. Life is full of traps. One of your most important jobs is to try your best to avoid them.
- 162. Sometimes you will have a better chance to overcome your obstacles if you approach them as you would approach a chess match rather than a boxing match.
- 163. Life can be tough enough as it is. Try not to make it even tougher by being your own worst enemy.
- 164. Learn to become a more interesting person by expanding your horizons. You can do this by learning as much as you can about as many things as possible.

THE PARENTS' DEN

165. If you know better, then you should do better.

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166. Learn to control what you can and try not to worry about the rest.

167. Learn to first help yourself and others will usually help you as well. Many adults will go to great lengths to help young people whom they perceive to be trying to help themselves do the right things in life.

168. Life is inherently risky, and you will never be able to eliminate all of life's risks. There are, however, many things that you can do to minimize such risks, and you should seek to do so.

169. If you put your mind to it and your grind to it, you can oftentimes do it.

170. Property is, in many cases, important to people. You should learn to respect both yours and other people's property.

171. If you are focused and disciplined, you will generally do fine in most of your life's endeavors.

172. If you really care deeply about something, consider becoming actively involved in it.

173. Consider pursuing your passions. Remember, it is your life, not someone else's.

174. Do not fret too much about today because there is always the possibility of tomorrow. And tomorrow can always bring about a better day.

THE PARENTS' DEN

175. Try to make your dreams a reality through hard work, focus, discipline, and perseverance.

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176. Try to earn your money honestly. Ill-gotten money oftentimes comes with a price that is much too high.

177. Always work toward improving yourself.

178. Be careful who you spend time together with and never let anyone else bring you down.

179. Keep money in its proper perspective. It is rarely the most important thing that you should concern yourself with.

180. Humility is important. The world that we live in is very big and thus, it is important to recognize that the limits of your mind are not the limits of the world.

181. While you are important. You are not that important. Just know that when you die, life goes on and barely skips a beat.

182. Seek out knowledge and skills because they are essential for progress in life.

183. Treat others as you would have them treat you.

184. It is important for you to first learn, if you want to teach, because you cannot teach what you do not know.

185. A good giver is often a good getter.

186. Resilience is important. Life is not always easy. Becoming resilient will help you weather some of life's strong winds.

187. Position yourself to take many of life's winning shots through preparation and hard work.

THE PARENTS' DEN

- 188. Remember to consider and contemplate non-human forms of life. Other animals and plants can be just as interesting and fulfilling to ponder as are their human counterparts.
- 189. When you praise or criticize, you reveal as much about yourself as you do those that are the target of your praise or criticism.
- 190. Your life is for you to live because, in one way or another, you will have to live it.

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- 191. Money will not always bring you happiness, but it can provide you with more options.
- 192. Everyone cannot be the boss. If, however, you decide that you want to be in charge, then you should understand that it costs to be the boss.
- 193. When you have accumulated the right set of skills, you are able to tell others how much they will have to pay you for your skills. When, however, you have not accumulated the right set of skills, others will tell you how much they will pay.
- 194. Sometimes it is all right to be open with others about your hopes, dreams, and plans. Otherwise, you may never be able to receive the answers and inspirations that might come from others.
- 195. You should learn to become self-disciplined because at some point you will have to chart the course of your own life. And it is at this point that being self-disciplined will really help.

THE PARENTS' DEN

196. Do not become overly concerned about making mistakes because everyone makes them. No one is perfect. Your job is to learn from them.
197. Learn how to make your own luck. It has sometimes been said that luck comes about when preparation meets opportunity. So, always be prepared and keep your eyes open for those opportunities.
198. Try not to give up too easily on things that really matter. You should recognize that everything changes all the time and that, therefore, there is always the chance that things can change in your favor.
199. Since the past is gone and the future is not promised, it is sometimes what you do today that really matters.
200. Your life. Your destiny. Your choice.

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Compiled and written by Karl E.
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Add to and customize your own family values to be passed on to future generations.

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THE PARENTS' DEN

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THE PARENTS' DEN

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THE PARENTS' DEN

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The Parents' Den was written to provide readers with enduring values and thoughts that they can use to help guide them to and through society's mainstreams. **The Parents' Den** was also designed to be kept and passed on from one generation to the next.

Karl McDonald
A U T H O R

Karl E. McDonald is an attorney licensed to practice law in Washington, D.C. and the State of Maryland. Mr. McDonald earned his law degree from the University of Notre Dame and his undergraduate degree from Xavier University in New Orleans. At Xavier, McDonald earned the University's top student honor named after its founder.

McDonald also had the distinction of serving as Agent to college football Hall of fame Coach Eddie Robinson. Coach Robinson is arguably the greatest coach in college football history.