



Encouraging Words with DARLENE SALA

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A Safe Place for Kids When They Hurt

I think it was Dr. Phil McGraw who said, “Parents should be a safe hospital for kids to come to when they hurt.” He’s right. Home should be a place where kids are wanted even when they’ve disappointed you. Not all kids are beautiful or handsome, nor are they all smart or talented. At times they all have problems. But they should know that home is one place where they can be loved unconditionally.

Home is a place for needy people, not perfect people. Sometimes in a family when one member is ill or disabled, it’s easy to think, “I wish we were all well and strong and could get on with life.” But this IS family life. A family is not a corporation, where the wheels always turn efficiently and where problems are dealt with and eliminated. A family is a love relationship. God designed the family to care for one another and accept one another with all our failures and imperfections.

God knew it wouldn’t be easy. That’s why His plan was for two people—a mom and a dad—to work together to raise kids. Any single parent understands how difficult it is to care for them by yourself. But let me encourage you to accept your family for what it is—folks with personal problems, financial problems, illnesses, and conflicts. Don’t be surprised, for the apostle Peter said, “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you” (1 Peter 4:12).

Sometimes kids do dumb things and get themselves into trouble. Yes, they should have known better, but don’t reject them. The emergency room at the hospital doesn’t refuse to treat a person just because he was injured doing something dumb. They still accept him and care for his wounds.

Keep the door to your heart open, Mom and Dad. Love your kids even when they disappoint you. Give them a safe hospital to come to when they hurt.