



Modeling a Positive Spirit

It's that time of year. Summer is rounding the bend and those of us with children in college or high school are bustling with excitement as we organize them for the journey of the upcoming years. It is a time of elation mixed with a tinge of apprehension as we send our children, many for the first time, out into the world on their own.

We have all the normal concerns: we wonder about their roommate, who they will meet along the way. We pray no one will break their hearts, and they will love what they are studying and make lots of friends. Certainly we wish the best of experiences for them as they step out into the world. Last year these concerns were there, but they were not as complex as they are at the moment. This pandemic has changed the college experience and the thoughts of going back to school in the fall.

My cousin told me that when he drops his daughter off at college in Florida next month, it will be a literal a drop and go. No assisting her with the move-in, no scoping out the housing to see who her dorm mates will be. No shooting the breeze with other parents and no making the bed perfectly and leaving behind an orderly space.

As a freshman parent, it is difficult day, mixed with many emotions. Not being able to have a proper sendoff will make it more of a challenge. This year will be a vastly different experience for students and parents as well. The college experience as we know it is over and unlikely to return. It's sad and yet all of us must make adjustments

that are foreign to us.

We must encourage our children to continue along with their dreams and desires. Life is not easy, they are seeing a side of it that's unfair, uncertain and confusing at times. It is important for parents to set the tone for acceptance of uncertainty. How we perceive all of this and how we react will create the standard for our children. I personally tell my children that this is the new norm and to accept it. The world is shifting, and we must hold on, never losing sight of our goals and what is important to each of us.

College will begin next month. Who knows what will happen? All of our college students may be back home in less than a month. The schools might shut down and remote learning may kick in for the entire year, and maybe next year as well. No one knows what is coming down the pike with this pandemic. It is in this uncertainty that we must remain calm, grounded and non reactive. We have to bend and accept that this is our reality at the moment.

If we don't accept it, the rejection of it will simply cause frustration, anger and anxiety. We must be the strong example for our children and teach them that life goes on. Difficulties and change can be surmounted, life is uncertain, and we all need to be flexible.

These skills are typically learned later in life, as we traverse through the challenges that life presents to each of us. Our children are experiencing them a bit earlier on their path. Perhaps the outcome will be a wonderfully adapted adult with a forceful positive attitude. An adult who has faith and believes that we have to make the best of every day.

We can help our children by being the light in a world that has dimmed great expectations. It is up to us to encourage forward momentum, a positive spirit, mindset and acceptance. Not be that model above is simply a disservice to our children.

If it is a practice we put into motion we will see the results. We will be focused, working

hard and hopeful that tomorrow will provide what we need to be happy and fulfilled. It may not be the picture we had in mind, but it seldom is.

As my Father always said, "This too shall pass." And somehow, it will.