

Makes for Very Poor Relationships

I have a general philosophy about human interaction.

I am often willing to put in the effort to make a deeper, more interesting or closer relationship with someone (if I like them). This applies to friends, relationships, and family. However, after I put out the initiative, I am not going to invest more in the relationship than the other person. I dislike how that feels when I care more than the other person, and I believe it makes for very poor relationships.

I think this idea is somewhat unobjectionable to most people. However, I also apply this to kids, and I think this is where people would find this to be distasteful and frustrating to think about.

I think one huge problem adults have with interacting with kids (teenagers especially) nowadays is that they try to make their relationship some idealized thing. They like to be active in the kids lives, show interest in them, have a certain degree of closeness, and actualize their investment into the relationship they have wanted. Often, the kids don't want this.

I was talking to a couple several months back who was frustrated that their teenage daughter often expresses frustration and embarrassment of them. I told them that what I would do is pull back, don't be as involved and let the daughter come to them. Not as a passive-aggressive stunt, but just as someone who respects boundaries and expects people to value their relationship. They hated this idea ... they wanted to be involved in her activities, and share an idealized parenting experience with her.

If my kids come off irritated, frustrated or annoyed by me ... I will take that as a sign to back off, just like I do with everyone else. I will back off until we find a point where we both value the relationship relatively equally. This is so much harder with our kids because we have so much invested in them ... however, you will probably maximize the value of the relationship on both ends by taking this approach.

Also, you should have planned this out before and had more kids. If you have 16 kids, they won't likely feel like you are overly invested. That's my plan.