

SMALL BOYS CAST LONG SHADOWS

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My daughter just emailed me this gorgeous photograph of her 2 year-old-son and his little friend walking along the sidewalk together, holding hands in the sunshine. As I looked at it, many thoughts ran through my mind as to what this scene suggested. Here are some of them.

It is always comforting to walk through life closely linked to a trusted friend. They love us no matter what. They always think the best of us and want the best for us. To be a good friend, we also need to do the same for them.

There are so many happy memories to share... all those 'remember when' stories around a shared BBQ in the back yard. We need to help our children to find friends who have a positive influence on their lives. We also need to make sure that our children learn how to be good friends.

I have known so many adults who don't seem to have any personal friends. They just huddle in their homes with the TV for company. How lonely that must be! What kind of message does friendlessness give our children? The fewer friends we have, the more vulnerable we are to succumb to the negative aspects of life. It is our friends who buoy our spirits and encourage us to do great things in life. Our children deserve that kind of friendship for themselves.

One of the little boys in the picture is looking back and the other is looking forward. How great it is to walk confidently through life, looking excitedly forward to the future! Are we cultivating enthusiasm and hope in our children? Do WE feel positive about the future? Sure, the economy is tending to rattle our cages at the present time, but pessimism doesn't help the atmosphere at home.

Sometimes, as parents, we need to check the home temperature just to see how the 'happy barometer' is faring. Stress leads to tension and fear, and with those feelings it is difficult to be positive. So, what do we do about it? How about thinking about what we have rather than what we don't have. A sense of joy does not rely on money or material things, but in being thankful for what we do have – and that is each other, along with good friends.

Sitting around with thoughts of doom need to stop. We need to get up, get out and do something positive for someone else. We need to show our children how to stay positive and how to take charge of their lives, rather than be blown about and be easily influenced by negative situations. What is required is an attitude adjustment.

The other little boy in the picture is looking back at the shadows they are casting on the sidewalk. We all leave something behind us. What kind of legacy

are you leaving behind you? Do we realize the influence we have on others? I think that if we really thought about it, we would like to think our presence on this earth has meant something positive to others. This is not just a haphazard thing – a fluke. No.

Each person has been created with a purpose and potential. Not only that, but each one is also given the personality, skills and abilities to fulfill that potential. Yet, many of the adults we know have no clue as to what their purpose or potential is. We have an obligation to our children to help them become 'all that they can be'.

How can we know what that is? We should watch for the talents, skills and interests our children are exhibiting. We need to expose them to many different kinds of experiences – physical, social and educational to see where their strengths lie. It doesn't matter how old we are as adults, we need to reach our potential. It is never too later to discover your destiny and go hard out to fulfill it. If our kids see our excitement in any kind of achievement, they will want to experience the same.

We can ALL leave long shadows behind us. How about shadows of the things that helped us to be successful? Definitely, being a great role model to our kids. Totally, making a determined and positive difference to those around us and, most of all leaving a spiritual heritage that lasts for generations.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.