

# FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

## The A-B-C of Parenting



**A**GEING: A rapid decaying process caused by exposure to children. The main signs are sagging of the body, wrinkling of the skin, and softening of the brain.

**BANANAS:** What parents have gotta be if, after having one screaming, sleepless, colicky baby, they choose to have another.

**CHORES:** Simple household tasks like doing dishes, feeding cats and making beds that parents can either do them themselves in a few minutes ... or spend hours begging, bribing and threatening their kids into doing.

**DOORS:** Upright, oblong draught-stoppers which children are incapable of shutting.

**ECSTASY:** A wonderful, euphoric feeling parents experience when they first see their newborn baby – and don't feel again until the kid leaves home 29 years later.

**FOOD:** Healthy substances lovingly prepared by parents. Also known as *Yuck*, *What's-This?* or *Why-Can't-We-Go-To-McDonalds?*

**GRATITUDE:** The response parents hope for but never get because by the time their kids are old enough to thank them they can no longer remember what for. (See AGEING)

**HOMEWORK:** After-school assignments that kids bring home for their parents to do. Clever kids who train their parents well can score an A-plus.

**INTIMATE:** What parents have trouble being when their bedroom door has no lock and their kids have no sense of timing.

**JAM:** Edible red goo (see **FOOD**) designed for smearing round mouth.

**KISS:** Wet sticky application of lips to parent's cheek. The regular use of this simple technique can wipe out all the pains of parenting. (See also **JAM**. **KISS** and **JAM** are often indistinguishable.)

**LOVE:** What parents and kids feel for each other even at times when they don't like each other very much.

**MONEY:** What parents are made of (according to kids).

**NERVES:** Skinny, fibre-like things that in parents are usually shot to pieces.

**OLD:** Anything to do with parents – e.g. *oldies*, *old-timers*, *old-farts* and *the olds* (i.e. when you were young).

**PUNISHMENT:** The discovery most parents make – that it really *does* hurt you as much as it hurts them.

**QUIET:** The absence of noise. In homes with kids this can usually be found only in the toilet.

**RETIREMENT:** A paradise where the tables are turned on your kids: *they're* now the parents ... experiencing the pain you went through when raising them.

**SEX:** The one subject that, no matter how hard you try, you'll never explain properly to your teenagers.

**TEENAGERS:** God's way of punishing parents for enjoying sex too much.

**UMMM:** The answer most favoured by kids when asked, "*How did school go?*" or "*What did you do today?*" (Usually followed by "*Okay*" or "*Nothing much*".)

**VACUUM:** A household pet with a long nose used by parents to clean up after mucky kids. Purrs when being fed.

**WEIRD:** (See also **OLD**.) What parents become when they dare to question their teenager's preference for music-from-hell.

**X:** Shows parents where to put their signature on the phone accounts, credit cards, and loan documents that parents are required to fill out so their kids can grow up feeling normal.

**YELL:** Something your parents did, and you were never going to do, but somehow you end up doing, often.

**ZILCH:** The amount parents get paid working their butts off over the 20-to-30 years it takes to turn a child into a grown-up. ❁

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JOHN (GRAPEVINE'S FOUNDER & REAR ADMIRAL) KNOWS FROM EXPERIENCE: BEHIND EVERY GREAT KID IS A DAD WHO IS SURE HE'S SCREWING IT UP.

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**TURT**



*I read recipes the same way I read science fiction. I get to the end and say, "Well, that's not going to happen."*