

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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A Parent's Love

When I was young my father told me a story about a boy and his father who were walking along a road. The boy spotted a large rock. "Do you think I can move that rock?" the boy asked his father. His father answered, "I'm sure you can, if you use all your strength." The boy walked over to the rock and pushed and pushed, but the rock didn't budge. "You were wrong," he said. "I tried as hard as I could, and I failed."

"No" said his father. "You didn't use all your strength. You didn't ask me to help."

In my years in the rabbinate I have seen repeatedly that there is nothing that can replace the certainty in a child's life that her parents love her and are there for her. Those children deprived of parental love and support feel the lack forever, even though they often compensate in powerful and beautiful ways. Those who are lucky enough to have such parents, as I was, carry a golden legacy all their days.

Raising a child is like learning to play an instrument except that practice and performance are the same and everything counts. We will all make a thousand mistakes. But deep love and genuine support can move the rock and lift the child.