



Donna will visit young moms in Compassion's El Salvador **Child Survival Program** in April.



straight talk ministries newsletter

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Hearing God at 35,000 Feet

Is it easier to hear God on a plane? Last January, I was praying in the window seat of a 737. A thought popped up suddenly, without any train of logic preceding it: so I was pretty sure God was responsible. He invited me to take my artist friends on a mission trip. It would never occur to me to take a group of women who didn't claim to be Christians and seemed reluctant to have anything to do with church on such a trip.

I connected with this group of intelligent, compassionate artists five years ago. I hadn't counted on growing to love them so quickly and deeply. I began to pray for them daily. I looked for ways to show them my appreciation. Over time, friendships developed and conversations began to dive beneath the surface. My artist friends were not

necessarily open to Christianity as they perceived it, yet they were deeply spiritual.

SAVE THE DATE!
FRIDAY MAY 11TH IS THE
NEXT STM DESSERT NIGHT
IN THE CALGARY AREA!

When I learned about a women's project film premiering last March on International

Women's Day, I thought: what a perfect way to gauge the interest of my artistic friends in doing a missions trip together. My prayer—in the conversation following the film—that someone would introduce the idea of getting involved.



The film was very moving; there was no small talk as we walked to a nearby restaurant. Finally, Amy* said, "That was so powerful, but I want to do more." Then I knew! God—who gave me this wacky idea—had prepared their hearts. I introduced the idea of doing a trip together to become involved with poor, oppressed women. Immediately Amy* said, "I'm in."

At our next painting class, I happened to sit next to Amy. "That was so powerful last night," she said. "I have so many questions. She leaned in conspiratorially, "I actually prayed last night!" We met for lunch to try to answer some of her questions. She expressed her realization of spiritual need. After I laid out the plan of salvation to her, she left to purchase a Bible.

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"Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did." John 2:6



For many students, whose highest value is acceptance of others...objective truth is on life support, resulting in a morality which is very stretchable.

He said

Elastic Morality

That is the name of a book where I discovered some disturbing statistics on the beliefs of young adults. Here is a sample of some of the moral statements they were asked to agree or disagree with and the percentages of those who agreed or strongly agreed with them.

Having sex before marriage is alright if you take proper precautions—32%.

Decisions about having an abortion should be left to the mother and her doctor—41%

A committed same-sex relationship is as valid as a committed heterosexual relationship—47%

In my opinion, living together before getting married is acceptable—51%

Viewing pornography that does not portray children is a matter of personal choice for adults—28%

The interesting thing is these stats come from a group of Christian young adult leaders 15-25 years old.

Seventy-one percent of these

young adults grew up going to church regularly. I'm talking young adult Christians who have expressed a desire to live out their faith in the world. Furthermore, 90% of these students' highest value is acceptance of others; which has resulted in a belief that what is right is subjective and decided by the individual in private. For most of them objective truth is on life support, all of which has resulted in a morality which is very stretchable.

When I get up to speak, this is the mindset of my audience. In 1 John 2:6, God says to us, *"Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did."* (1 John 2:6 NLT)

We need speakers and leaders who will invite this generation of students to join them in living out a faith that is anchored in following Jesus. They need role models to help them graciously and passionately stand up for what really matters and courageously live against the stream of our culture.

Thank you for supporting Straight Talk and making it possible for me to be one of those people. (RT)

She said

Lessons Learned Under the Memorization Tyrant!

Recently Straight Talk's mild-mannered treasurer, Carolyn, has become a fanatic. I mean she's really lost it! The teaching team at our church is working through the book of James. Carolyn challenged Randy and I along with our whole board to memorize the entire book. She didn't merely suggest it. She relentlessly used every pause in the last board meeting to interrogate each member for a commitment to memorize the first chapter by the next board meeting, one month away.

One board member asked, "How much will it cost me to get out of this? If I donate enough money to balance the budget, can I get off the hook?" Nope. Not good enough. As if this pressure isn't enough, she's been emailing, inquiring of our progress and reminding us of the deadline. James by June.

I've been working on it and—by the way—it's really hard work. When I finished memorizing the first chapter, I began to pray that God would help me to not only keep his word in my mind but to lodge it in my heart. Well, that

was a dangerous prayer. That evening while I was making supper, Randy came into the kitchen and made a comment that really rubbed me the wrong way. He meant it to be endearing, but it didn't strike me that way. I went from 0 to Jerk in 30 seconds. Out came harsh words that communicated in no uncertain terms I didn't appreciate his comment. Within minutes, I remembered the verses I reviewed just that day. "Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters. You should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." Argh! I apologized, realizing that God had answered my prayer about lodging His word in my heart.

I was reminded that scripture is "alive and active". In fact, one of only two things besides God which will last forever. The other is people. What could be a more worthwhile or lasting investment of time and money than imparting God's Word to people?

I'm grateful that is what I get to do. Thanks for investing your money in us so that we can bring the Bible alive to people. God is bringing spirits alive as a result. (DC)



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Contact us:

38 River Rock Crescent SE
Calgary, Alberta T2C 4J4
Phone/Fax: 403.720.3832
Toll Free 1.866.835.5827

www.straighttalkministries.com

Editor: Heather Traub
Parkvista Projects Inc.
403-225-6590

parkvistaprojects@shaw.ca

Spending of funds is confined to board approved programs and projects. Each restricted contribution towards such a program or project will be used as designated, with the understanding **the fine print** that when the need for such a program has been met, or cannot be completed for any reason determined by the board, the remaining restricted contributions designated for such programs or projects will be used where needed most.

(Continued from page 2)

We met regularly last summer to plan our trip, and I realized my friends were curious about how I live my life. They looked for ways to authenticate what I say I believe.

April 13th, we leave for El Salvador! We will be investing in young mothers through Compassion's Child Survival Program, and then raise the required funds once we're home to

keep that project going. This common purpose will keep us connected.

I am convinced God will use this trip to transform the lives of these women. I believe God will infuse their compassionate, creative hearts with his Holy Spirit and they will do great things for him as he does great things in them. (DC) * *not her real name*

Four ways *you* can make a difference by investing in Straight Talk



Pray for us. Straight Talk is empowered by consistent, informed prayer. To receive weekly prayer requests in your inbox, send your email address to admin@straighttalkministries.com.



Sponsor Randy to call leaders and students to live out their faith.



Enable Randy and Donna to challenge youth, men and women with Biblical truth.

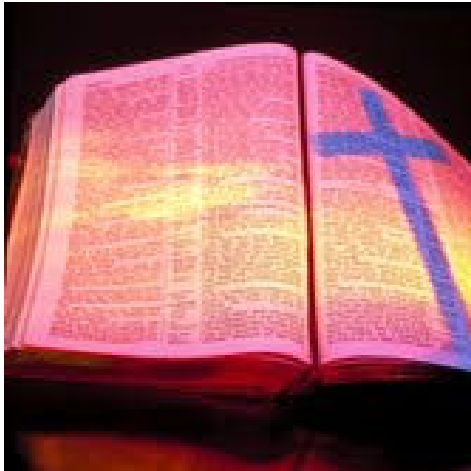


Empower Donna to reach out to women, both overseas and at home.

heart change straight talk ministries

life change

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- I want to make a difference by investing in Straight Talk:**
 - Equip** Randy & Donna to stay relevant & passionate in their ministry \$ _____
 - Fund** the Face to Face book \$ _____
 - Sponsor** Randy & Donna to continue to challenge people \$ _____
 - Please use my gift where most needed \$ _____
 - Pray** for us. Join our weekly prayer team. Email: admin@straighttalkministries.com

- I want to support Straight Talk monthly:**
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 - \$50 \$ _____

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Note: Please include a cheque marked Void and provide signature below.

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heart change

life change



The Parent Page

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the parent page!

The Parent Page is a new addition to the regular Straight Talk Ministries quarterly newsletter. I hope to use this page to deal with parenting issues and hopefully answer parenting questions you may have. In this issue, I want to talk about disciplining teens.

Although our roles change in the teen years, we still need to parent our children. Part of parenting our kids is setting minimum standards of acceptable behaviour. We need to set rules with our kids to help them become productive, independent, citizens and passionate Jesus followers. One of the great challenges is what to do when one of those boundaries is broken.

When Kendall was in Grade 5, we began having problems with her getting school assignments and homework done and handed in. It was an issue we talked about on numerous occasions. I remember one Saturday as I was taking her to the church for a Christmas production rehearsal, I discovered that, once again, she had not done an assignment on time. I was furious!!!! Both the volume and intensity of my voice began to rise and I asked rhetorical questions like, "How many times have we talked about this?" and "Don't you think we are serious?" Feel free to build the rest of the conversation in your mind. I had her in an enclosed space and she was going to experience the full extent of my wrath! HOW DARE SHE IGNORE MY WISHES! She needed to experience severe consequences for her disobedience and I was in no mood to wait.

I don't know how long I kept her there crying and asking "Can I go now?" before I said something like "Go, but we are not finished with this. We will talk about it more when you get home." I wanted her to suffer!

That day I blew it on so many levels. First of all, I totally disregarded James 1:19-20, "Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry because human anger does not produce the righteous life God desires."

Secondly, I was dishing out emotional consequences rather than reality consequences. Emotional consequences (expressions of anger, belittling, or berating) often feel like a withdrawal of our love and accep-

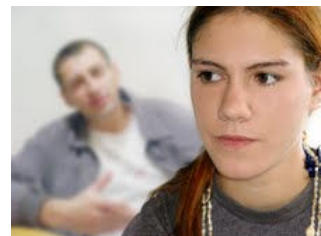
ance in our kids minds. Emotional consequences may make us feel a little better and get the results of better behaviour that we desire for a time. However, they can be terribly damaging to our relationship with our child. Reality consequences, on the other hand, are those that naturally occur as a result of the child's behaviour or those which were clearly spelled out ahead of time.

I've heard when a police officer pulls you over for a driving infraction, they can give you a tongue lashing (emotional consequence) or they can give you a ticket (reality consequence), but not both. I don't know if that is true; I have not had a lot of tickets, but I have been amazed how calmly tickets are given out.

As our children get older, especially into their teens, the most significant influence we can have on them is relational influence. When they were small we could physically stop them from doing things we didn't want them to do. We could also control them with fear of what we will do if they get caught doing something wrong. Remember counting, 1...2...3...? These methods generally don't work any longer in the teen years. However, I know many students who have made the choice to stay out of trouble because they have a deep relationship with their parents and didn't want to disappoint them.

When we discipline our students we need to concentrate on using reality consequences not emotional consequences. We need to work hard to protect our relationship with them. Not only does the greatest influence we have with our kids stem from our relationship, but relationship is all we have when they mature and leave home.

A great book that helped Donna and I with the concept of disciplining our teens is *Boundaries with Kids*, by Henry Cloud and John Townsend.



If you have feedback, or have questions you would like to see addressed, please forward them to feedback@straighttalkministries.com.