



Creating Strong Connections

Implementation Teams Guide

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YEAR ONE



PROM NIGHT the new honeymoon

get prom prepped tips to get prom perfect





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how alcohol, tobacco and other drugs can ruin proms

RESPECT GIVE IT TO GET IT

Some of life's lessons are hard, like learning to show respect—all the time, every time. I wasn't always a great kid. I got in a little trouble when I was younger. But then I started to get closer to my parents. I know, a lot of teenagers think that's uncool. But I realized my mom and dad do care. And it matters to them—and me—how I treat people.

BY JAMAR LEWIS

The road to respect

I didn't always get what respect was all about. I used to think I had to prove I was tough—and I had no idea when it came to girls and relationships. Don't get me wrong—I'm not perfect. But I try to do my best to treat everyone right. That's probably the biggest thing my parents have taught me. It may sound corny, but it's true.

My parents aren't perfect either. But the cool thing is, they really care about each other. They talk through their feelings and they make decisions together. I watch how my dad treats my mom. And I think about that when I'm with my girlfriend. I guess I'm getting to be old school, just like my parents.

The deal on dating

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My girlfriend's name is Lashona, and we've been dating for about 4 months. I really like hanging out with her. I don't think I ever would have had the courage to ask her out same way. With respect. And everyone want to feel important. So I was just myself, and I never tried to act like anyone else around her. It turns out she thought

I think we both see each other as that I may not always agree with but we work through that.

Lashona. And sometimes she gets uncomfortable when we go to parties or whatever, and she doesn't know many we just leave. It's not a big deal.

I don't put pressure on her to do something she doesn't want to. That's just not right, and it's not my style. I guess I get that from my dad. I know better than to think that would make me a "real man." Please. That's so stupid. A "real" man respects others. End of story.

The plan

For example, take the prom. A lot of guys were freaking out about it. It was like suddenly they felt they had to outdo each other and get their dates to think they were all macho. But the rest of the year, it's not like they're prince charmings. Some guys I know can be real disrespectful to their girlfriends. And I know from talking to Lashona that women don't want to be treated like that. Who does?

A few of them came up with this "plan." They arranged to get hotel rooms for after the prom. And it was all going to be a big surprise to their dates. They said any girl would be flattered to have a nice hotel to go to. They asked me if I wanted in.

One thing is, I'm a little more outgoing than people. But if I see that she doesn't feel right, Somehow it didn't sound right to me. If they were so sure their dates would like the idea, why not just ask them first? I really doubted it was the kind of thing Lashona would like.

I asked my parents about it first. My dad said the whole plan was wrong, especially going behind their dates' backs. My mom reminded me that going along to get along could make Lashona lose respect for me. And what about my self-respect? Talking to them put things into perspective. I called Lashona and told her about "the plan." She just laughed, like I knew she would. She had a much different evening in mind, and so did I. A nice dinner, dancing, maybe getting together with some friends later.

The big night

The night of the prom finally arrived. I bought Lashona a nice corsage and a card. Dinner was awesome—we just talked and laughed a lot. When we got to the prom, we met up with those guys. It was weird, they didn't even look like they were having a good time. It seemed like there was a lot of tension between them and their dates. Lashona and I knew how lucky we were that we didn't get caught up in all that stress. I give credit to the fact that we actually communicate.

The right choice

We both had a great time at the prom. She really appreciated the corsage and the card. She was so sweet all night, and she kept thanking me for everything. I told her that it was no big deal-I wanted her to be happy. Neither of us know if this is "true love"-we each still have our own dreams and plans. But we do know that dating is serious and takes effort. The prom is just one day. It's important how you treat someone that day But all the other days are just as important too. I'm going to keep doing what I know is right, and follow my dad's advice: "Give respect to get respect." It works.

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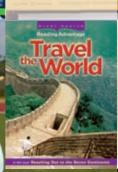
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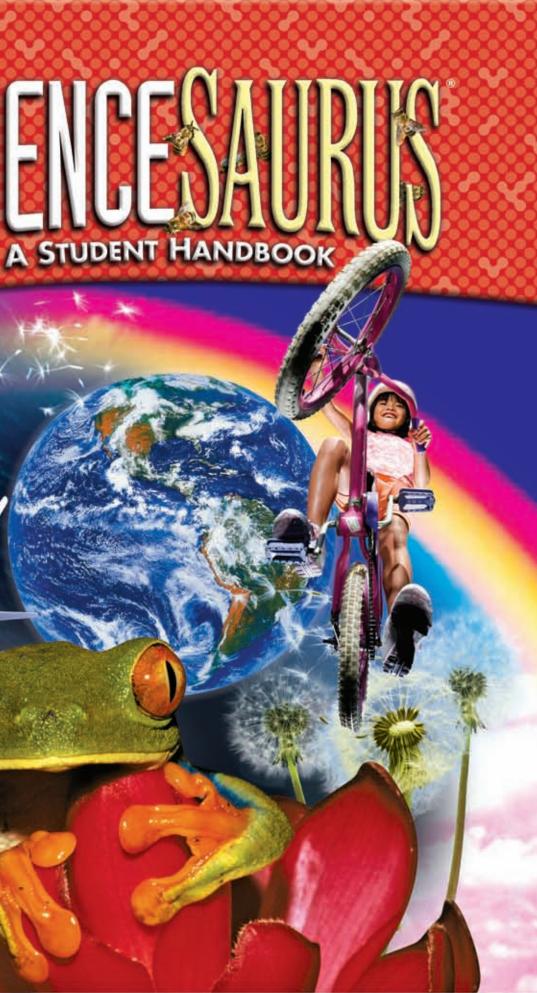
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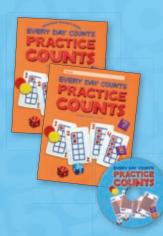
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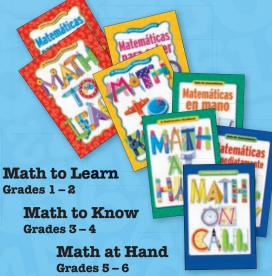
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