



The Value Minute® for Families.

Family time seems to be becoming scarcer. Between commitments to academics, athletic activities, and other extracurricular pursuits, families are constantly on the go with seemingly little 'down time'. In addition, dual-income and single-parent families are more common which means some children spend as much or more time with other care providers and influencers than their own parents. The Value Minute® is a perfect means to gain some perspective by getting a quick pulse on family values relevant to our times. Keeping children grounded by providing examples of practical values is one way to ensure they will mature into confident, principled young adults.

Sample Values for Family Features

- **Erma Bombeck's Values**

When she was dying from cancer, Erma Bombeck wrote: "If I had my life to live over... I would have talked less and listened more. I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained, or the sofa faded. ... I would have taken the time to listen to my grandfather ramble about his youth. ... I would never have insisted the car windows be rolled up on a summer day because my hair had just been teased and sprayed. I would have sat on the lawn with my children and not worried about grass stains."

What kinds of values shifts did Erma Bombeck embrace?

- **When "Blind Eyes" and Values Cross**

A parent wrote to The Ethicist, in *The New York Times Magazine*: "I turned a blind eye to the under-age drinking at my 16-year-old son's keg party. When the police showed up, my son pleaded with me to say that I just got home so I would not be held liable for the drinking." The parent did not lie to the cops but wondered about this decision.

If you were the parent, what would you have done? Why?

- **Character Modeling**

James Baldwin observed that "children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them." Laura and Malcolm Gault in *The Biggest Job We'll Ever Have* offer three ways to inspire our children. One is when we model daily character. "Picking up litter, being honest, taking the high ground, showing concern, supporting the right thing to do, helping a friend, listening," are ways cited to practice and model the character that our children may be inspired to emulate.

What examples do you set for the children who observe you to emulate?