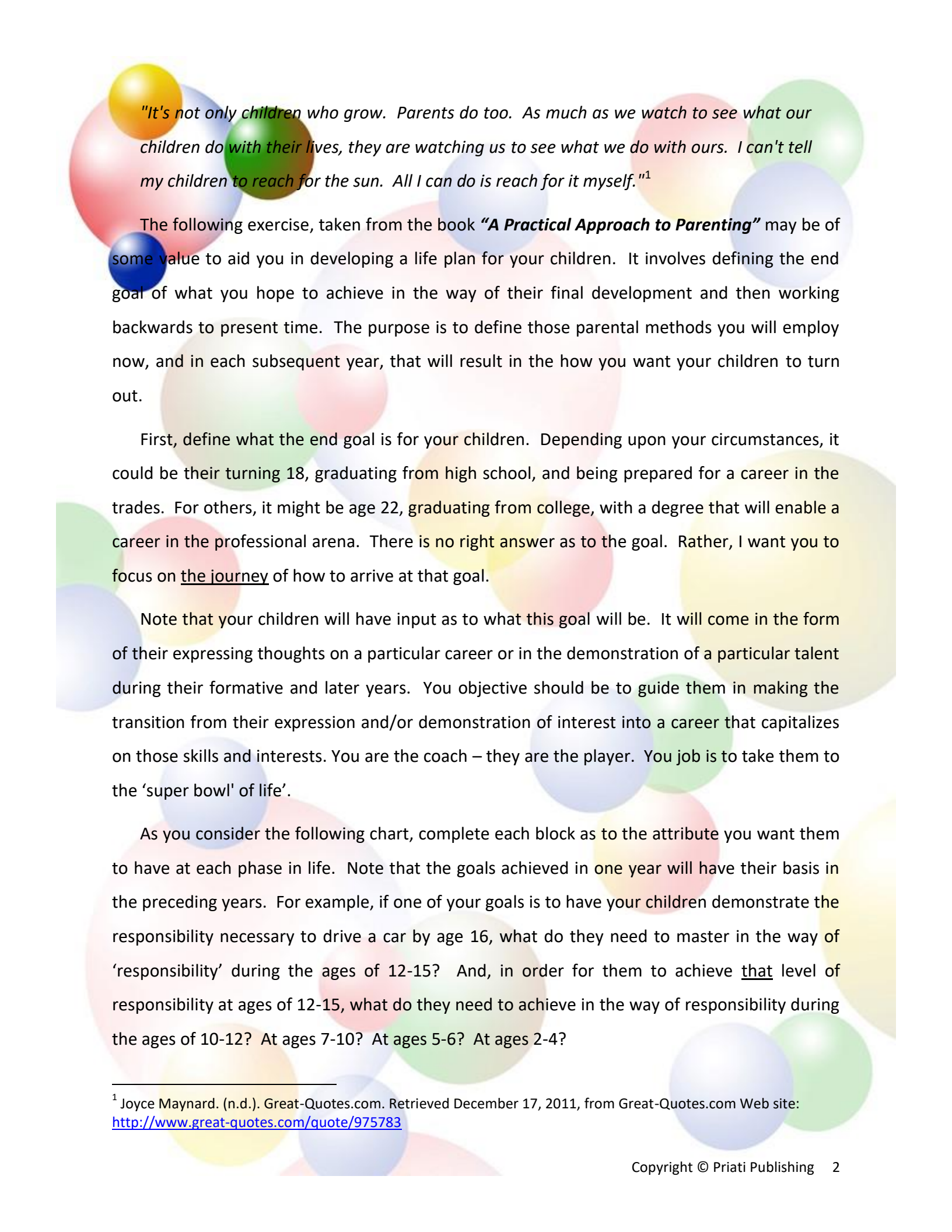




**AN EXERCISE  
FOR SHAPING  
YOUR KIDS**



*"It's not only children who grow. Parents do too. As much as we watch to see what our children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours. I can't tell my children to reach for the sun. All I can do is reach for it myself."<sup>1</sup>*

The following exercise, taken from the book ***"A Practical Approach to Parenting"*** may be of some value to aid you in developing a life plan for your children. It involves defining the end goal of what you hope to achieve in the way of their final development and then working backwards to present time. The purpose is to define those parental methods you will employ now, and in each subsequent year, that will result in the how you want your children to turn out.

First, define what the end goal is for your children. Depending upon your circumstances, it could be their turning 18, graduating from high school, and being prepared for a career in the trades. For others, it might be age 22, graduating from college, with a degree that will enable a career in the professional arena. There is no right answer as to the goal. Rather, I want you to focus on the journey of how to arrive at that goal.

Note that your children will have input as to what this goal will be. It will come in the form of their expressing thoughts on a particular career or in the demonstration of a particular talent during their formative and later years. Your objective should be to guide them in making the transition from their expression and/or demonstration of interest into a career that capitalizes on those skills and interests. You are the coach – they are the player. Your job is to take them to the 'super bowl' of life'.

As you consider the following chart, complete each block as to the attribute you want them to have at each phase in life. Note that the goals achieved in one year will have their basis in the preceding years. For example, if one of your goals is to have your children demonstrate the responsibility necessary to drive a car by age 16, what do they need to master in the way of 'responsibility' during the ages of 12-15? And, in order for them to achieve that level of responsibility at ages of 12-15, what do they need to achieve in the way of responsibility during the ages of 10-12? At ages 7-10? At ages 5-6? At ages 2-4?

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<sup>1</sup> Joyce Maynard. (n.d.). Great-Quotes.com. Retrieved December 17, 2011, from Great-Quotes.com Web site: <http://www.great-quotes.com/quote/975783>

Visualize each attribute or character trait you want them to have as being on a continuum from 0-100. They can't achieve a score of 100 at age 10. But, they might be able to achieve a score of 35 by age 10 and that might be a great score for that age. By age 12, their achievement might progress to a score of 40. The target score for each age level is up to you. Just remember, that the goal is to bring all of their character attributes to a level of 100 by the time they reach your (completed) target age (18 or 22).

Note the following:

1. You may add as many character attributes as you want in guiding your child to be the adult you want them to be. Expand the chart as much as you want.
2. Change the scores and age ranges at each level to complement your parenting style. Be aware that you may want to change the scoring ranges for each attribute so that no two are the same – it all depends on how you weight the importance of each level of achievement in each category.
3. You may find that there is some level of interdependency between the character attributes that may affect the target levels.
4. You'll note in the sample below that a greater portion of the score appears in the older age segments. The reason is that the children's greatest aptitude for learning occurs during this period; therefore, the higher the potential for step progress.

The following is only a sample to help get you started. Build on it and remember that the chart for one child may be different than the chart for a different child.

The book [\*"A Practical Approach to Parenting"\*](#) may be obtained in ebook format from Amazon.com.

Sample Goals Chart

<u>Age</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Respect</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Honor</u>	<u>Faith</u>
17-18	90-100	Punishment is limited to facial expressions of parental disapproval	Values respect given and received	Understands responsibility of being an adult	Values personal honor and integrity; their word is their bond	Knows their chosen faith
15-16	75-90	Loss of privileges is excruciating but rare	Understands the importance of earning respect	Understands personal responsibility	Values patriotism, heritage	Willing seeks a faith that complements their life
12-15	55-75	Loss of privileges only form of discipline; voluntarily demonstrates self-discipline regarding sports, the arts, etc.	Understands the importance of earning respect	Can be trusted alone at home	Demonstrates importance of truth; knows truth is tied to honor	Openness to learn parent's faith
10-12	35-55	Child values loss of privileges more than corporal punishment; child chooses between punishments	Willing shows respect for others	Can be relied upon to complete chores on time and to expectations	Understands that truth can have negative consequences	Openness to learn parent's faith
7-10	20-35	Non-corporal punishment occurs more often than spanking; understands the value of self-discipline as it relates to sports, the arts, etc.	Understands the importance of giving respect to everyone	Can handle small amounts of responsibility (such as taking care of one's bicycle)	Understands that their personal honor is directly tied to family honor	Grasps simple concepts of faith
5-6	5-20	Understands consequences	Willing shows respect to adults	Can carry out simple chores	Knows the difference between truth and lies	Comfortable with early exposure to faith
9 mo-4	0-5	Understands simple commands	Learns not to 'sass back' to parents	Understands that responsibility is a required character attribute (such as picking up one's own toys)		
0-9 mo	0					