



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Positive Parenting – Part 1

Guest(s): Zig Ziglar

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- Dr. Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.
- Roger Marsh: Well, hello everyone. And welcome to another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk with your host psychologist and bestselling author, Dr. James Dobson. I'm Roger Marsh and today we are going to roll back the clock a bit to hear a very important program titled Positive Parenting. This was a conversation that Dr. Dobson had with the late Zig Ziglar about his book, which was titled Raising Positive Kids In A Negative World.
- Roger Marsh: Before we jump into today's show, let me go ahead and introduce our guest. The late Zig Ziglar was a well-known motivational speaker and salesman and the bestselling author of multiple books, including the one we will talk about today, Raising Positive Kids In A Negative World. Zig Ziglar was the husband of Jean Ziglar and the father of four kids, as well as the grandfather to many grandchildren. Sadly, he passed away in 2012, but through great messages like this one, his influence lives on. So let's go ahead now and get into the program. Here now is Zig Ziglar and Dr. James Dobson for the first part of Positive Parenting on this edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.
- Dr. Dobson: I've waited a long time to be able to look across this desk at the man on the other side of the microphone there, and to welcome Zig Ziglar to our studio.
- Zig Ziglar: And Jim, it seems that I've waited even longer to be across this desk, so I'm delighted to be here.
- Dr. Dobson: You've raised how many children?
- Zig Ziglar: We have four, we have three daughters, and then 10 years later, like Abraham and Sarah, we were blessed in our old age. And we got our little boy.
- Dr. Dobson: And your wife's named Jean?

Zig Ziglar: Yes. When I'm talking about her, I call it her red head. And when I'm talking to her, I called her Sugar Baby. But her name is Jean, yes.

Dr. Dobson: How do you feel about the children you raised? I don't want to put you on the spot. You feel good about your job as a father and her job as a mother?

Zig Ziglar: It felt exceptionally good. Jim, we made some mistakes along the way as do all parents, but in the final analysis, as I put in my dedication page, there, they're four very positive kids. More importantly, each one of them knows Jesus Christ as Lord, and they're happy and successful in their own lives.

Dr. Dobson: Is that your definition of success?

Zig Ziglar: Yes. You know, if you do everything else, right, and don't lead them into the kingdom, then you've certainly come up a way short.

Dr. Dobson: You talk in this book about actually going to your grown kids and asking them to evaluate the positives and the negatives of your parenting. Boy, you open yourself up in that regard, what kind of answers did they give?

Zig Ziglar: Well, some of them were encouraging and one or two, I just assumed they had not mentioned of, but one of the things that struck me and hit me the hardest on the negative side, and I cannot believe that I did it, but I'm going to defend myself by saying I did not know the Lord at that point. But throughout our early years, we moved a lot. And Jim, I never once really consulted with my wife properly, nor did I consider the impact that it would have on my children. And in retrospect, I cannot believe I was that insensitive. And my feeling was I was the man of the house, I was earning the living and it was my decision. And we're going to go because it's best for everybody.

Dr. Dobson: And Jean went along with you, but-

Zig Ziglar: Pretty much so, yes, she did. Reluctantly on occasion. But in retrospect, as I look back, we might still have made most of those moves, but they could have been handled with so much more love and compassion than they were.

Dr. Dobson: It's tough on a family to move isn't it?

Zig Ziglar: Yes it is.

Dr. Dobson: Especially the wife. I find that a man, somehow, especially if he's got his work and gets engrossed in it, copes with that better, especially better than the homemaker who doesn't have those contacts. And it may take her years to reestablish the network of friends.

Zig Ziglar: That's been my observation as well. I know in our case, a move didn't affect me at all, but I know particularly when we moved from Atlanta, Jean had such close

friends there and yet that particular move economically speaking was an absolute must for us. But again, I could have handled it more graciously.

Dr. Dobson: What positive things did your kids say?

Zig Ziglar: Well, one of the things they were most delighted about was the fact that when we would eat out and this seemed like a small thing, but when we would eat out, if we ate steaks, they were given the same ordering privileges that we were, we did not relegate them to the hamburger side of the menu.

Dr. Dobson: Who would think kids would reach out for that particular example when they could've given a thousand of others? That was important to them.

Zig Ziglar: Very important. Each one of them, as a matter of fact mentioned that. The second thing that they mentioned a lot was the amount of time and attention that we devoted to them. For example, I was in the cookware business in those early years, putting on demonstrations at night and I would come in like at 11:30 or 12:00 o'clock and the baby would long ago have been asleep, but I'd wake her up and play with her for an hour, hour and a half, two hours literally. And anytime the children would wake up at night, it was agreed that I would be the one to get up and look after them. And I did that for two reasons. First of all, early on, for whatever reason, God impressed upon me that the mother had her hands full all day. And for her to have to get up in the middle of the night was simply a load that was too heavy. And so I recognize that. And then second, I wanted that opportunity to spend some time with my children.

Dr. Dobson: The title of your book is Raising Positive Kids In A Negative World. Let's start with the downside of that title. In what way is this a tough time to raise children? In what way is it negative?

Zig Ziglar: Jim, basically the input into our children's minds, what they're exposed to via television, the music that so many of them listen to, and which is all around you, can't avoid listening to it on so many occasions, the prevalence of drugs in our society, the violence, which is everywhere in particular depicted again on television, the moral decline in our society over the last few years, when you put them all together, it makes it very difficult obstacle for parents to overcome.

Dr. Dobson: You believe it is possible in that kind of negative environment to raise positive kids.

Zig Ziglar: Jim, I'm, as you know, an optimist from the word go, I'd go after Moby Dick in a rowboat and take the tartar sauce with me. But I'll have to confess to you, when I finished the research on the negative aspects of life, when I looked at the abortions and the rape and incest and child abuse and all, I'll have to confess, I was down. I was pretty negative. But then as I started putting together the procedures we can follow to do something about it, my enthusiasm and

optimism returned. And I tell you, I'm more convinced than ever that we emphatically can raise those positive kids today.

Dr. Dobson:

How do we go about it, Zig?

Zig Ziglar:

Well, we start, Jim, obviously the most important thing we've already kind of hinted at earlier. We start with our relationship with the creator of the universe. If we know Christ personally and can use his wisdom and his judgment and his strength and share his love, that obviously is the most important thing that we can do.

Zig Ziglar:

The second thing I believe if we have the opportunity, if expectant mothers are listening, we need to take care of mother while she's carrying that precious life in her body. You can actually even talk to the babies before they're born. And there's been a lot of evidence to support the fact that that bonding particularly between the father and the child can start right there in the womb.

Dr. Dobson:

I believe that.

Zig Ziglar:

I don't think there's any doubt about it. Well, interestingly enough, when Elizabeth was carrying John and Mary approached-

Dr. Dobson:

He jumped.

Zig Ziglar:

Absolutely jumped. Isn't it interesting that our savior's birth was announced by an unborn babe?

Dr. Dobson:

Isn't that something? I hadn't thought of it in that sense.

Zig Ziglar:

It's phenomenal there. So the womb is a good place to start. And then from infancy, particularly in those early hours of that baby's life, the relationship between mom, that bonding. The baby's just been removed from the most secure, comfortable place in the world and spanked upon arrival and thrust into the bright lights. So it needs its mother.

Dr. Dobson:

Hung by his heels.

Zig Ziglar:

Yeah. Those early days and weeks of course are important. And Jim, I read something the other day that's most intriguing. And this says a lot about mom. If it's humanly possible, staying at home to raise her babies, the study done in Missouri reveals that up to two thirds of that child's vocabulary that he'll use for life is acquired by the time its three years old.

Dr. Dobson:

And that is the everyday vocabulary that they're referring to the words, not that he knows and doesn't use, but the words that he actually depends on.

- Zig Ziglar: Absolutely. In their life. And so the question is, who's going to teach that vocabulary? Will it be a television program or a rockstar, or will it be a loving mother and a loving dad who are sharing the important words in our vocabulary?
- Dr. Dobson: You know, something that's really interesting to me, Zig, right now, back in the late '60s, there was a sudden burst of enthusiasm among the feminists and others for a whole new attitude toward families in the home. As you recall, women began going back into the workforce and it just looked like everything was going that direction. And there was very little evidence to indicate that that was not wise. And at that time I saw some dangers in that and I began talking about it. My book, *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women* came out in the mid '70s. And I was trying to describe the concerns that I saw. And I'm sure there were those who thought that I was rather chauvinistic in my perspective on women for saying that the modern trend, what everybody seemed to be doing, had some dangers associated with it.
- Dr. Dobson: It's been very interesting to me to see research begin to come along and validate what I was trying to say at that time. And in fact, to have experts in authorities who don't come from a scriptural perspective, began to agree with those of us who do on this point of view. I saw a Phil Donahue show where there was a panel of authorities. There were five of them with university credentials. Most of them were published authors and I think it included Dr. Burton White from Harvard University, who did the Harvard preschool study and Dr. Lee Salk and others. And they were expressing great concern, especially about mothers who leave their babies, their very small children in those early years. And what the implications of that are, what life in a childcare center can be like.
- Dr. Dobson: They were not only talking about the psychological influences of placing a child in a childcare center, but also the diseases that occur there. As you know a child picks up a toy the first thing he does is puts it in his mouth and then another child picks it up right after that. So communicable diseases get transferred much more easily in that kind of group setting. But there's just a lot of research that's coming out now that shows that we have reason to be concerned about ripping and tearing that relationship between a mother and a child, especially during those early years.
- Dr. Dobson: Dr. Barry Brazelton is a world renowned pediatrician, and he talks about studies that show that when a mother knows that she's going to go back to work immediately after the birth of her child, emotionally and subconsciously perhaps, she begins to prepare herself for that even before the child is born. And she begins to see off her emotions and to try to protect herself from the hurt and the pain of handing that little baby over to someone else to raise and care for and to be there when the critical moments occur, when the first step is taken, when the first word is spoken and that's painful for a mother. So she begins to protect herself from that. And the child, according to research, the

child can feel that isolation, that removal, that emotional distance that occurs between mother and child.

Dr. Dobson: So it's interesting to me that what began with some rather vague, but serious concerns in the late '60s and early '70s about this new social phenomenon is now being documented by research. And we have reason to take another very hard look at what's happening because from 1970 to 1984, according to the Bureau of vital statistics, the number of women who have children less than three years of age, who are now in the workforce has almost doubled. And I think that has tremendous impact on the family and, Zig, that's what you're talking about.

Zig Ziglar: Absolutely. And the interesting thing here is that while a lot of mothers say they have to work and a lot of them do, Jim, but according to the Yankelovich poll, 67% of the working mothers today are working by choice and not by necessity. You said something there that kind of triggers a lot of it too. And that is that when the mother goes off to work, as all the indications are approving now, trying to be the supermom, the super employee and the super wife is an absolute absurdity. It's an impossibility.

Dr. Dobson: It can't be done.

Zig Ziglar: It cannot be done. And then there's another friend's danger that is involved. 50% of the divorces in America are the result of the husband or the wife meeting someone else in the workplace and forming a relationship with them. So if that mother can possibly stay home, not only will their child benefit, but the possibilities of a family disruption and divorce are dramatically reduced.

Dr. Dobson: Zig you talk in this book about times of the day, when you can do more than perhaps other times to raise a positive child. Describe that for us.

Zig Ziglar: Well, I believe, Jim, the way we get our children up and the way we put them to bed is extraordinarily important. One of the most beautiful scenes I ever see is to watch either my wife or my daughter awaken our newest grandbaby. She, first of all, will begin to open her little eyes, and you know how babies will stretch and arch their little bags and yawn, and then as their eyes become fully awake and she begins to smile, you know. Well, either my wife or daughter are talking to the baby all the time, and they reach down and they'll pick her up and they'll hold her real close for, oh, a few seconds, then they'll lay her down and start changing her diaper. And they're talking and she's cooing and laughing. And I couldn't help but think what a marvelous way to introduce her to the world of the waking.

Dr. Dobson: I wish somebody'd wake me up like that.

Zig Ziglar: Well, Jim, it occurred to me why can't we simply continue in life to awaken our children pleasantly and cheerfully and lovingly and optimistically. And one of the

things that we have always practiced in our family is as our children got older, we would knock on the door to make sure they were not in a state of undress and no answer meant that they were sound asleep. So we'd peek in. And if they were covered, we had either my wife or I had always walk in and stroke their face, and I'd always kiss my children and awaken them to the day and somehow or another it just seems that if you start the day, that way-

Dr. Dobson: You know, Zig that is good advice.

Zig Ziglar: One of the things also some children are so different as you know. Some children, you can wake up and they're wide awake and ready to go. In our case with our son, for example, he's not that way. So we started doing this. I would simply knock on his door and I'd say, "Son in 10 minutes, it's time to get up." And 10 minutes later, I would come back and again, I'd knock on the door, then I'd walk in. And then we would go through the procedure we talked about earlier.

Zig Ziglar: In the evening, also if 9:00 is the bedtime, well I'm convinced that 99% of our kids are natural born procrastinators. And so at 8:30 we would say, "Okay, now go make your phone calls, get the two drinks of water you're going to have to have, straighten up whatever you need to do, whatever it is because in 30 minutes now you're going to be going to bed." An amazing thing happens when we do it that way. First of all, it's easier to get them to bed on time. But second children who will fight going to bed desperately, I mean, that bed is the last place in the world they want to go. Somehow overnight, they develop an attachment or romance for that bed that defies belief-

Dr. Dobson: And stay there all day.

Zig Ziglar: Oh yeah. And why can't we lovingly do what we're doing? I believe the rest of the day would be more effective and productive. If we do.

Dr. Dobson: You give them an early warning system for bedtime.

Zig Ziglar: Pretty much, yes.

Dr. Dobson: Zig, you talked in a book about creating winners. I think that's one of the most valuable things you had to say. Most children feel like losers, especially during the teen years, early adolescence and so on. How do you make a kid feel like a winner?

Zig Ziglar: I never will forget, Jim, I was on the west coast at a seminar and a man and his wife were there with their little guy who just had winner written all over him. He was smiling from ear to ear. He stuck his hand out and shook a very firm, enthusiastic handshake. So I knelt down and I looked at him. I said, "Son, you know, I can do something that very few people can do." And he kind of grinned and said, "Oh?" And I said, "Yes. Would you like to know what that is?" He said,

"Yes, sir." I said, "You know, I have the ability to spot winners." And I said, "I am never wrong. I always get them right." He said, "You do?" I said, "Sure. And I said, "Now let me look at you real good." And I looked at him for a few seconds and I said, "Yep, there's no doubt about it. You've got it written all over you. Undoubtedly."

Dr. Dobson: That's priceless.

Zig Ziglar: Well, obviously he was delighted. I got a beautiful letter from his mother a few days later. And she said, "You'll never know what those few seconds meant to us and to our son. She said, we adopted him. And by the age of two, he was a badly abused child having had at least one broken limb." And she said, "We've had some other difficulties," but she said, "You know, he will, for the rest of his life, have that picture in his mind, which you planted there and which we're going to reinforce from time to time." Jim, I believe with all my heart that man was designed for accomplishment. He's engineered for success and he's endowed with the seeds of greatness. And I believe that's the message we need to communicate to our kids.

Dr. Dobson: So you're recommending that that parents address their children as winners, by telling them as you told that young man. In what other ways?

Zig Ziglar: That's one step. But I always believe, and again, here's why I'm so enthusiastic as a Christian and why I love my Bible so much, the Bible never makes a promise unless it gives you a plan. God does things that way. And so I always like to follow that procedure in whatever I do. Here's the plan basically. I use this in audiences when I'm speaking, I ask them to identify the qualities of success and they will identify for me anywhere from 25 to 35. And they will always include honesty and character and integrity and faith and love and law, a good, positive mental attitude. The successful person is a hard worker is enthusiastic, is motivated, is a good listener. This individual also is dependable and they're persistent.

Zig Ziglar: And when we get through listing all of the qualities, I said, "All right, now let's look at them and you'll find out why I'm excited." I asked the question, "How many of you would love to have a mate or a child with these qualities?" Everybody says, "Me." How many of you would like to have these qualities yourself? And everybody says me. Then I said, "Well, let's go down the list because here's the good news. You've got every one of these qualities. You have some honesty, some character, some integrity, some faith, some love, some dependability, some persistence, some willingness to work. All of them. Now, what we've got to do is keep reminding ourselves that God has already planted within us all of the seeds necessary to raise a positive human being, a child." And it seems, Jim, that when parents realize that they've got that basic raw material to work with, that their enthusiasm really grows for the task ahead.

Dr. Dobson: Have you noticed, Zig, that in the process of disciplining, some parents approach their kids as though they were the enemy and throw them on the defensive and

set up a barrier of communication between them because there's an irritability that develops when you're together all day, every day, and the children are irresponsible and they're not doing what you want them to do. That's easier to tell parents than it is to implement, isn't it? That you approach their children as winners?

Zig Ziglar:

Yes, it is. And discipline, I certainly share the sentiments, which you expressed so eloquently on so many occasions about the importance of that discipline. Understanding that discipline is something you do for the child and not to the child. A Gallup poll, as you're probably familiar with about four years ago, revealed that over 80% of the graduating seniors expressed the wish that their parents and their teachers had loved them enough to discipline them more and require more of them. I think one of the most tragic mistakes most make is when they permit their child to quote sass, or talk back to them. Dr. Bruno Bettelheim at the University of Chicago points out that anytime a parent permits that to happen, that the child is actually putting the parent down below the child and Dr. Bettelheim says that destroys the security of the child because that child must have the parent to look up to. And if the parent is permitted the child to put the parent down below the child, then the security is destroyed. And the chances of raising a positive child are greatly reduced.

Roger Marsh:

Well, what a great reminder for parents about the importance of discipline in raising positive children. You've been listening to part one of a program that we have titled Positive Parenting here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and I encourage you to make plans to join us for the conclusion of this classic conversation featuring Dr. Dobson and the late Zig Ziglar. Now, if you'd like a copy of Zig's book, Raising Positive Kids In A Negative World, look for the link on our website, drjamesdobson.org, or you can call us at (877) 732-6825 and a member of our staff will be happy to give you all the information you need. Be sure to join us again next time, when we will hear part two of positive parenting right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

This has been a presentation of the dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

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