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etting go of your adult children



"What did wo do wrong?" This pilative question has been uttered by bowlidered parents when confronted by the fact that their addescent or college-age children (or even beyond) have violated moral or legal standards, torment themselves with the feelings of gullt and personal responsibility for the transgressions of the younger generation.

the younger generation. In an ironic reversal of the Biblical judgment, contemporary so-ciety often visits the sins of the children upon their fathers and

ter is using narcotics, or has vio-lated the law, or has engaged in some willfully perverse act that has brought havoc upon his or her life.

Since most parents try, as best they can, to provide proper train-ing and direction for their young, it is an over simplification, when such tragic events occur, to place all blame upon the shoulders of the older generation.

What does one say to parents who have trouble with their children and cry out "What did we do that was wrong? Where did we fail?" There are, to be sure, many ways in which we do fail our children. We neglect to give them enough attention, to talk things over with them, to let them know firmly and lovingly where we stand, to express our convictions about our faith and about our values.

Yes, there are times when we do fail in giving them the proper example of conduct and practice. But, at the same time, there are numerous cases, perhaps the ma-

jority, in which parents do the right things, communicate faith-fully, set fine examples, and still their children disappoint them. What about this?

The answer lies in two parts.

The answer lies in two parts.
First, young people are more influenced by their peers, by the
media, by the morn confusion our age than they are by their eleers, at least so it seems to me.
There is such a thing as the
"spirit of the times" while
overwhelms any generation. That
spirit of moral defiance, of self-indulgence and of instant gratification exercises a powerful and soductive force upon the impressionable hearts and minds of the
young.

sionable hearts and minds of the young.

The second part of the answer lies with children themselves. Once you have done your best for your children, and they grow to maturity, you have to let them stend on their own feet.

Their mistakes are their own, and not yours. You have done what you could, you have communicated your conscience and still

they will not listen, at least not yet. It is up to them to choose what they will, but we cannot con-sider our children to be babies

Parents who have tried their best (and most do) should not harbor guilt feelings. Our sons and daughters are people in their own right, and, if they reject what their parents have offered, this is their decision, upon which they will either rise or fail.

Always, we must give them the knowledge that we love them, that they can come to us with their problems, and we shall do what we can to help them. After this, we must hope for the best and accept what may, in some instances, be the unacceptable without tormenting ourselves on how and why we failed.

Rabbi Irwin Groner is with the Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield. If you have a question or comment for him, call 953-2047, mail box number 1862, on a touch-tone phone.

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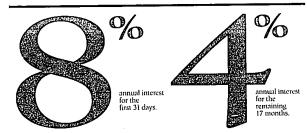
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