The Golden Rule works for parents too

One of the most frequently asked questions we receive has to do with the concern parents have that their kids will be influenced by poor behavior on the part of celebrities, sports heroes, teachers, or even family and neighbors. Kids consistently tell me that they learn about respect and consideration– how you show it and how others show it to you – at home from their parents.

The behavior of celebrities, sports heroes, teachers, or even family and neighbors actually validates what they learn at home – both by commission and omission. When your child sees that pitcher spit on the mound, he doesn't really think that makes it okay to spit unless *you've* told him it's okay. He may try spitting, but he knows it's probably not okay. The same is true about the language he will use. He may try out using this word or that, but he knows when it is contrary to the values you have taught.

The main thing you can do is apply The Golden Rule of Parenting. **Always *be* the kind of person you want your kids to be.**
So, if you want your kids to be respectful, considerate and honest, you have to be respectful, considerate and honest. And, then you may expect that behavior from your kids. Set some consequences to deal with those times they choose to try on contrary behaviors. When it's needed, you have to follow through with the consequences, so be sure they are something you can live with also. And, be patient – as they mature and take on manners as their own (not just because Mom says so) you will see the very behaviors you value emerge.