

TITLE: Right vs. Right

Jim, a single father and aspiring high school principal, had a tough decision. On the one hand, he had the responsibility to attend a late afternoon meeting that would most likely extend into the early evening. He had also made a commitment to his teenage son to obtain a breathing apparatus that would help him with sleep apnea, a potentially life threatening condition. Attending the critical meeting was right, but so was attending to his son's medical needs. Jim thought he could do both.

Jim's important meeting spilled over into the late evening. When he came home near midnight his son had suffered a traumatic apnea-related episode. He was too late. His son had died in his sleep.

(This is a true story. I was asked to fill in for Jim as a High School Principal back in 2007)

In life we are all challenged to make countless decisions, some more compelling than other. Most decisions can be categorized as Right vs. Wrong. Straight forward.

~~And~~ Yet, as we get older, we are confronted with life's complexities and the moral and ethically dilemmas they bring. I call these decisions Right vs. Right ones. As parents we are faced with such decisions. Take, for example, siding with your son or daughter, or with their teacher, in responding to a disciplinary incident in school. Who do we believe?

And our children are not immune from such difficult decisions either. Should a girl break-up with her high school sweetheart in order to move away and attend college? Or how about staying loyal to a best friend who just confided about sexual abuse at home or choosing to speak to the school counselor without the friend's consent?

While there's no easy answer, many people will agonize over these decisions. And yet, what seems to help when confronted by such dilemmas is to stay close to our faith and our moral compasses. It won't make such decisions any easier, but they do allow us to face ourselves and have some sense of peace.

Assisting our children in developing these life compasses is perhaps one of the greatest gifts we can give them.