

Mid-July and a few of my friends are getting ready to ship out their kids to college very soon. One as early as this week – my best friend of thirty years, Esther, heads to Embry-Riddle tomorrow with my goddaughter. I know for a fact that she and most of these other friends feel very anxious about their kids leaving and I don't blame them one bit. I feel queasy about it myself and it's not even my kids flying the coop. Mine have chosen a University half an hour from our home. For now anyway. But it could've been me in my friends' shoes right now and I feel for them, because I know they are as close to their kids as I am to mine. I'm fresh back from a two-week vacation where every second of every day was spent within a breath of my children and I miss them terribly now that I'm back at work. And they live with me!!!

Nonetheless, although most of us don't like to see our kids go, we certainly don't want to hold them back. But whether moving out because of college or marriage or whatever, thankfully, and ironically enough, we have technology. Quite a few moons ago when I left home for college I remember my mom had to deal with her separation anxiety cold turkey. Now parents go digital and stay in touch with the kiddies via text, e-mail, BBM, Skype, Facetalk and whathaveyou as soon as they're out the door, if they choose to. A total techno-blessing if you can believe that. For us parents at least. I think it's a definite plus because, after all, communication is key. And I won't go here into the little things us parents miss when the kids venture out so as not to make this into a mushy read, but I will say that no matter what lessons we have instilled in our children about the importance of family and staying close, it is up to us parents to keep the communication going forward and the kids coming back. No, not to move back in, rather to keep us in each other's hearts. If cyberspace can help in this regard while our kids are away and ease those empty nest blues, more power to it.

Of course, technology can never, and should never, take the place of a hug or a real live conversation with our kids. The absence of such leaves a void hard to fill. And that's where our family and friends come in; to help us through this very poignant transition.

Even though my husband and I still have our kids living at home, already we feel inklings of

empty-nest syndrome by virtue of their busy teenage life, and our friends and family do, and will, play an important role in our sanity. So parents, hang on to your socks and to those around you!

And do I even need to mention faith and God here? Suffice it to say, without our faith in God during this chapter of our lives we are…well, toast! So I'd like to ask you to join me in prayer for all the children starting college next month, especially for those moving away, and for their parents. My heart goes out to them. Our children are in God's hands. And truly there are no better hands.

[Dedicated to Esther: My sister, I love you; hang in there, God's got your back, and me].

The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence."
– Denis Waitly

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