

Like ship's captain, parents lead family

I would like to share with you a question a friend asked me.

She asked, "Why do therapists blame parents for everything?"



**EDWARD
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IN THE FAMILY

I reflected upon my parents and the stories I have heard from some of my clients. I smiled at my friend and shared with her that not all parents are to blame for the choices that their children make.

Let us look at a metaphor of a ship.

The sea, like life, is filled with much beauty and some challenges. At the helm of the ship stands a captain and, if we are so lucky, a co-captain. These two leaders of the ship provide rules, structure, guidance and care to the ship (the family), to the crew (children) and to their cargo (the innerworkings of the family.) The leaders have experienced the sea, have seen its beauty and have witnessed its

danger and, if blessed, have overcome the challenges placed before them. A sailor aboard the ship may choose to jump ship, may choose to board another ship; and/or to ignore the captains' call for steadiness or to make ready — these are choices that the crew can make. The choice of the captain is in his dispensing of the rules, structure, guidance and care that is needed by their crew.

I do not blame the parents for the individual choices of their children. In fact, a therapist's job should never be to blame. I would, however, ask the parent to reflect — how have you or how do you lead your ship?

Have you done everything you can to prepare your crew and how have you met your personal storms at sea?

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