

I WISH I KNEW

When my husband and I were raising our five children, we taught them everything we knew. Now we know that wasn't much. If we could do it over, here are some critical facts about human nature that I would start teaching them before they were old enough to brush their teeth without help.

Bad is easy, Good is hard.
Losing is easy. Winning is hard.
Talking is easy. Listening is hard.
Watching TV is easy. Reading is hard.
Giving advice is easy. Taking advice is hard.
Flab is easy. Muscle is hard.
Stop is easy. Go is hard.
Dirty is easy. Clean is hard.
Take is easy. Give is hard.
Dream is easy. Think is hard.
Lying is easy. Truth is hard.
Sleeping is easy. Waking is hard.
Talking about God is easy.
 Praying to God is hard.
Watching basketball is easy.
 Playing basketball is hard.
Holding a grudge is easy. Forgiving is hard.
Telling a secret is easy.
 Keeping a secret is hard.
Play is easy. Work is hard.
Falling is easy. Getting up is hard.
Spending is easy. Saving is hard.
Eating is easy. Dieting is hard.
Doubt is easy. Faith is hard.
Laughter is easy. Tears are hard.
Criticizing is easy.
 Taking criticism is hard.
Letting go is easy. Hanging on is hard.
Secret sin is easy. Confession is hard.
Pride is easy. Humility is hard.
Excusing oneself is easy.
 Excusing others is hard
Borrowing is easy. Paying back is hard.
Sex is easy. Love is hard.
Argument is easy. Negotiation is hard.
Naughty is easy. Nice is hard.
Going along is easy. Walking alone is hard.
Dumb is easy. Smart is hard.
Cowardice is easy. Bravery is hard.
Messy is easy. Neat is hard.
War is easy. Peace is hard.
Sarcasm is easy. Sincerity is hard.

An F is easy. An A is hard.
Growing weeds is easy.
 Growing flowers is hard.

Reaction is easy. Action is hard.
Can't do is easy. Can do is hard.
Feasting is easy. Fasting is hard.
Following is easy. Leading is hard.
Having friend is easy. Being a friend is hard.
Dying is easy. Living is hard.

If you ask why all this is so, why is life so hard, I'll tell you, it just is. Nothing in life that is good and worthwhile comes without effort. We are torn, all of us, with a nature that is drawn to the easy rather than the hard. Surely you've noticed that no child ever has to be taught to be naughty; we're all born knowing how. It's easy for us. What's hard is learning to be good.

Knowing this about oneself and others softens the heart and builds iron into the will, keeps us going when all around is crumbling, when friends forsake, when the heart breaks, and the courage and confidence shatter. Knowing that such experiences are part of the deal gives us opportunities to choose to do hard things. Constant challenges make our journey exhilarating, wonderfully fulfilling, never, never boring.

As the Arabs put it, all sunshine makes a desert. And here's a small secret that most sad and lonely people never learn: Deep down inside we are all asking the same question. No matter who we are, life is hard, and we all ask why it should be so.

But there is comfort in knowing we're not alone. So maybe your child or the person sitting over there needs to hear from you right this minute that sometimes you question, too, but that the One who knows us best and loves us most promises that for those who choose the hard way, the dawn gives way to morning splendor while the evil grope and stumble in the dark.

Easy is its own reward. Hard is much, much finer.