

# FOR THE LADIES

## LONG-RANGE PLANNING FOR OUR CHILDREN

By Bonita Armstrong

Long-range planning was never something I used to think about. When I was a small child, planning for the next day was a tremendous task.

My mother used to tell me pick out clothes for school the night before. I would, but by the time morning came around I didn't want to wear those clothes anymore. I'd select a different outfit and take quite a bit more time choosing it, much to my mother's dismay.

After I became an adult I'd hear people talking about saving for their retirement, planning vacations a year or more in advance, planning when they would have children, how many they would have and how much space would be between each child.

No, long-range planning was definitely not my strong suit. It was all I could do to keep up with what was going on in my life for the next couple of months, or weeks or sometimes even days.

But then, something spectacular happened. I became a mother and my ideas about long-range planning changed.



BONITA ARMSTRONG

I still don't have a hearty retirement to fall back on in my golden years. Planning a vacation for me consists of taking a few days off work to rest at home. And anyone who knows me knows that my children came along quickly and plentifully.

But I did change one idea about long-range planning. I decided to be a good parent, I had to set some long-term goals for my children.

If I want them to become well-rounded, worthwhile, quality people, I had to commit to some work and some responsibility. Which, as you all know, is not an easy task.

I want my children to know

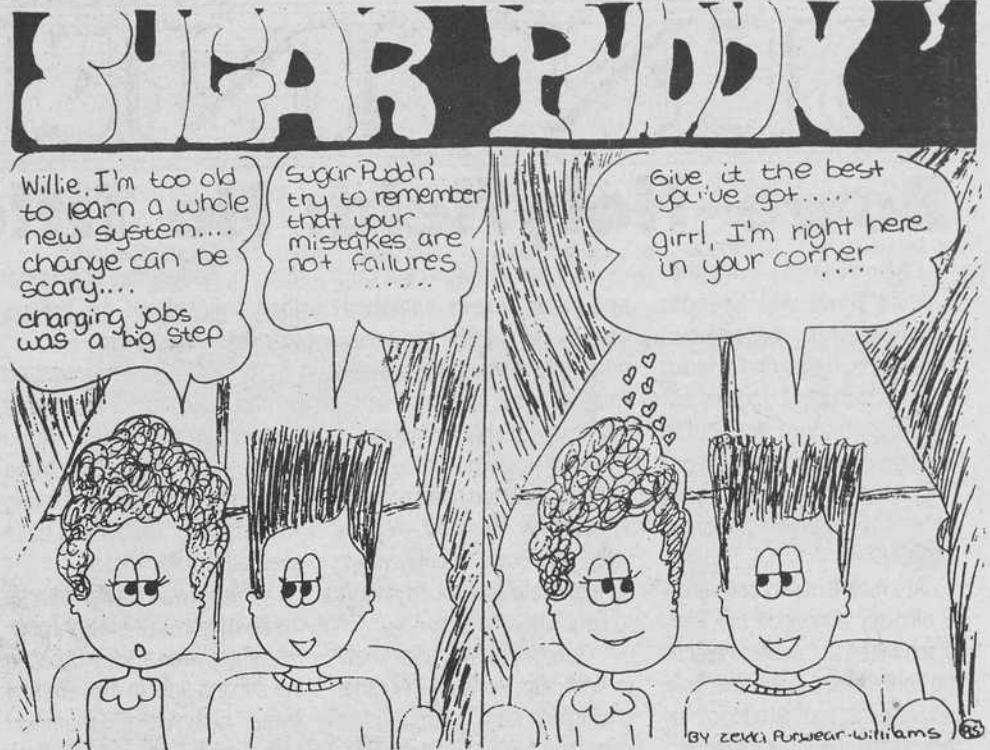
how to do certain things when they get to be teenagers. So I must start preparing them now. I have to wrestle with them learning to do chores around the house.

They gripe and fuss, which is sometimes frustrating to me, but if we all stick with it long enough, they will be able to do these chores without any prodding and nagging from me.

I also want them to have good study habits. Therefore I am constantly on their backs about doing homework at a certain time of the day, reading quality books in their spare time, and not watching too much television. Right now, they think I'm mean, and they tell me so, but later it will be a tool they can not replace.

If I want them to grow up to be honest, civic-minded, strong black men and women, who reverence God and adore their people ... then I must present that image to them. It's a lot of work for me sometimes to burn the candle at both ends but someday it will be worth it.

If I plan it right and execute it well, I could have some wonderful people on my hands.



Some that will make a contribution to society in a positive way.

So maybe I won't have a hearty nest egg to live on in the future. I will probably never take a trip around the world, but all that really doesn't matter to me.

I once heard someone say that one hundred years from now, it won't matter what kind of house you live in, or what kind of

car you drove, or even what kind of job you had ... but if you make a difference in the life of a child, you will have made a difference in the world.

My sisters and brothers ... making that difference begins at home with our own children. Let's make a brighter future for our children by making our children a part of our long-range plans for success.

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