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INTERVIEW OF THE FIRST LADY
CONDUCTED BY DIANE REHM
THE DIANE REHM SHOW
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WASHINGTON, D.C.

Q From WAMU in Washington, I'm Diane Rehm.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton is embarking on a tour to talk about the book she has written on children's issues, called It Takes a Village, and Other Lessons Children Teach. Ms. Clinton has been an advocate for children all her life. In her book she speaks her mind about child-rearing topics from early education to teen pregnancy, and she also writes forcefully about what children need from the family and the broader community.

Mrs. Clinton herself has become the center of controversy in recent days with the release of documents related to her role in the matter of the White House Travel Office and her legal work for a failed Arkansas savings-and-loan.

She joins me in the studio to talk about It Takes a Village, and other issues on her mind and yours. Throughout the hour you can join us: (800) 433-8850, if you're calling from around the country; here in the Washington area or from abroad, (202) 885-8850.

Mrs. Clinton, thanks for joining us.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you, Diane. Thank you for having me back. I'm delighted to be here.

Q Always a pleasure.

I wondered, considering all the controversy that's been going on, whether at any point you considered canceling your tour.

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MRS. CLINTON: Oh, not at all. You know, this book is about what I believe America should do for its children, and the idea of It Takes a Village is that each of us has a responsibility for the raising of our children. You know, that means maybe mentoring or tutoring a child, or trying to shield children from the violence and destructive information in our media, or, you know, maybe the importance of imparting values and standards in the home, in the school, in the church. I think there is something for each of us to do, and in my book I try to talk about some of the lessons that I have learned, over about 25 years, that I see working in people's lives to help our children.

Q And, of course, all the while you were planning this tour. Then emerge all these new details, and people -- some people -- actually speculated, "Well, of course she'll cancel her tour, because she doesn't want to be asked these other questions."

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, of course not. You know, I expect to be asked questions. I must say, it's a little bit bewildering to me that these things would occur at the time when I want to start my book tour, but that's all part of it. It sort of goes with the territory, and, in an odd sort of way, maybe because of the interest and all of the storm over Whitewater, more people will pay attention to what I'm saying, and, when they work through what people are saying back and forth about Whitewater, they might say to themselves, "Well, you know, that'll be done and gone. It doesn't affect my life. Let's think about what we can do for our children, and let's maybe think about this book and some of the ideas it promotes."

Q You take on some of the -- really, the most difficult issues -- regarding children, right from prenatal care, on through their intellectual development and the care for children, into the teenage years. Your policies sound -- I mean, when you talk about Head Start for all children, you talk about health care for all children -- those are really liberal visions, are they not, when you yourself describe yourself as really rather conservative?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, this book really tries to focus on what each of us can do in our various roles, starting with the home and the family. I think there's been a false debate pitting the family against the government, and rarely do we stand back and say, "There are many institutions

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that actually have more of an impact on our children than the government does." Certainly the family is the most important, but every parent I know needs some help. I certainly do and did.

You know, I tell the story about, you know, trying to breast-feed Chelsea in the hospital in those first days of life, and I had read the books; I had had people show me what I was supposed to do; but I really didn't know what I was doing, and I needed some hands-on help.

So I think there are ways in which, if we kind of cut through the political and ideological rhetoric and honestly ask what is best for children, yes, there's a role for government, but in my view it's a relatively minor role. There is a much bigger role not only for the family, but for business, which affects so dramatically how people live their lives and whether working parents are able to be both good parents and good workers. I think the media, more than any other single institution in our society, has affected how children are raised and how they see themselves and what they think of their futures. I think churches and synagogues and mosques and every other religious institution affect our children. And certainly, those child-oriented institutions, like schools and child-care centers, have a big role to play.

So, yes, there is a role -- and I think we should define it carefully -- for government, but I believe there is a role for the rest of us, too.

Q I was interested in what you wrote about your mother: that, in fact, her mother had had her when she was just 15.

MRS. CLINTON: That's right. One of the other debates we've had, which I don't think is very useful, is, you know, who is a proper family; who has the right to raise children. I say very forthrightly in the book, I would wish that every family were stable and dependable under stress and that a mother and a father raised every child, and I think we should do some things, like making it more difficult to get divorced for families with children, in order to create a better situation, so that could occur. But --

Q Does that -- excuse me -- does that mean that you would favor Michigan's doing away with no-fault divorce?

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MRS. CLINTON: Not at this point. What I would favor is what I call braking mechanisms and required education and counseling for couples with children. I know that divorce will continue. I do believe that we're starting to see it level off, as the results of divorce on children are honestly evaluated, but I believe that we could do more to encourage couples to weather some of the difficulties in marriage that are inevitable in any marriage that I'm aware of, with more information about what divorce does for kids.

There was a myth in the '70s and '80s that, you know, a bad marriage was, you know, worse than a good divorce. Well, we now know that most divorces are not good for children.

But what I was saying about my mother -- and I write about this in the book, and it was one of the things that I really had to think carefully about and ask her permission, because she is also a very private person -- but I wanted to make the point that -- she had a very difficult childhood: a 15-year-old mother, a 17-year-old father. They were married, but that was a mere formality. They were immature, not ready for parenthood, very neglectful of her. When she was 5, she had a little sister. Her little sister was mistreated.

And finally, her father, who then was about 25, did make a good decision on her behalf, which was to get her out of the family environment, but he sent her and her little sister to California from Chicago, on a train, alone, and when I first heard that story I could not believe it. To think about, you know, my child, at 8, taking care of a three-year-old little sister, being alone on a train -- unfortunately, the destination was not what one would hope. Her grandparents were very severe, very rigid and arbitrary -- again, I think any fair reading would be "mistreated," both my mother and her sister.

So when my mother was, I think, 14, she left her grandparents' home and went to work taking care of someone else's children. She was able to finish high school, but it was a very difficult childhood.

So I think any one of us, if we look honestly at our own families, knows there's no picture-perfect family. What's important is that the adults know what it takes to raise healthy, resilient children, and we do the best we can.

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Q First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton is with me, and we do invite your calls: (800) 433-8850, or here in the Washington area, (202) 885-8850.

In a chapter you call "The Best Tool You Can Give a Child is a Shovel," you talk about how you've equipped Chelsea for dealing with criticism of her parents. Talk about that and how hard that has been for her.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, it has been hard, and I'm very grateful to my parents, because people ask me, sometimes, how I get through what I get through on a daily basis, and I give my parents enormous credit for really giving me the tools that I needed.

And in that chapter, "It Takes a Shovel," I tell the story of how, when Chelsea was about 6, it was the first time she was really old enough, beginning to read, to follow politics, although her father had been in politics since her birth. And Bill and I decided that it would be unfair to her not to bring her in as much of a participant as a child could be, so that she wouldn't hear things or pick up things from someone else.

So we started at the dinner table to say to her that an election was happening, explained it to her in terms a 6-year-old could understand, and then tell her that, in elections, people say things about each other that are not very nice, sometimes, even mean, and I remember her eyes just getting wide and welling up with tears, like "Why would anybody do that," because, of course, we had always told her that, you know, she should tell the truth and all that we thought was important. And it was very difficult, but I am so grateful we did it.

We actually staged little mock debates, where I would say, "Chelsea, I want you to pretend to be your daddy and say why you should be governor again," and, you know, she didn't know what to say. She'd say, "I'm Bill Clinton, and I'm trying to help people, so please vote for me." Then I'd say, "Well, now your daddy's going to be one of his opponents," and Bill would say, "Bill Clinton's a terrible person. He is mean to people," and Chelsea would say, "That's not true," and I said, "Well, honey, that's what's going to happen."

So during the, you know, last nearly ten years, she

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has been part of every, you know, experience we've had. We ask her, if she has any questions, to come to us. So that's one of the shovels we've tried to give her.

Q In the last week or so, there have been some questions raised about whether you actually wrote the book. Yesterday, Maureen Dowd commented that Barbara Feinman, who Simon & Schuster apparently paid a certain amount of money, felt bad that somehow she had not been acknowledged. To what extent did she help you on this book?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, she was one of a number of people who helped me. As I say in the acknowledgements, it took a village to write this book. She helped me in the early stages to -- she conducted conversations with me so that I could get my ideas out, and then they were transcribed. She offered suggestions. I appreciated her help. She really didn't help much beyond August, and the bulk of the book was really written from August forward -- from September forward.

But I am grateful for her help, as I am for the superb editor I had at Simon & Schuster, Becky Salitan. I started a list of everybody I wanted to acknowledge, and in my life I have contact with so many people. I sent drafts of chapters to friends to read and comment and criticize. I, you know, stopped people. I called people. I remember, when Daniel Goldman's book, Emotional Intelligence, came out, it was right down the alley of what I was thinking. In fact, he sent me an early galley of it. I called and had conversations with him.

There were so many people who contributed to this book that, when the list got to be about 60 people and was still growing, I thought, "I'm sure to leave somebody out," and there were people who helped me a great deal, but there were also people, like those who helped me in the past 25 years, who in many ways were even more influential in this book. I thought the safest thing to do was not acknowledge anyone by name, but to acknowledge, in general and by categories, everyone who helped me, because I could never have done this book without the help I was able to receive.

Q And now, if we can, let's turn to Whitewater. A number of people have wondered in the last several days whether you might actually offer to go before Senator D'Amato's committee and talk about Whitewater. Will you do

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that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, you know, Diane, I have said repeatedly that I will cooperate in any way at all, and if there were an opportunity, when I thought that the partisanship was not there, when the questions were ones that you could predict -- they weren't, you know, just coming out of left field -- certainly I would consider that. I would consider anything to bring this matter to a close.

But I also believe that what we have here is a repeat of what has gone on for the last four years, because the fundamental facts have not changed. We said we lost money. It took four years and an independent study by the RTC -- that cost, I think, \$4 million -- to say, "Yes, the Clintons did not lose money." That committee won't release that study.

Then there was an allegation that we somehow were channeled money, either to us personally or through the President's gubernatorial campaigns, from Madison Savings and Loan. We said, "Absolutely not." Now, we did not have any documents in our possession to prove that. All we could say was the truth. It did not happen.

Now, after four years and \$4 million, that independent study says, indeed, we were telling the truth. The committee won't release that, either. So we're in a very difficult position, because we are asked questions that are not wholly within our knowledge. We try to answer them the best way we can, then the ground shifts, the questions change, and we're asked new questions.

Nobody wants this over with more than I do. I was delighted when those documents showed up. I want everybody to know everything, because, frankly, there's a lot about this I don't remember. It happened 10, 11 years ago. I've done the best I can. I will continue to do that.

Q And on that line of thinking, couldn't you in fact put a great many of these questions to rest if you were to volunteer to go up to Senator D'Amato's committee and tell your story?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, it may come to that. I don't know. But I think that it would be very helpful if we had an atmosphere where what the committee knows was better available to the public. Where are the RTC reports that verify what the President and I have said for four years?

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It would be very helpful if we could have a very honest attempt to get to the real truth, not the gamesmanship, not the gotcha stuff that, you know, somebody says the word, "is," and somebody says the word, "are," and there's a conflict, when the bottom line is there is no conflict. So I will do whatever it takes to continue to try to get this matter resolved.

Q With all due respect, it would seem to me that listeners hearing that comment might say, "Well, there's Hillary Clinton being a lawyer again."

MRS. CLINTON: That's one of my problems, Diane. You know, I was a lawyer for 20 years. I think like a lawyer. That is not often the best thing for somebody in my position. I recognize that.

But I also know that there are many things at stake here, and if everything could come out -- you know, if this were a fair inquiry instead of a partisan inquiry, as I think it has now unfortunately taken that direction, there would have been a press conference holding up those reports which said we had told the truth. I find it -- I mean I want the truth to come out.

Now, if I have made mistakes in the way we have handled this, as opposed to, you know, what I've done, but in how it has been handled, I am the first to admit that. You know, I did not understand a lot of what would be expected, and I have paid a price for that, but what I have said repeatedly has been truthful. And so, part of my dilemma is, how do I get a fair chance?

You know, when this first started four years ago, and they said to us, "You did not lose money in that real estate deal," and we said, "Yes, we did." They said, "Prove it." We said, "Well, based on the documents we have, here's what we can prove," and in fact we showed what we had.

And then we were told, "Well, that's not good enough. You have to, you know, prove that you didn't take money from somebody else." Well, we couldn't disprove it other than by saying truthfully, "We did not do that." So this has been a tragedy, if not a comedy, of back and forth all the time.

Q In the last few days, it has been reported a

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number of times that, early on in the administration, David Gergen, advisor to President Clinton, advised you both to go to the Washington Post, lay out all the documents, and just put it all out on the table. Number one, did he advise you that? And number two, do you now think maybe that would have been a good idea?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, David did, and I certainly understood why he gave us that advice, and I have a very high regard for him. David was not with us in the '92 campaign. We actually did that with the New York Times. We took every document we had -- which, again I have to say, were not many. We laid them all out.

But the New York Times was getting documents; they were getting stories; they were getting, you know, accusations from other people. So when they would ask us a follow-up question, we would have to say, "We don't know anything about that," and then they would say, "Well, then, maybe you can't answer our questions." And of course we later were able to prove that what we said was truth, but at the time, all we could do was to say what we knew.

We were concerned about the same problem. We only have what we know. We have no responsibility for the Madison Savings and Loan's conduct during the years in question. We have no responsibility for what Mr. McDougall when we were passive investors. We could not answer questions. So I don't think it would have put the matter to rest.

That's why we have a special counsel. They have subpoena power. They can get documents we could not get. They can put people under oath. We thought this whole matter would be left to the special counsel, and instead we now have congressional inquiries that are kind of doing the same thing that we hoped to avoid, you know, telling half the story, not telling the whole story.

So this has not been an easy matter for us to respond to, and maybe we, you know, have missed some chances. But, looking back on it, I think there were reasons why people kept asking questions even when we couldn't answer them. That's why I think this matter should be left to the special counsel to resolve.

Q What chances do you think you missed that could have made the difference in people's perception of Whitewater

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and the Travel Office affair?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, with respect to Whitewater, I think that -- I'm not sure we could have done this, but we were always answering questions on the fly, especially during the '92 Presidential campaign, and we answered them the best we could, but then something else would come up.

We originally, for example, thought we had lost \$60,000. That was just our best guess. We didn't have the time to stop and go through everything. When we finally went through everything, and when the RTC went through everything, we lost a little over \$40,000. So someone could say, "Oh, she said 60 first, and then it turned out to be 40," when we were acting in good faith both times.

But we didn't stop everything in the middle of a Presidential campaign to prove how much we lost. We knew we had lost money. That was the fundamental fact, and that has never changed. So maybe if we could have figured out how to stop things and take more time to answer questions, we might have avoided some things.

I also believe that I sometimes -- again, this may be my lawyerly training -- I always tried to answer the question I was asked. Then people later come back and say, "Well, but she should have answered an additional question, or she should have known we would have asked that, even though we didn't ask it." That has been something that, if I could have maybe foreseen everything everybody wanted to know, even if they didn't ask it, that might have helped, as well.

Q Which is why it comes back once again to the idea of voluntary testimony before that Senate committee.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, as I have said and will say again, if that is the kind of cooperation that is needed to end this matter, I am more than willing to do whatever it takes.

Q So are you saying, as you sit here, that you are considering volunteering to go up to Capitol Hill and speak before Senator D'Amato's committee?

MRS. CLINTON: I'm considering everything, including going to the South Pole. (Laughter.) I mean

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everything is on my plate to be considered.

Q And at 29-1/2 past the hour, you're listening to the Diane Rehm Show. We've got a lot of callers, Mrs. Clinton. Let's open the phones. 800-433-8850, or here in the Washington area, 202-885-8850.

In Arlington, Virginia, Oliver, you're on the air.

CALLER: Mrs. Clinton.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, sir.

CALLER: I believe you are perfectly capable of standing on your own two feet and defending yourself, but President Clinton and the national media are seeking to hide you behind Eleanor Roosevelt and make you Eleanor the Second. I think this strategy is not complimentary to you, and it is not a strategy of truth.

As a 21-year-old youngster, I cast my first vote for Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and by chance, I knew Eleanor Roosevelt, and Hillary Clinton, you are no Eleanor Roosevelt.

Q All right, Oliver. Thanks.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, Oliver, I've never said I was, and I cannot imagine anyone for whom I have higher regard than Mrs. Roosevelt, but I do think it's fair to say that she engendered quite a lot of controversy and criticism. Her husband gave her a job during the war, and congressional opposition drove her from that job. So, although I make absolutely no claim to in any way approach the model and the work that she did, I do believe that there are some similarities that historians have pointed out.

Q And to Amy in D.C., you're on the air.

CALLER: Mrs. Clinton, I applaud your new book, and I'm looking forward to the good that will come from it. I certainly appreciate you and your husband's compassion for children and families. Our country's tendency to elect and then tear down our leaders truly distresses me.

I'm concerned, though, about the effect that the constant visualizations of sex and violence have on our

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youth, the visualizations that are constantly pushed on us by today's movies, videos, records, soap operas, and television programs. It seems so hypocritical to me that certain politicians and do-gooders rail against violence and babies having babies as though they and today's climate have nothing to do with it, and I just wonder what you would say we can do to prevent some of the garbage from bombarding our children.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, Amy, thank you for asking that question. I write about this in the book, in a chapter called, "Seeing Is Believing," because I believe that our children are being damaged by what they see, particularly on television, starting at a very early age. I recommend there that parents start turning off the television sets, and by that I mean start with an evening and think of other things to do with your children. Put some restrictions on what children can see.

I also think parents and groups representing parents need to band together to issue ratings about what programs are appropriate for children, in anticipation of what I hope will be a V chip that will allow parents to control what their children can actually watch on television.

I am not at all opposed to parents and other groups, on their own, exercising their First Amendment rights to boycott certain advertisers and programming which they believe is harmful to children. I cannot stress too much that, if I could do one thing to help children in our country, it would be to change what they see in the media, day in and day out.

Q We are going to take just a short break, and when we come back, we'll take more of your calls for First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, so stay with us.

(Interruption to interview.)

Q Welcome back. I'm Diane Rehm, along with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. We'll try to take just as many calls as we can through the hour. Join us on 800-433-8850 or 202-885-8850.

Mrs. Clinton, we talked earlier about those shovels that you provided to Chelsea early on as to handle the kind of comments and questions that might come her way. How about you? What are you using for inner strength? What kind of

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be, a great big ugly man came up and tied his horse to me." You know, things happen to you no matter how hard you're trying and no matter how, you know, you're trying to treat people and the like.

So the shovels that I have, in addition to a very positive upbringing with good discipline and a lot of love and expectations, are my religious faith, which has really helped me enormously throughout my life, but particularly in the last several years. I also read a lot of literature and history. I start the shovel chapter talking about Nelson Mandela. I will never face what he faced, but each of us, in our own way, faces challenges.

One thing that really did help me, that I also write about, was a phrase in a book about the parable of the prodigal son, written by Honore Nouin (phonetic), a Jesuit priest, and there was this one phrase that leapt out at me. It's called the "discipline of gratitude." You know, no matter how hard times get for me or for anyone, there is so much to be grateful for, and that may be the greatest gift you can give a child.

Q 800-433-8850. Peter in Dallas, Texas, you're on the air.

CALLER: Good morning. I'm so glad you took my call.

Q Sure.

CALLER: It's an honor to speak with the First Lady. I think that if folks will just watch what is being said by D'Amato and his allies and listen to how it is said, I think it's easy to see an orchestrated effort to demonize the Clintons and to score political points.

And I just wanted to say that I also think that you may not be Eleanor Roosevelt, but you are a revolutionary First Lady, and I hope you'll be the First Lady for four more years, and thanks so much, on Martin Luther King Day, for all that you've done for civil rights for all Americans, and we do appreciate it. I'm 26, and the 20-something crowd really likes the Clintons, and we're going to help reelect the Clintons.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much, Peter.

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CALLER: Thanks.

Q Peter, thanks for calling. And to Beara in Baltimore, you're on the air.

CALLER: Good morning.

Q Hi.

CALLER: Mrs. Clinton, I would just like to say how gratifying it is to have an honest, intelligent, strong advocate for children in the White House. I think it's very, very necessary.

I would like to speak to early childhood education. I believe so strongly that, before kids get to school, their lives and their emotions and their intelligence levels are pretty much determined, and a lot of that is ignored by our educational establishment and parents in general. I wonder if you could speak to how we could rectify that, maybe through parent education or any other thing that we could possibly come up with. Thank you again.

Q Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Beara, I think that's the most important question my book addresses, because I agree with you that so much of what happens in a child's life happens in the first three years, and there are many things I think can be done.

I write in the book about what we have learned about brain development that I was surprised by, and I think a lot of parents would be, and how important it is to talk to your baby from the moment that baby is born. Many parents don't know that, but it is building that vocabulary that really helps prepare a child for learning. Reading to a child, even if a parent is not a good reader. The child doesn't know. It's the experience of reading that is so important.

I also believe parents often need help in educating their own children. Although a parent is a child's first teacher, I believe there are program -- and again, I write about them -- that I've been involved in that can help parents know how to teach their children. There isn't any better investment we could make as a nation in helping

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parents become their child's first teachers.

Q In Kensington, Maryland, Russell, you're on the air.

CALLER: Thank you, Diane.

Q Sure.

CALLER: I love your show. I only get to call in when it's a federal holiday, though.

Q Well, I'm glad to have you.

CALLER: I have a question and a comment for the First Lady. The question, about her new book, I tried to find it in the bookstores on Saturday and couldn't find it.

Q Probably all sold out already, but it will be there. Check back.

CALLER: I hope so. But my question was, what sort of public policy would the First Lady advocate to make it easier for men to be more involved in rearing their children, especially in the very early years from birth to two or three years of age, when it seems to me that women get to spend most of the quality time with children.

MRS. CLINTON: Russell, I love that question, and I actually write about it in the book, in a chapter called, "Kids Are an Equal Employment Opportunity," because I firmly believe fathers need to be more involved in the raising of their children, especially during the early years. I think there are two big obstacles.

The first is that society doesn't really support that. You know, there's a state trooper in Maryland who, under the Family and Medical Leave Act, took leave to try to take care of his newborn because his wife had had a very difficult pregnancy, and he was only given 10 days, even though, under the law, he was entitled to much more time, because the attitude was, you know, "That's not men's work, and so get back to your real work."

So, under leave laws, particularly the one that the President signed, where at least some employees are eligible, we can begin to change the attitude about our society's

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feelings concerning fathers.

But I think there are less tangible obstacles. I would have to admit that many women are not encouraging of their husbands' to be involved in child rearing, and I had to really learn this, because, you know, men don't always do it the way that you want it done, and, you know, the diaper may fall off, or, you know, there may be a stomach ache the next day because junk food was fed instead of what you think should have been eaten.

So I think women -- us, we, mothers -- have to lighten up a little, because helping to create that relationship between a father and his children is one of the greatest gifts a mother can give a child.

Q Thanks for calling. And you know as well as I that one in four children now born out of wedlock. You recommend abstinence for young people until age 21. Nevertheless, you do recommend sex education. What's the line there? What's the balance, and how do we encourage kids to think about sex as something for adults, as opposed to children?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think if we leave the media in the role of teaching our children, then we're not going to reverse these statistics, because sex is presented in an unrealistic and often totally irresponsible way. You don't see the follow-up to jumping into bed with the baby crying at 2:00 a.m. in the morning, and so there's a lot of really unfortunate messages our children get.

Most parents, I believe, support the idea of sex education, but feel a little bit squeamish about it, and I think it needs to be both in the home and in the school and in other institutions, including religious institutions, community institutions, so that we kind of demystify sex and make it part of the life cycle at an appropriate, responsible stage.

That can only happen if, when children are very young, their questions are answered; they're given, you know, straight talk; they're taught how to say no; they're given the feeling that parenting is a gift that they need to exercise responsibly.

And then, when they get older, peers have to be

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given tools to support each other in saying no to early sexual activity, and adults have to give young teenagers other things to do under adult supervision than just wander the malls or the video arcades.

Q In Newport News, Jay, you're on the air.

CALLER: Good morning.

Q Hi.

CALLER: How are you doing, Mrs. Clinton?

MRS. CLINTON: I'm fine.

CALLER: Let me say, first of all, that that D'Amato character, he is a nasty individual, and I do hope that you get through this. Being in public office must be awful, having to, so to speak, air all your dirty linen in public, and I have a lot of sympathy for both you and your husband. I think that you've both done a very good job. I wish you well for your book.

However, one thing that really is not on this subject, one thing that I am really concerned with that's happening in this country, is what the corporations in this country are doing. Specifically, I'm talking about the 40,000 people who were laid off just recently at AT&T. It seems in this country what we come down to is the corporate bottom line. There is no compassion in this country anymore for the workers of this country. How can you raise children in this country when you can't have a job?

MRS. CLINTON: Jay, I think you've asked what will be the most important issue, politically and economically, in the next couple of years, and again, I've written about it in a chapter in my book called, "Every Business Is a Family Business."

And in each of my chapters, I have a little aphorism, and here's the one for this chapter. "The Golden Rule does not mean that gold shall rule." I believe that if business leaders do not understand that they have a responsibility to the social stability of our country and, particularly, working families, I fear for our future.

You know, much of the talk in the last few years

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has been all of the problems government has caused, and I am not an apologist for government. I think that government has done a lot of things right, but it has also done things wrong, and those need to be corrected. I want a conversation about what business has done right and wrong and what business could do better to help families, and I have some specific suggestions about that in this chapter.

But I agree with you that if we do not have our business leaders understanding that workers are also consumers, and if workers don't have stable jobs and rising incomes, then all of our goods and services will not be bought, and the entire economy will not grow, and we will have a two-tier society, which is not good for children or a democracy.

Q I'd be interested in your own outlook financially, Mrs. Clinton. Money magazine has reported you and your husband are going to be bankrupt because of all the legal bills you're facing.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, that is apparently true, Diane. You know, one of sort of the undercurrents of this series of questions about us is that I somehow must have used my law practice inappropriately, to make money for my family. Well, as I have said, if I intended to do that, which I certainly did not, I didn't do a very good job of it. We do not have many financial resources, but we don't care about that. I mean, we feel lucky to have our health, and we, despite all the slings and arrows of public life, enjoy and appreciate this opportunity.

But given the legal bills that we are running up, we certainly, on paper, are bankrupt.

Q How will you address that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, you know, we have a legal expense fund, and many Americans have contributed to that, for which I'm very grateful, but ultimately, you know, I was raised to believe you pay your debts. We've paid every loan we've ever had. We've paid every credit obligation we've ever had. And when we're able to make money again, we will pay off every penny that we owe. I, you know, couldn't live with myself if I didn't. But I do think it's kind of a sad commentary about what's going on today.

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Q And it could mean -- sort of signal -- the future for other incumbents of the White House.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, if anyone is in public life today, they are certainly more of a target than any time in our history for legal cases being brought, for accusations being made. And if you stop and think about what that does to the capacity of the people to perform their jobs, you know, it is kind of discouraging. I want to see a return to, you know, more of a sense of trust in our society, giving each other the benefit of the doubt. Everybody makes mistakes, but that doesn't mean people intentionally do wrong. We ought to just lighten up a little and let people live their lives, and then, together, I think we can build a better society.

Q And at 10 minutes before the hour, you're listening to The Diane Rehm Show.

Patricia is on a car phone. Are you still there, Patricia?

CALLER: Yes, I'm here. Thank you.

Q Thanks for waiting.

CALLER: Thank you very much, and good morning.

Q Good morning.

CALLER: First of all, I really want to applaud Mrs. Clinton for your work, your courage, and your strong leadership as a woman, an intelligent, independent thinker. And I hope my two daughters are able to lead in the same way you do.

My question -- I'm a mental-health professional, and my question, Mrs. Clinton -- I haven't read your book yet, but my question is, what do you propose as a solution to violent marriages, where children are victims, and spouses are victims, and parents are unable or unwilling to get help, and social services are unable to protect the children? And how can you discourage divorce in those situations?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, Patricia, in the book I talk a lot about my own mother-in-law's marriage, which was very violent. And she did divorce her husband and then remarried

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him, out of pity, and I don't think that was a very good decision. I certainly understand situations, particularly where there is abuse and violence, where divorce is absolutely necessary, and probably should be taken sooner instead of later, to remove both the children and the spouse from a very violent environment.

So I think that that's one approach: that, yes, where there's violence, let's move on divorce. But I think there's a bigger problem, and that is, we still don't take abuse seriously enough in our country. I think that we have overburdened our social-welfare system in trying to make difficult decisions about abuse, trying to reunify families when, actually, there's not a family to reunify. So when abuse occurs with respect to children, I believe that you should move quickly to remove the children, criminally prosecute every adult involved, both the perpetrators and those who were accessories. I believe that we have to move more quickly to make a decision whether children should be returned to a home or freed for adoption, and I advocate that we should literally view the numbers of children -- about 100,000 -- in our foster-care system, who are eligible to be adopted but are left in limbo, as a national emergency, and do everything it takes to find new homes for those children.

As a mental-health professional, I know you know that we do not have enough services for families who need counseling, and that often can make a huge difference in someone's life. So, again, I would urge that we try to provide help for people who are trying to help themselves.

Q And Randy, in Dallas, quick question, please.

CALLER: Yes. Ms. Clinton, I really respect you. Both my wife and I are student-ministers in the United Methodist Church. We wanted to know how John Wesley's teachings and Methodism itself has informed your life and your approach to policy.

Thanks. I'll hang up and listen on the radio.

Q Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Randy, they've had a very big effect on me. You know, trying to do all the good that I can do was drummed into me at a very early age. And, you know, I wrote about religion in my book. Some people urged me not to; they

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said, you know, "That's not an issue that has broad public appeal," or, you know, "You'll say something that will alienate somebody." But I don't think we can talk about what's happening in America today without talking about our spiritual challenges.

And so, in my chapter about religion, I talk about how I was raised in my church, the experiences I had, and how important it was as a basis, both for dealing with life's challenges, but also understanding where I stood in the world, and not to feel any sense of superiority because I was lucky enough to be born a privileged white girl in America in the middle 20th century, but to realize that, you know, part of what God's mission for all of us is to relate more to one another, to love each other.

And that's a real challenge for me, many days, but I try to practice what I was taught.

Q Mrs. Clinton, you and your husband will be moving into high gear as the campaign heats up. On that point, have your actions in the past three years, do you believe, helped or hindered your husband's chances for reelection?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I hope that they have not hindered my husband's chances, because, not only do I love my husband, but I think he's been a very good president in a difficult time for our country. And I believe, if what I have done is truthfully and factually conveyed to the American public, the American public is fundamentally fair, and they will judge me on what I have done, and they will judge my husband on what he has done, and that's all anyone can ask for.

Q But the questions remain, and, as you say, the questions keep coming, and I'm sure, in the campaign, his political opponents will make a large issue of you.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, they may, but in a political campaign, unlike in the sort of daily back-and-forth of public service, you can focus people's attention, and, if worst comes to worst, you can pay to advertise what the facts are. I don't think 10 percent of the American public know that an independent investigation, run by an independent law firm, headed by a Republican former U.S. attorney, found that we were telling the truth. Well, if people want to accuse us

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of things that are not true, then we will make sure that the truth gets out.

Q What about David Watkins and his testimony, expected this week?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, as I have said repeatedly, I expressed concern about the stories of financial mismanagement in the White House Travel Office.

Q What form did that concern take?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, the best that I remember, it was "I have heard these stories. What is happening?"

Q And to whom did you say that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I had two conversations with Mack McLarty. I had a few conversations with Vince Foster. And I did not seek out Mr. Watkins. He called me, at Mr. Foster's suggestion, to tell me that an accounting firm had been engaged to investigate these reports that I and others had expressed concern about. And I said, "That sounds like a good idea."

But I in no way directed any particular action to be taken.

Q Why do you think that he has said what he has said, somehow casting doubt on your version of things?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think, if you read his memo -- and I will, you know, obviously listen to what he says -- he doesn't say I directly told him anything. He says that, you know, the fact that I expressed concern had an impact on him.

You know, Diane, one of the things I have learned is that, before I came to the White House, I dealt with people in a very direct way. If something was on my mind, I said it. That is an entirely different environment, and the mere expression of concern could be, I guess, taken to mean something more than it was meant to.

Q First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton -- her new book is called It Takes a Village. Thank you so much for joining us. It was a pleasure.

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MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much, Diane.

Q Dorsey Bacon and Carol Beach, Sandra Pinkard and Dorothy Buckhagen, produced the program. Jada White's been on the phones for us. Bruce Youngblood and Toby Shriner are the engineers.

Thanks for listening. I'm Diane Rehm.

Cassettes of this program are available. For information, call (202) 885-1200.

If you'd like to write us with your comments, our e-mail address is drehm@wamu.brandywine.american.edu.

ANNOUNCER: From Washington, D.C., this is The Diane Rehm Show.

Q Tuesday on The Diane Rehm Show, we examine a new approach to solve the shortage of human organs for transplants, using pigs. Then we begin a regular feature on the media, with Howard Kurtz, of the Washington Post. And Colleen McCullough, author of The Thorn Birds, talks about her latest novel on the women in the life of Julius Caesar. That's all coming up Tuesday on The Diane Rehm Show.

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