



The Real Housewives of New York City

N.Y.C. Housewife **Alex McCord** & Hubby **Simon Pen** Parenting Book

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The Real Housewives of New York City's attached-at-the-hip couple **Alex McCord** and **Simon van Kempen** can now add author to their ever-growing résumés. The couple have penned a parenting book together called *The Urban Parent: Tales From a Real House in New York City* based on their own experiences in raising two sons.

“It’s not a how-to book but a collection of our experiences and what we learned from raising our children,” McCord told PEOPLE recently at their private cocktail party for their yet-to-be-released book at the Bruno Jamais Restaurant Club in New York.

“Some people may think why we wrote a parenting

book, but we were getting e-mails from fans with so many specific questions on what is it like to speak two languages at home or what’s it like to have a nanny versus an au-pair? So the book will help answer those questions.” —*Paul Chi*

McCord shared four tips she has learned over the years raising sons Francois, 4, and Johan, 2:

- “The most important thing is you have to stay awake and be present,” says McCord. “It’s okay to do a lot of things in your life and multitask but don’t text on your Blackberry while you’re talking to your child.” She adds, “It’s important to give them your full attention when talking to them so that it is easier to see what they need.”
- “A happy marriage makes a happy family,” adds van Kempen. “It’s a cliché but so true. And also from a father’s perspective, make time to see your children. Don’t work all hours and don’t be too hung up about your career.” “The most amazing thing to do is watch toddlers grow up. They change so quickly and if you blink you miss it. We have friends who are investment bankers and they only see their kids on the weekends. That’s not the quality of life that I want to live. I’m biased. I was only 5 when my father died and I want to be the father of my children that I didn’t have.”

- “You need to maintain a sense of humor, and what works for one child in your family will not necessarily work for the other child,” says McCord. “You can’t have one parenting philosophy — it doesn’t work that way. I have learned that nobody can be perfect all the time.”
- “We take our children everywhere we go,” says McCord. “If you want to go to Morocco or China or a vacation, we take them even though it can be challenging.”

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