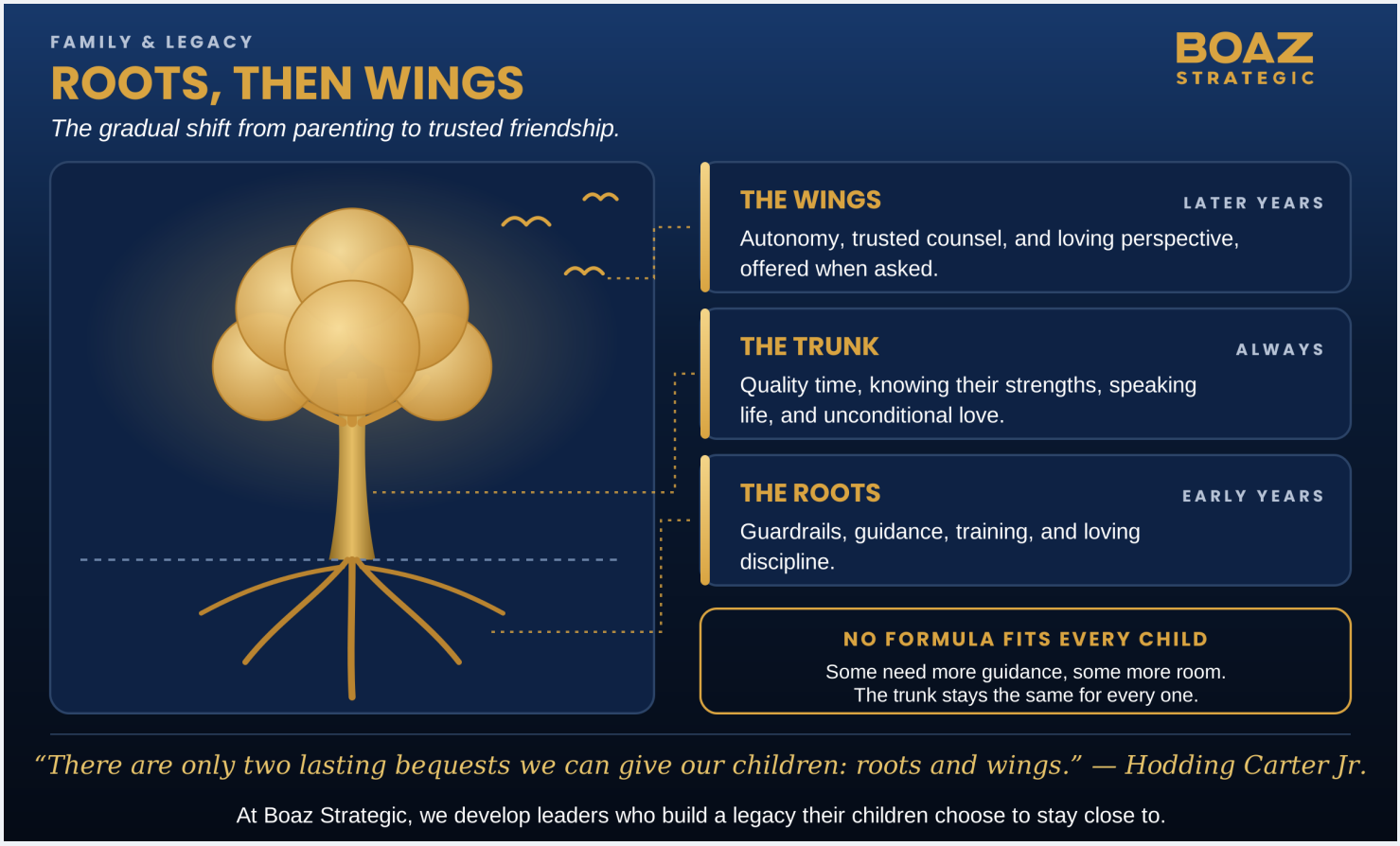


Will they visit out of duty, or *desire?*

> *"There are only two lasting bequests we can give our children: roots and wings. — Hodding Carter Jr.*

Picture your child at thirty. When a free weekend comes, will they call out of obligation, or because they want to be with you? The answer is shaped long before they leave home, by how well you adjust your role as they grow.

Every parent starts as a guardrail. That season has to end.

In the early years, you set boundaries, teach right from wrong, and offer correction a child did not ask for and needed anyway. These are the roots. But as children become adults capable of their own decisions, the posture has to shift. "You must do this" slowly becomes the counsel of a trusted friend, offered when requested and never forced.

There is no formula that fits every child. Some need more guidance for longer, and others need room sooner. The goal does not change: move from parent to friend.

What does not change is the trunk: quality, intentional time that lets you truly know their strengths so you can speak life over them; unconditional love; and trust, even knowing they will sometimes fail.

The research suggests that how you offer help matters as much as whether you offer it. A University of Michigan Institute for Social Research study of 399 parents aged 40 to 60 and 592 of their grown children found that help perceived as conflicted, support with strings attached, was linked to poorer relationship quality.

So resist the urge to critique what was not asked for. Offer a listening ear and confidence that they will make good choices. Advice they request is a gift; advice they do not is a toll on the relationship.

Build the roots. Let them fly. Keep the trunk strong enough that they choose to come home.

Sources: Hodding Carter Jr.; UM Institute for Social Research