

Handling Your Kids That Break Your Mold

When my first set of kids were younger, I used to think of them more like empty vessels. I was the mom, and I believed it was my job to fill them up with all the good things of life—things to make them well-rounded and, let's face it, better than any other kid who's ever been born.

I signed them up for sports, for music, for dance, because there was a lot to instill in these few soon-to-pass child years. But no matter what activity I shuffled them around to, I discovered that my kids were not empty vessels. God had already done a fine job designing them, thank you very much!

It's sad to think of all the time I wasted trying to mold my children into who I thought they should be. Instead, I wished I'd realized sooner my children's Creator knew them from the beginning—had designed them from the beginning. King David knew this. Psalm 139 is one of my favorites. In it, David sings about God creating us and knowing us, forming our bones and preparing our days.

It's silly to think that God didn't make my kids right. Or that He missed an important element (like artistic genius and athletic aptitude) when forming them. Even though their talents are different than what I'd envisioned, their designs were well thought out and beautiful.

God knew Leslie's strong will would help her as she lived away from the rest of us as a missionary in Europe. (And you'd have to be pretty stubborn to not give up in learning the Czech language!) He knew Cory's loving, hugging nature would help him be a good dad and that Nathan's propensity to having a wandering mind would make him a great novelist. (I know that now, but man, it was hard home schooling that kid!)

There are still things I would have liked to change in my kids (through either subtraction or addition). There are ways they need to grow in godliness, but no one starts off perfect. I have so far to go myself! I know that just as I've grown and changed over the years, with God, they will too.

I've taken away a few lessons that I'm using with our second set of kids:

1. God makes everything beautiful in its time. Understanding this earlier would have helped save me time and energy as I attempted to form my kids into something they're not.

2. When my kids refuse to be put into the molds of my making, that doesn't make me a failure as a mom. With the first set, I would have been more tuned in to the kids and how God created them. It's what I'm trying to do with this 2nd set!

3. Different is beautiful. God's design is different than anything I could have come up with, and that's just fine. God knows what He's doing, after all! God did not create empty vessels for us to fill, but well-designed people for His purpose.

What about you? How are your kids different than what you tried to mold?

Steps to Take

1. Pray that you would trust God's design concerning your kids.
2. See your kids as works in progress.
3. Post a sticky note to remind you to trust God's beautiful design!

Daily Prayer

Dear heavenly Father,

Help me to realize my kids are empty vessels, but they're not

for me to fill—they're for You to fill! Help me to trust You in this; I know it will be a process, but I know You'll guide me through it.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Tricia Goyer has written more than 35 books, including both novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as *Guideposts*, *Thriving Family*, *Proverbs 31*, and *HomeLife Magazine*.