

Is It Your Fault Your Kids Act the Way They Do?

A couple months ago, I learned a huge lesson when it comes to the behavior of my kids. I am very much responsible for their behavior ... both the good and the bad.

So, when my kids are acting up in public, at school or even in church, I shouldn't be looking at them. I should be looking in the mirror.

I learned this lesson, with some help from my wife, after analyzing both my actions and our 5-year-old's actions on two separate mornings. One particular morning, we were getting prepared for our homeschooling group to meet for class, and we were running late as usual.

I had enough and morphed into Drill Sergeant Dad. I barked instructions, stormed around and pretty much threw a 40-year-old tantrum at my wife and kids. Well, the barking, yelling and just all-around-crazy behavior didn't go unnoticed. Our 5-year-old was just not himself that day. He wouldn't listen, he was pouty and he was outright rebellious at some points throughout the day. I just thought it was him; that is, until about a week later when we had a completely opposite experience.

On that day, our son was being baptized, and I was the one who had the honor to do it. Talk about the greatest day ever! Well, I was so proud of his decision and just overjoyed at what was to take place that I was the most patient, the most kind, the most understanding husband and father you'd ever run into.

Our morning, as far as running behind, was normal. We weren't ready to leave at the time I'd hope we would. However, I chose to look at things with a completely different perspective, and

my actions followed. And our son was an angel that day. Here are three things I did differently:

1. I chose my words carefully. The way I spoke to him, his siblings and my wife was totally different. I was not Drill Sergeant Dad. Instead I was kind and careful with my words. My wife has shared how I can be more effective with my words by doing the following: Encourage the behavior you want versus discouraging the behavior you don't want.

2. I chose grace. As I said we weren't ahead of schedule, but still running a little behind. However, instead of condemning my wife and kids, I showed grace to them. This is very much related to choosing our words. When we choose grace, we choose to focus on what is good and encourage it. Grace allows for mistakes to happen without condemnation.

3. I chose to look at the big picture. It didn't matter what went wrong that day. My son had accepted the gift of salvation that comes through a relationship with Jesus Christ. No matter what happened, this was an amazing and wonderful thing. Nothing was going to change that.

I admit I didn't consciously do those things; but now, with the knowledge of what happened, I can in the future. And so can you. So the next time your kid's behavior is not what you like, look in the mirror first, and choose to do and say some things differently.

Share a time when your behavior brought out the best in your kid's behavior.

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