

Think Honor When Disciplining Your Children

Have you tried just about everything to get your kids to behave? Then maybe you need the honor approach.

This is what discipline without honor looks like: A teacher told a fidgety student to sit down. When he refused she stood over him and demanded it. Well, he sat down all right but said this, "I'm sitting on the outside, but I'm standing on the inside."

You see, obedience without honor only looks like it works in the short run. and it definitely doesn't work in the long run. Teaching honor shapes a child's heart and his motivations.

The book, *Say Goodbye to Whining, Complaining, and Bad Attitudes in you and your kids!* by Scott Turanksy and Joanne Miller, says the key to good behavior is not in controlling your children, but in instilling honor into your family life.

What is Honor?

But first, what is honor? Basically, it's three things: treating people as special doing more than what's expected and having a good attitude. You see, when you instill honor into your family's life, you get to the heart of obedience.

And when I say heart, I mean your child's thoughts, intentions and motivations. Once a child understands and learns honor they'll be motivated on their own to behave. Here are some of the guidelines Turansky and Miller use in teaching honor.

1. **Teach children to treat people as special.** To help your children begin to see how honor works, occasionally say something like this—with a smile, "I made some cookies for a snack. I wanted to honor you." Children learn how to treat

people as special when they watch how their parents treat each other and those outside the family.

When your child shows dishonor to another, use it as an opportunity to teach him how to treat others as special. For example, if you hear your child make a mean comment say, "Son, that wasn't kind. I'd like you to take a break for a few minutes and come back to me when you're ready to talk about this." When your child returns, help him learn honor. You can say, "From now on, when you do something mean, I'm going to have you think of one kind thing to do."

Violations of honor need to be addressed by building new habits of kindness.

2. Teach children to do more than what's expected. When teaching children to do more than what's expected, parents can include honor in the instruction. You might say, "I'd like you to set the table, then I want you to think of something extra to surprise me. That's showing honor." Remember: If you tell them to fold the napkins in a special way, that's obedience. If they choose to add that extra touch, it's honor.

3. Deal with a bad attitude. Discuss the importance and benefits of a good attitude. Coach your children to have a better response. The next time your child demonstrates a bad attitude, don't just point out the negative but teach how to respond rightly.

A bad attitude is a sign of an angry spirit, and the groaning, rolled eyes, sarcasm, stomping feet or disgusted looks are all attempts to communicate dissatisfaction. Gently point out these bad responses and help your children to practice better responses.

The Wise Appeal

One way to do this is through the wise appeal. Let's look at a typical example. Cal, 15, comes home from school and says to

himself, “Whew! I’m tired. I just want to listen to my CDs and rest.”

Just then, his mom comes in to greet him. “Cal, I’m glad you’re home from school. I’d like you to go out and mow the lawn.”

Here’s one way this scene could play out. Cal looks up at his mom and irritated say, “Mom! Mow the lawn? Not now. I’m tired.”

Then, mom feels like she has to get more intense. Instead, Cal can use the wise appeal and say, “Mom, I understand you want me to mow the grass. But I have a problem with that because I am tired right now and had a tough day at school. Could I rest and mow the lawn in two hours?”

See the difference? The wise appeal formula goes like this:

- I understand you want me to because
- I have a problem with that because
- Could I please

You can even teach preschoolers the wise appeal. So remember, honor is the foundation for good behavior that goes beyond mere obedience.

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