

Why Your Children May Be Resisting You

Caryn was feeling the pressure, “I don’t know what’s happening. It seems that in the last few weeks I’m having more conflict with my son than I’ve had in a long time. I don’t know whether he’s going through a phase or what, but the tension doesn’t seem to be going away.”

A number of factors prompt tension in a relationship with a child, but if it seems to be lasting for a while, it might be time to consider a parenting shift. As children grow, they go through developmental stages, and as they do, parents need to change the way they relate to them.

When parents don’t make the necessary shifts, then one of the first signs may be more friction in family life. We see this happen when the 3-year-old is still dictating the eating and sleeping schedules for the family. Parents get frustrated because this little person is getting older and stronger but still acting like he did during infancy. Parents need to make a shift and bring more structure and boundaries into the child’s life.

The same type of thing happens when a teen begins resisting parental leadership because that parent is still treating him like a 9-year-old. There comes a point in time when young people require more dialogue added into the parenting process. Some of the changes parents need to make are minor or subtle; others are more significant. One mom said it this way, “Just when I thought I had it all figured out, my daughter changed and I feel like I have to start all over again.”

Unfortunately, some parents get ideas in their heads about what good parenting is and then they lack the flexibility necessary to be effective. Although a strategy may work well

at one stage, it may be necessary to modify or even abandon it at another stage.

Some parents try to simplify their jobs by setting policies they think will last for years, apparently believing that one parenting principle fits all. Other parents believe consistency means never changing the way they do things. One dad said about his 1-month-old son, "I'm going to stop the teenage rebellion right here." He proceeded to set some pretty strict rules about feeding and sleeping. That's a sad misunderstanding.

If family life is a continual struggle, there may be a number of causes that need attention. Most of the time it means that parents will have to change the way they lead and train their kids. The old methods of relating don't work the same way anymore. In fact, they seem to cause problems instead. Take time to consider the points of tension and consider if a parenting shift is in order. Sometimes the parenting shift is prompted by developmental changes. Other times a different approach is needed because of a child's personality or due to a growing character weakness.

Parents must be students in order to maximize their parenting. Your continued growth is essential. Studying God's Word will give you rich insights into your children, and reading parenting books and attending seminars will give you added tools to help your family. Be willing to make changes along the way and you'll have the most success.

*This parenting idea is from, The Christian Parenting Handbook by **Dr Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN**. Learn 50 Heart-Based Strategies for All the Stages of Your Child's Life. In 50 short chapters you'll find practical ideas and new ways of addressing the issues your family struggles with. Be inspired and encouraged with the turn of each page.*