

How Do I Help My Wife Get Better Results With Our Children?

What's going on when a husband can have positive interactions with the children while most interactions between Mom and the kids are negative, adversarial, and conflict-ridden?

What can a husband do when his wife and their children don't get along very well?

Let's explore based on a man who had this exact situation...

"The issue I'm having is not between me and my wife as much as it's between my wife and our children. The children and I have a very positive relationship whereas the children and their mother are constantly "pushing each other's buttons". So often, when I get home from work, my family is an emotional wreck.

My question is, how can I help my wife have the positive kind of relationship with the children that I have?

I'll give you an example that happens often...yesterday, my wife was asking one of our children to practice their music and it promptly turned into a huge battle of the will's...my wife pointing out mistakes and asking our child to get them right and our child becoming more and more obstinate and stubborn.

Today, when I got home, my wife hadn't got to the music practice yet so she asked me to work with our child. The result was that our child and I had a wonderful practice that was positive, fun, and enjoyable for both of us.

Of course, my wife got very upset...as she usually does..when she sees how positive it goes for me and how negative it goes for her. In fact, she said, "Watching you with the children makes me feel like a total failure."

How can I help my wife?"

Ok, connecting what I know of your situation with what I've learned from experience, I see two problems.

Here's the first one...

A person's strength over-extended is a weakness.

Your wife CARES too much.

Caring is good. Caring too much is a weakness and a problem.

Your wife so cares about your children and how they turn out that she's literally driving them away -- SHE is producing the obstinate and stubborn behavior that you describe. I suspect she's doing this in all areas...the only exceptions being any areas where your children have a high level of interest and passion where they of their own accord are driven to succeed at a high level.

The music practice is a great example of what I'm talking about. Your wife so wants your child to be an accomplished musician...someone who's "significant"... someone who represents HER well...someone who points the world back to HER...SO THAT SHE FEELS AFFIRMED...so much so that a "mistake" is unacceptable to her.

What I just said reveals the second problem...

Each person must live out their own unique life.

A child IS a person.

Your wife wants her dreams and goals fulfilled through her children...she wants them to be of higher class and capability than she perceives herself as being.

Your wife wants it to be the case that when the world looks at your children, the world thinks of them as so special and remarkable that they cannot help but think about how special and remarkable these children's "Mom" must be.

This mode of operation...having a mental-map that drives a person to this kind of behavior IS HOW a parent DRIVES AWAY their kids and sends them off into bad/wrong directions in life. The more a parent tries to project their own wants and wishes onto their children, the more the children will reject and resist their parent.

The thing is, SOME kids will resist and reject while they are still a kid. But most will seemingly go along with their parents wishes and desires UNTIL they are an adult at which point they will reject and resist anything that reminds them of their parents.

So, the first thing a parent has to do IF they wish to be successful with their children...and if they wish to have children who are successful...is to realize and accept that EVERY person is a unique individual formed and fashioned by God to be UNLIKE anyone else who has ever existed or ever will exist...and to then support and encourage that uniqueness within each child.

A parent must realize and accept that they must pursue their own dreams for their own self and they must help their children find and pursue their own dreams for their own selves.

If YOU try to live your life through me...sooner or later, I'm going to reject that. If I try to live my life through you...sooner or later, you're going to reject that. Any parent that tries to live their life through the lives of their children...sooner or later, those children are going to reject that.

Without exception!

It's this way because God intends for each person to live out their own life according to the gifts and talents that He gave each person...so that they can fulfill their unique destiny and purpose...and someone who is trying to intervene and interject THEIR will into another person's life creates a disharmony and division between that person and God...and NOBODY can live with that forever.

Now, let me harp on the music a bit...and hopefully make some useful points...

Think about this: who said the music on the sheet of paper that your child was practicing from was "correct" to begin with?

In truth, those notes on that piece of paper are just one person's expression...and if your child's expression happens to be a little different, so what?

Chet Atkins is widely regarded as one of the best if not the best guitarist of all time...and I heard him tell a story about making mistakes on his recordings...people would learn to play the song from his recording...and when he would play it "right" in a concert, people would tell him that he "messed up" because it didn't match the recording.

Music is NOT about the notes on a piece of paper! Music is about expressing yourself...it's about having fun...letting your spirit soar...communicating to the world real feeling...and who cares whether or not that matches what's on a piece of paper.

In fact, a piece of paper is nothing more than a CONSTRAINING device that LIMITS a person from expressing themselves musically.

When I was growing up, EVERY DAY AFTER SCHOOL, my parents forced me to practice the piano for a FULL HOUR...and they completely drove me away from music until I was an adult who could pursue the kind of music I wanted to play...the beautiful music I had in my heart.

And I LOVED music...if they would have just worked with me...I would have been an incredible pianist...but, THEY wanted me to play CLASSICAL music...which I enjoy listening to...but did not care to play...I wanted to play the boogie-woogie / bluesy piano style...and that didn't match what THEY wanted.

Further, I LOVED guitar EVEN MORE THAN THE PIANO...and even though my Dad could play the guitar, he refused to teach me how to play the guitar or to get me one so I could learn on my own...again, because THEY wanted me to play classical piano...it was all about THEM...instead of helping ME become the kind of person who could express himself musically through the instruments that I wanted to express myself through.

You know what? After all those years of that piano practice, you could give me pretty much any piece of sheet music and I could play it...I could answer just about ANY music theory question you could ask me...and I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HOW MUSIC REALLY WORKED...no sheet music in front of me meant I couldn't play anything.

But, when I put away the sheet music...when I said forget all that nonsense...I just want to express the music that's in my soul...and I quickly learned the patterns and relations of the 12 notes in music...and now, I can get upon stage with my guitar...with ANY band...and I can RIP through ANY song...even one that I've never heard before...in ANY key...and people listening will be saying "WOW!" when I'm done.

In my opinion, THAT is what music is all about...it's what ALL the music greats did. Go study the history of classical piano players...they were people who were hired by kings and dignitaries to play...and what they played was different every time they played because they were expressing the music that was in their soul...and the sheet music that we have today of their music is but a single INTERPRETATION of that music...but it was by no means the composers ONLY interpretation.

Ok, enough of that...admittedly, I was on a soap-box and ranting...but I had to say all of that...because it sickens me how many parents are forcefully teaching their kids to be chameleons of other people...they are teaching them to be followers of the "crowd"...and teaching them to DENY their true self...and NOBODY can truly be successful in life UNTIL their REAL SELF begins to assert itself and shine forth to create and bring about the good that God intends for them to manifest.

In terms of "fixing" this problem, the solution will depend upon how open your wife is to receiving instruction from you.

Possibly, just a discussion that is your own variant of the above may be all that's needed for your wife to make the shifts she needs to make.

Myself, I tend to "teach" my wife by providing contrasting examples. What one person can do, any other person can do too...IF they do the same thing.

So, going forward, when you interact with your children, notice what your thought-processes, attitudes, time-orientations, outcome-orientations, perspectives, and behaviors are and share those with your wife so that she can take on your mode of operation and get the results you get.

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Author: Calle Zorro

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