

Teaching our kids (lessons to consider)

First up: Recently Dr. James Dobson shared a brief read that was titled: *'7 Ways to Teach Our Kids Respect'*.

And I thought, okay – this is interesting. Here are his 7 ways, what I consider as challenges for us as parents . . . and with his words, I've added some of my comments and/or considerations as well.

Please read through the following and see if you agree or if you would adjust in some way. Thank you for your consideration and a big thank you to Dr. James Dobsin for sharing this with us.

And yes, my added thanks to Bill Watterson for his **Calvin & Hobbes**

comics (they are a great reminder for us that our kids will be kids).



1. Teach them that all of human life is created in God's image and is precious. This is an essential teaching we must communicate to our children at a very young age and is paramount to learning and living a life that loves and respects others. It also establishes in their own minds that they are uniquely created by God with His fingerprints all over them, and God doesn't make mistakes. This is why I love Steven Curtis Chapman's song, *Fingerprints of God* (every child is a masterpiece of God).

If our children value their own lives and the lives of others, love and respect will be a natural outflow of who they are and how they live.

2. Live it (like everything else in life, our children will learn to respect others by watching our lives).



Dads, if we treat our wives disrespectfully, our children will follow suit. Sadly, this generational cycle of sin is repeated too many times in our marriages. This also holds true for how we treat all people. Regardless of our differences with the surrounding culture or certain individuals, we are called as Christians to carry ourselves like Christ—embracing and exuding both grace and truth. If our children witness this firsthand on a regular basis, it will become their foundation as well. And Dads, words are cheap.

Our actions mean everything. As I remind myself often, God doesn't want me to beat myself up.

He wants me to look

more like His Son on a daily basis. One verse that drives this reality home for me is Ephesians 5:25. If my children see me loving my wife as Christ loved His church, they will begin to understand what it means to respect someone.

3. Never discipline your child through anger. Always discipline your child through love. This is not an easy one. I've failed with this one many times over the years. However, my adult children in their 20's know without a doubt there is nothing they can do to

lessen or increase my love for them. They know that after God and then my wife, they are the greatest loves of my life. Every son and daughter needs to know this. As shared, that love is interwoven within the fibers of what it means to respect someone. As Christians, this is who we are and one of the greatest life lessons we can teach our children.

4. Don't negate or make light of your child's feelings.

This is yet another area I constantly need to watch when helping my children through difficulties or challenging moments in their lives. My wife does this very well. She bleeds empathy for our kids and has taught me a lot over the years. I often joke with my older children that they helped make me a better dad for my younger ones. Yet, even now when my six-year-old is crying over something that seems trivial to me, I need to remind myself that, to her,

it's a big deal. I need to take the time to *just* listen to her express her feelings (not necessarily try to fix it). I have learned that after listening to her, a hug is often what she needs most from me!



5. Look for ways to build them up. One of our memory verses we continually revisit as a family is Ephesians 4:29, "*Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*" (ESV). This hits at the core of what it means to actively respect someone. It's our jobs as dads to build our kids up in Christ. It's a lot easier to respect others when you've been raised in a household that fosters an environment of encouragement. This is another reason why memorizing Scripture is a must for every father out

there. Speaking God's Words into the hearts and minds of our sons and daughters is one of the best ways to build them up, i.e. train, encourage and equip them.

6. Teach them the joy in serving others. By focusing on the needs of others, our children learn that life is not all about them. It's hard not to show respect to someone if you're looking out for their best interest. I also believe God has wired us to enjoy helping others, especially when we're using our unique gifts and skill sets. We do our best to include our children in age-appropriate chores around the house—washing the dishes, taking out the garbage, cleaning their rooms, etc... We have also taken our children along on ministry events through our church and also our own ministry opportunities, i.e. short-term mission trips, community outreach, and ministry conferences/retreats. Over the years, they've learned first-hand the joy that comes when we serve others.



7. Pray with your children and for your children. Another core trait, alongside love, that compels the ability to respect those around you is humility. Without love and humility, our children will never learn how to respect others. Through our prayer life, we demonstrate to our children that we are totally dependent upon God.

In a very real way, the act of prayer demonstrates our greatest respect for God as we humble ourselves before Him. At bedtime, I pray with my children and then I pray for them. I want them to hear my neediness before God and their father's blessings upon their lives. I specifically pray that God will work in their hearts and minds to make them children that love Him and love others.

Second: R Lessons all Dads should teach their kids.

Please Note: I'm not sure where I found this but I thought all the insights shared are worth considering aka what lessons would you teach your kids (and when)?

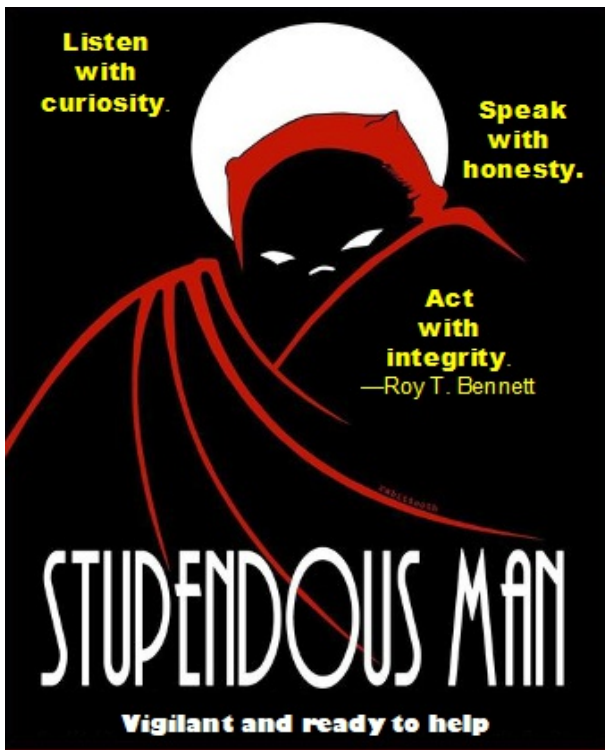
Words are Valuable - Speak up: Your kid is listening. In families with two working parents, fathers have a greater impact on their children's language development by age 3 than mothers do, according to a study in the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*. Provide a creative, dramatic play by play of the activities you're engaged in and your surroundings. Use big words, even if they're unfamiliar to your kid. Children learn a lot by context.



Tantrums Earn You Nothing - "When your anxiety visibly rises, you add fuel to the fire," says Hal Edward Runkel, a family therapist and the author of *ScreamFree Parenting*. And if you simply hand over a piece of candy, you encourage more bad behavior. Instead, when your kid starts shouting, be calm and attentive. Don't ignore it.

This signals that you will not be rattled and the child won't win—ever. It may not work for the first tantrum, warns Runkel, but it's magic by the fifth.

Competition Leads to Confidence - Children as young as 4 start to compete with their parents—sprinting to the car, wrestling on the sofa, stuff



like that. Roll with it. Let them win a lot, and then slowly ramp it up so they have to work harder for their victories.

"It's a way for kids to develop a sense of strength and to let them test their muscles," says Justin Richardson, M.D. who teaches psychiatry at Columbia University. They'll start to walk more confidently and be less of a mark for bullies.

Quitting is Hard - When his son wanted to quit baseball at age 8, Runkel said to him, "Sure, but you have to tell your teammates and coach." The boy couldn't do it. He's played for 7 years since. Show kids the pain of quitting,

and they won't make those kind of decisions lightly, Runkel says. "If your kid says a school project is too hard and that he wants to give up, that's okay," says Runkel. "But say, 'Tell your teacher you're quitting and that you'll take whatever grade is appropriate.' Trust me, he'll stick it out."

Other People's Feelings Matter - It's easier to connect with others if you understand their perspective, so nurture that instinct in your child. Start with the child's own feelings. "Say, 'Man, it must be hard being 8 years old. What's the hardest part?'" suggests Runkel. Then mention people your kid knows who are having a hard time—say, a friend whose dad lost his job.

Ask what he thinks it's like for that friend. "They won't always have an answer, but they're thinking about it," Runkel says.

There are two ways to be happy: change the situation,



or change your mindset towards it.

Fights Can Be Resolved - Unless one kid is dangling the other out the window, don't say a word. "As soon as you become involved, they no longer care about a solution. They'll only try drafting you to their side," says child psychologist Anthony Wolf, Ph.D., the author of '*Mom, Jason's Breathing on Me! The Solution to Sibling Bickering.*' If they pester you, say your solution will be bad for both of them. They'll learn that pleading is fruitless. More important, they'll learn quickly to compromise.

Independence is Earned - When your kids ask to stay later at a friend's house, ask what time would work for them. Then ask why. If you don't hear a good answer, it's okay to say no. If you do, try it, says Pennsylvania-based psychologist Janet Edgette, Psy.D. When parents give children freedom and responsibility, studies show, the children develop stronger morals more quickly.

Success Requires Focus - Maybe you don't wish for a prodigy, but our competitive society suggests otherwise. That's why so many kids have trouble focusing, says C. Andrew Ramsey, M.D., a psychiatry professor at Columbia University. Make sure your kids know your expectations. Celebrate improvement first. And explain the



value of slow mastery. "Whether your kids love Tom Brady or Beyoncé, let them know that these people succeeded because they mastered one skill," says Dr. Ramsey. "Learn to go through one door and many others will open for you; try to go through five doors at once and you'll go nowhere."

Third: Five questions for yourself.

In closing on all of these lessons - as stated above, don't forget these words as shown in this image and ask of yourself these questions:

(1) How much time do I spend at work verses with my family?

(2) Do I model the behavior that I want my kids to see?

(3) Do I challenge, coach and cheer my kids as I should be doing?

(4) What should I start doing and also, what should I stop doing?

(5) If I'm not doing the above as I would like, when will I fix that?

Yes good questions. The follow up action is then up to you.

Always has been, always will be. Thanks for doing so.

