

FAMILY MATTERS

Answers to your questions...

This has been a time of high stress and great anxiety. Of course, my children have been impacted as well. How can I help them rise above negative emotions?

ANSWER:

Negativity is contagious; it is like a drop of black ink in a jar of clear water. Within a few minutes the whole jar is murky and contaminated. Yet with a positive attitude, you can teach your children to rise above frustration, unhappiness and anger. When I think of optimism, I think of the following characteristics.

Being able to laugh

A good sense of humor can lighten the most tense situ-

ation. Children need to see that you can have fun and be joyful. Laughter makes everything a little better.

Looking for the positives

We are surrounded by positives, but sometimes we have to make a point of looking for them. If we look for the negatives, we'll easily find them. Yet focusing on the positives is like standing in the sunshine.

Counting your blessings

Learning to be thankful and expressing thankfulness reminds you that things are frequently better than you think. When your children see you being grateful, they will begin to appreciate all that they

have as well.

Children need an example to follow. They need to see you modeling what a healthy spouse, parent, friend, neighbor, adult and Christian looks like. If you don't set a positive example, there are plenty of people who will set a negative one for your kids.

Your children are too precious to risk letting peers or strangers show them the way. Optimism can be learned, and it's best learned when children see it in their parents.

Adapted from *20 (Surprisingly Simple) Rules and Tools for a Great Family* by Dr. Steve Stephens

TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

ANSWER:

Sickness was not part of God's original plan for us. Sin brought sickness into the world. God does not promise us that He will keep all pain and sickness away from us, although He does promise to always be with us. But this life is not all there is. In heaven, God will end all sickness.

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FOCUS
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Bulletin

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Celebrating Summer!

HOW TO WIN EVERY ARGUMENT AGAINST YOUR SPOUSE

BY JIM DALY

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO WIN EVERY ARGUMENT YOU HAVE with your spouse? I've got three ideas, but there is a catch.

First, the list. To win every argument, scream a lot. If you shout over your spouse, you'll never hear them. And if you can't hear them, they can't win.

Next, give your spouse the silent treatment. It not only dismisses their point of view; it dismisses them. It's a real sucker punch that's sure to give you the upper hand.

When everything else fails, take your argument to the streets. Get friends and family to gang up with you. Your spouse will spend so much energy defending themselves, they'll have nothing left to fight you.

As I said, three great ideas for winning every argument against your spouse. There's just one catch: You'll lose your marriage.

Making victory your goal is a dead end. It turns your spouse into an opponent. And you don't compromise with opponents. You defeat them. You'll wound or manipulate your spouse in order to get your way. And you'll lose even when you win.

Every couple disagrees. That's why how you disagree matters. Find solutions that benefit both of you. The goal isn't to win for yourself. It's to win for your marriage. Together.

JULY
2020

Tough
Questions
from Kids

Why do
people get
sick when
God is
watching
over them?

JULY 20 Bulletin

CONQUER THE SPENDING PROBLEM

I like to spend money. There, I said it.

Spending problems have long been an issue in my marriage. It didn't matter whether I was buying a household appliance, a new pair of shoes or gifts for friends. There's just something about leaving a store with a bag of goodies that makes me warm and giddy inside.

The issue intensified because my husband, Jared, also enjoys shopping . . . and stores don't require actual money. The banks eventually come for the money, but it's easy to get lines of credit with a few strokes of an electronic pen.

Jared and I spent our first months of marriage expensively—pun intended. Weekends were treated as splurge holidays. Neither of us cooked well, so we'd eat out between trips to the mall and the movies.

About a year into marriage, we took stock of our condition and discovered the large gaping hole we'd spent ourselves into. We were barely making minimum payments on our many credit cards. We lived paycheck to paycheck. But the worst part was that our unhealthy relationship with money felt normal. We viewed it as a commodity to use, not a resource to steward. As a result, our earn-spend cycle never ended because (surprise) we always found something new to buy. Thankfully, once we realized this lifestyle was limiting our long-term goals, we started building healthy financial habits.

Jared and I planned our budget together and talked regularly about financial dreams and decisions. We recognized our unhealthy habits, took ownership of our contributions to the problem and worked toward a solution as a team.

By the time we recognized we had a spending problem, we were dealing with school loans and car payments. It would not be easy to change, so we paced ourselves and took one step at a time—baby steps—to get our spending under control. But we also recognized that a strict budget wouldn't last without a fun reward to aim for.

Jared and I developed a budget that would allow us to live below our means, pay off some debt and save enough to spend a month in Europe. After two years of intentional planning and financial discipline, we finally reached our goal.

—Jen Weaver



STEADFAST LOVE IN PARENTING

Tough love may be needed when our children are making poor decisions, getting into bad relationships, manipulating others or doing things that may threaten their safety or the safety of others. As parents, we often want to swoop in and save the day—but sometimes the most effective way for our children to learn and grow is to allow them to face those challenges.

Many teens are drawn to immediate rewards such as feeling better, being accepted by peers or gaining status. This can lead them to poor decisions, such as vaping, drug use, alcohol use and sex. Tough love as part of steadfast love is about being attuned and available when your child is struggling, and taking the time to listen.

Tough love is about looking at the big picture and long-term journey that your child is taking. When you must give your child tough love, be sure to think about how your actions will impact and guide your child for years to come.

Situations requiring tough love also open up a natural opportunity for you to connect with your child and share your story with them. These teachable moments are a great chance to share where you might have encountered a similar situation, and how you handled it.

—Danny Huerta

GUIDING YOUR CHILDREN THROUGH DISAPPOINTMENT

One day, when Sadie was 5, she told me that a girl in her class was going to be a flower girl for her aunt's wedding. "I hope I get to be a flower girl someday," she said. I told her that I had wished to be a flower girl when I was her age, too, but had never had the opportunity.

A few months later, we learned that we would be attending my niece's wedding. "I hope I get to be the flower girl!" Sadie exclaimed. My heart sank as I explained that the role had already been filled. I waited for the look of disappointment. Instead, she said, "That's OK, Mom. I don't need to be a flower girl. You never were."

In that moment, I realized that telling my children about my own unmet expectations allows them to see that it's OK to let go of some dreams and allow God to replace them with others.

—Suzanne Gosselin