



DAD



Love Is
Kindness

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For DAD Only:

REKINDLE Your Love

Does your child make you feel more like a fire fighter than a dad? The problem child demands super human wisdom from fallible human parents. I've tried dealing with mine using both extremes: total permissiveness and fiery rage. Both fail.

The wild child is a needy child. You can't out-scream him. You can't stare him down. You can't turn your back on him. And at times he makes you wonder why you had children. We whine, "I want to enjoy my children, not fight with them."

But love is neither passive nor cruel about dealing with problems. The let's-be-nice-now parent says, "Okay, Bubby, give Daddy the knife. C'mon, Sunshine, let's not hurt anyone." The tough-love dad, however, steps back from the scene of the crime and formulates a plan. Niceness tries to make everyone happy. But kindness doesn't placate or beg. Niceness fears turmoil and disturbance of peace. Kindness cares about the greater good for all concerned.

Here's a few "kind" ways of dealing with that devilish child:

Make a schedule. Pause for a second from chasing every fire your little hell-bender has ignited. Look at the big picture. Set up a fire route. Kids usually make trouble during their free time. So, take it away.

Be ahead of the game with a schedule for every hour of his day. He starts by getting his bed made, getting dressed, and so on. Schedule his breakfast (which disappears when time is up), his chores, exercise, schooling, and other daily activities.

A problem child is very smart; he seeks to push every limit to see which ones are flexible and which ones won't move. He climbs everything and stops only at the ceiling because he can't move it. He fusses over his food to see if you are really going to make him eat it. He drops the egg on the floor to see if it really breaks (and, no, a whole dozen isn't proof enough). He will light every match (figuratively and otherwise) until the box is empty (or your sanity is). These little geniuses make us parents look like complete imbeciles. Until we outsmart them.

First, we realize that a boundary-pushing child needs security. Then we give them that security by partitioning their day. For the toddler, only being able to play with blocks from 9:30 until 9:45 makes him respect the few moments he has with these toys. For the peddler, restricting his bike riding from 5:30 until 6:00 makes him value every moment. For the teenager, limited phone time or hoop time makes him more resourceful

Typical of human nature, the wild child will fight the new rules. But when he sees that you've taken away all the toys and only the Legos are available for a short time, he will value the boundaries.

Get him up early. Okay, Dad, I realize that much of the above discipline will have to be administered by the child's mom while you are at work. But here's the part you can be sure to do: get ahead of the game before he gets ahead of you.

I know, I know, we're all tempted to let the little creep—I mean creature—sleep for as many hours as possible. But you've tried that, and it doesn't solve anything more than aspirin could for gangrene.

In the military, you want to catch the enemy off guard. Why not do the same with this domestic conflict. Awaken the dragon before he has dreamed up some new

devastation to bring down on the home. Spend some “Dad time” with him before you leave for work. I know, this means we have to get up earlier too, Dad. Whoever said child raising was all fun and games ought to be stuck with your little terror for a whole week.

Acknowledge him. I know you think he’s just a mutation of genetic code. And no one in your family tree even slightly resembles this monstrous child. And he definitely must take after the *other half*. But hey, he still needs love. He will only learn kindness by seeing it in action. Value him as much as you do the placid, funny kid.

More than all the schedule stuff and temporary micro-management, he will shed his prickly personality quickly when he sees that you care about him. He gets to color with you, beat you at checkers, and go on a bike ride just with Dad.

There are no miracle cures for trouble kids, but there are kinder ways to be nice. He’s going to get your attention. You get to decide whether you spend that quality time together with a rod of correction or a fishing pole.



Dad, read this story with your kids:

Bird in Hand

“What are you, a cripple?”

“Rusty,” Mom scolded, “don’t talk to your sister like that. Some people can’t help the fact that they can’t walk. Don’t speak so cruelly. Being crippled is a handicap, not an insult you use.”

“Sorry, Mom,” Rusty said, looking down at his hot cocoa. “I was just wondering why she asked me to get her a drink instead of doing it herself.”

“Well, Rusty,” Mom said, “It would be a kind thing to do since she is setting up a game for both of you to play.”

Rusty agreed and put a cup of hot chocolate in the microwave for his sister.

“Oh, Rusty,” Mom said, “while that’s heating up, could you let the dog outside?”

“Sure, Mom.” Rusty went to the door. “C’mon, Wiggles,” he called to the little brown dog. Wiggles ran up to the back door and Rusty slid it open for him. He stood and watched the dog run out into the backyard and then turned around to head back into the kitchen. Just then, Rusty heard a thump on the big glass door.

“What was that?” Mom asked.

Rusty shrugged and walked back toward the door. “I don’t— Oh, look!”

Misty ran in to see. “It’s a bird!”

“Yeah, that looks like the one that ate out of my hand at the birdfeeder!” Rusty said.

“Is it dead?” Misty asked.

Rusty slid the door open to see the bird better as Mom walked up behind them. The bird lay there on the ground, not moving. Wiggles came running up to investigate. He wagged his tail and sniffed at the bird. “Bark!” he said, as if to say, “Wake up!”

“Hey, be nice!” Rusty scolded the dog. Rusty bent down and picked up the bird.

“He must have been trying to fly in and just didn’t see the glass,” Mom said.

Rusty stroked the little red bird’s feathers. “Hey, little guy, do you need some aspirin? That’s got to be a bad headache.”

“He’s breathing!” Misty said.

“I think he just knocked himself out,” Mom said.

“Maybe if we keep him warm, he will wake up.”

Rusty cupped the bird in both his hands and pressed him up against his chest to keep him warm. He sat down at the table and watched the bird pant for air with its mouth slightly open. The eyes were tightly shut. Its feet were the light brown color of a paper bag, with little claws protruding from each toe. In its red feathers there were little streaks of black. At the back of the bird’s head, the feathers formed a pointy shape that Mom called a “crest.”

“Maybe we should give him CPR,” Rusty said.

Misty shook her head, “He’s too small for that.”

“I know,” said Rusty, “but I wish I could do something more for him.”

Slowly the bird opened his eyes and blinked. He shook his head and ruffled up his feathers until he puffed out like a little red balloon.

“He’s alive!” said Misty.

The bird blinked a few times and turned his head to look up at Rusty. Then it pulled its feet under itself and stood up in Rusty’s hands. “Look, he’s just standing there!” Rusty told Mom, who had just let the dog back inside.

Mom said, “Careful, he just might—” but it was too late. The bird jumped and flew out of Rusty’s hand. He

flew up toward the ceiling and began circling around the kitchen.

“He’s alive!” Misty shouted.

The dog saw the bird and started barking.

“Wiggles!” Rusty said, “be quiet.”

The bird flew through the doorway into the dining area. Rusty, Misty, Mom, and Wiggles followed it. “He’s going in the living room!” Rusty announced.

Wiggles barked at the bird as it flew around the living room. Rusty ran to catch the bird as it flapped its bright red wings around and around the room. Wiggles ran too, yapping and snarling at the intruder. The dog jumped up on the couch and snapped at the bird.

“Wiggles!” Mom said as he knocked a pillow on the floor.

But the dog kept barking and started running around the room, jumping from the couch to the coffee table to a chair to another couch. When the bird tried to land on a picture frame hanging on the wall, Wiggles jumped up and bumped the picture off its hook, knocking it down onto the couch.

“Wiggles, stop it!” Mom yelled.

Misty yelled above the noise, “Rusty, I’ll open the door to the backyard, try to get him to fly this way.”

Rusty tried to chase the bird out of the room while Mom grabbed Wiggles and made him sit.

Just then, Dad opened the front door and started to say, “What’s going aaahhh—” but he had to duck because the red bird flew straight at him and out the open door. Dad turned to see the bird fly away into the trees and then he looked at the family. “What was all that noise? What are you guys doing? Where did that bird come from?”

“Whew!” Misty said as she slid the backdoor shut. “You should have seen it Dad—that bird knocked itself out.”

“He looked pretty awake to me!”

Mom picked up the pillow and straightened the furniture while Rusty explained why, what, and how. When he had heard the whole story, Dad shook his head. “Wiggles you were very mean to our guest. But, Rusty, thanks for being kind to that poor bird.”

Rusty beamed and said, “That was fun!”

What if they had just left that bird outside?

Rusty and Misty got to be kind to a bird. Aside from animals, who else needs our kindness?

Sick people, new people, friends, the elderly, and so on.

Have you ever seen someone be mean to another person?

What are things we shouldn't do to others that make them feel bad?

Laugh at their mistakes, brag about what we have when we know they don't have nice things, talk about their problems to other people.

What if our friends make fun of a person by mocking the way they walk or talk?

We shouldn't laugh or copy them. Get away from kids like that and be a friend to the person who has a physical difficulty.

Read the following scripture with the family:
Helping a Dead Dog

Now David said, “Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”

And there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba. So when they had called him to David, the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?”

And he said, “At your service!”

Then the king said, “Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?”

And Ziba said to the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan who is lame in his feet.”

So the king said to him, “Where is he?”

And Ziba said to the king, “Indeed he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar.”

Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar.

Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, “Mephibosheth?”

And he answered, “Here is your servant!”

So David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father’s sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually.”

Then he bowed himself, and said, “What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?”

And the king called to Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said to him, “I have given to your master’s son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house. You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in the harvest, that your master’s son

may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread at my table always."

Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do."

"As for Mephibosheth," said the king, "he shall eat at my table like one of the king's sons."

Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants of Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.

II Samuel 9:1-13, from the *New King James Version*, © 1983 Thomas Nelson, used with permission.

In what ways can a person have personal difficulties (handicaps, disabilities, ailments, and so on)?

What if the disabled person has low self-esteem (a dead-dog mentality), how can we help them?

Find things they are good at. Focus on positive attributes. Don't ask questions like "What happened?" or "Why?" or "What's it like to be...?"

What ways are people mean to those with uncontrollable conditions?

Making fun, taking advantage, ignoring.

How can we help handicapped people without making them feel bad about their condition?

Action Plan: What Mephibosheth do we know that we could be a King David to? What could we do for him or her?

Take some time to color with your youngin's

Little Bird

If you are handy with printer options, you can print two copies of this picture on one page or select the option that says “Scale to fit page” or something similar. Go to <http://www.danieljkoren.com/1-13Coloring.pdf> and get out red crayons (and a yellow).

Memory Verse:

I Corinthians 13:4

**Charity suffereth long,
and is kind...**

*charity suffereth long,
and is kind...*

**I Corinthians
13:4**





Charity
suffereth long,
and is kind;
charity envieth not;
charity vaunteth not
itself, is not puffed up.

I Corinthians
13:4

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