

Wednesday

*Show Me a Mean Teacher,
and I'll Show You a Good One
(It's All in the Perspective)*

Who do you want your child to be 5, 10, 15, 20 years down the road?
What kind of parent do you want to be? With determination and
three simple strategies for success, you can get there.

The Kickoff

1. If you could choose only three qualities for your child to develop and carry throughout life, what would they be? Why?

2. What steps can you take now to encourage these qualities in your child?

Watch

Watch "Wednesday—Show Me a Mean Teacher, and I'll Show You a Good One" on *Have a New Kid by Friday DVD*.

Wednesday

Discuss the DVD

1. What is the "authoritarian" parenting style—the one most common for people to have experienced growing up? What is it really saying to kids?
2. How do authoritarian parents sometimes misuse parental and scriptural authority, including verses such as, "Children, obey your parents" (Col. 3:20)? What long-term effects does this have on children, reaching even into their adult lives?
3. What is the "permissive" parenting style? How does it treat children, and what are the results both now and far down the road?
4. What is the "authoritative" parenting style? What benefits does it provide for both parent and child?

5. What happens in the parent-child relationship when you hold your child responsible and accountable for his or her actions?

6. Do you agree with Josh McDowell's statement, "Rules without relationship lead to rebellion"? Why or why not?

7. Has establishing rules worked in your house? If so, how? If not, why not? Give an example of a recent situation.

8. Imagine that today you switch to an authoritative parenting style. What immediate changes would you see in the atmosphere of your home? In the tension level? In your relationship with your children?

Taking It Deeper

Have you ever heard someone say, "I never wanted to be like my parents. I hated the way they parented. But then I open my mouth and sound just like them. And I act like it too!" This just goes to show that what parents

Wednesday

model sticks—and sticks well. That’s because every child longs for parental approval and can’t stand it when he or she doesn’t get it.

1. What kind of parenting style did you grow up with?
 - Authoritarian: “It’s my way—my way only—or the highway. I’m in charge here.”
 - Permissive: “Oh, honey, anything you want to do is fine with me. I’m your doormat.”
 - Authoritative: “As parent and child, we are both equal in God’s eyes. But we play differing roles. I am responsible for your well-being until you become an adult.”

How did that parenting style influence your own parenting style today?

2. How did your experience with your parents in your growing-up years influence how you think about or approach God?

3. If you are an authoritarian parent, what steps can you take to balance your tendencies to:
 - make all decisions for your child?
 - use reward and punishment to control your child’s behavior?
 - always have to be right?
 - see yourself as better than your child just because you’re the adult?
 - run your home with an iron hand?

4. If you are a permissive parent, what steps can you take to balance your tendencies to:
- become a slave to your child?
 - place a higher priority on your child than your spouse (if you're married)?
 - provide your child with the "Disneyland" experience, making things as easy as possible?
 - invite rebellion with inconsistent parenting?

5. First Corinthians 13:4–5, 7–8 provides this "bucket list" of what love looks like:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. . . . It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

How does this list stack up to the authoritative parenting style?

6. In Ephesians 6:4, God gives fathers a special responsibility: "Do not exasperate your children." Why do you think that instruction is given to fathers in particular?

Wednesday

7. Why is connecting with your child's heart the most important thing you can do—both now and in the long run?

8. How might you slip your child a commercial today? Do some brainstorming.

9. Psalm 127:3 says, "Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him." How might these words encourage you, even in the most difficult moments of parenting?

Life speeds by like sand drains through an hourglass. You can't afford to take advantage of the time you have with your kids. If you want something, start with that end in mind, said Stephen Covey, the recently deceased bestselling author and business consultant. When you apply that principle to parenting, it means that if you want your child to be kind to

others in the future, teach your child to be kind now. If you want your child to be a responsible adult, teach responsibility now. If you want your child to enjoy spending time with you, start now in setting aside unpressured time to spend together instead of getting caught up in the rat race of constant activity.

Sometimes your parenting job will be tedious and boring (like washing the same clothes over and over). Other times the pace will be breakneck, especially when your children are young, apt to get into danger, or involved in a lot of activities. Sometimes you'll be annoyed and angry. So will your kids.

But rest assured that what your children think about you in this moment isn't necessarily what they will think about you for life. If you are calm and consistent, and you always do what you say you're going to do, then you will earn their respect and trust.

Remember

- What your children think about you at any particular moment isn't necessarily what they will think about you for life.
- The kind of parent you are influences who your child is and what he or she does.
- Your child longs for a connection—a relationship—with you.

My Game Plan for Today

1. Identify my parenting style—authoritarian, permissive, or authoritative. How does that learned style influence how I communicate with my kids and how I respond to their behavior? (All of us, at one time or another, have said, "I'll never say that to my kids." Then not only do you say it, but you say it with the same tone and inflection that your mom or dad did.)

Wednesday

2. Evaluate how my children respond to my parenting style.

3. Jot down ideas to adapt my parenting style to be more balanced.

4. Brainstorm ways to emphasize relationship in our home.

Aha Moments