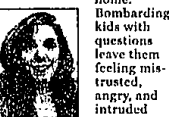


Instead of bombarding kids with questions, communicate

"Where are you going?"
"Who will be there?"
"What will you be doing?"
"Will a parent be around?"
"When will you be home?"
Have you ever noticed how frustrated kids get when they're asked a lot of questions?

Parenting isn't easy. Communication is vital, especially when kids begin spending time away from home.



Marilyn Suttle

Bombarding kids with questions leaves them feeling mistrusted, angry, and intruded upon. These hostile feelings shut down good communication. By using a respectful approach, you can reduce the stress in your relationship while meeting both your needs and theirs.

MEETINGS

Have a meeting with your child. Choose a time when both of you are calm. Describe the purpose of the meeting and invite your child to look for ways both of your needs can be met.

Judy struggles with her fourteen year old son. He's been pushing to be independent and spends more time away from home. She has a good relationship with her son, but lately, they've been arguing. He's been going out without asking and giving her a hard time about telling her where he's going. Judy has been coming down hard on him, and the tension between them has grown. She decides to approach her son in a new way:

"Jimmy, we have a problem. Every time you want to go out with your friends, we get angry with each other. I want to know what's going on, and you get upset with all my questions. Then, I get upset with your attitude. I'd like to see if we can put our heads together, and come up with a way to get my questions answered without causing either one of us so much distress. Is this a good time for you to talk?"

When both you and your child are ready, begin the meeting.

Start with Step One: Talk about your child's feelings and point of view. Listen to his or her thoughts and feelings. It's easier for kids to hear your point of view if you have taken the time to listen to theirs.

Mom: "Jimmy, you sure

PARENTS CORNER

don't like it when I ask you lots of questions."

Jimmy: "No, I can't stand it. I feel like I'm being interrogated right in front of my friends. Then, they all laugh and give me a hard time about it. It's embarrassing."

Mom: "That must feel bad. First, I'm badgering you with all those questions right in front of your friends, and then they tease you about it."

Jimmy: "Yeah, I wish you didn't have to make such a big deal out of me going out."

Mom: "I see." Step Two: Talk about your feelings and point of view. State your highest intent. Avoid slipping into lecture mode. The more you talk the less kids listen.

Mom: "I feel that it's important for your safety and well being, that I know where you are, and who you are with, and how you are when you roll your eyes and give me a hard time."

Jimmy: "I know." Step Three: Invite your child to brainstorm ideas with you that you can both agree to.

Mom: "Let's see if we can come up with some ideas that will help you feel less pressured while giving me the information I need to know."

BRAINSTORMING

Step Four: Write down all ideas without making judgments. Creativity flows when all ideas are accepted. Later you can decide which ideas to keep. Encourage your child to come up with the first few ideas. Add ideas of your own.

Here is the list of brainstorming ideas Jimmy and Mom came up with.

1. Mom will let Jimmy go anywhere he wants without asking questions.

2. Jimmy will answer mom's questions privately, away from his friends.

3. Mom and Jimmy will make a list of questions that need answering. Jimmy answers the questions on the list instead of Mom asking the questions.

4. Instead of asking lots of questions, Mom will ask, "What are your plans?" Jimmy will know that he needs to give her all the information she needs.

Step Five: Decide which ideas you can both agree with. Go through your list. Circle the ideas that work for both of you. If you cannot agree on anything, don't

worry. Some problems need more time. If you don't come to an agreement, plan to meet again in a couple of days, after you've both had time to think about it.

Mom and Jimmy agreed to try ideas 3 and 4. They sat down and made a list of the questions mom needs to know. They agreed that when Jimmy wanted to go out, mom would ask, "What are your plans?" Then, Jimmy would answer the questions they had agreed upon.

Jimmy liked this idea because mom wouldn't be nagging him in front of his friends. Mom liked it because Jimmy would remain pleasant and still give her the information she needed.

Step Six: Shake hands on the agreement and plan a follow up meeting. Shaking hands gives the meeting an official feeling. The meeting takes on a higher sense of importance. A handshake represents good will and respect toward the child and the parent.

Jimmy and mom shook hands. Mom said, "Let's meet again next week to see if this idea continues to work well for both of us."

Practicing positive communication skills help kids stay connected to their family. Parents are often surprised to see how seriously their kids will approach problem solving once their feelings are heard. When kids work with parents to come up with solutions, they are more eager to follow through on their decisions.

This approach allows parents to set loving limits without nagging, forcing, commands or threats. It creates an environment where the child's feelings and concerns are recognized, without compromising the needs of the situation.

Marilyn Suttle helps corporate and educational groups increase parenting skills, self-esteem and work/life balance strategies with interactive presentations and workshops. Email her at MsSuttle@aol.com or visit her web site: www.SuttleOnline.com

FATHER

FROM PAGE C5

Rhoda Botsford, a member of the colorful Botsford family.

Before long, P.D. Warner bought a half interest in a general store with his brother-in-law, Myron Botsford. This store was near the village center at the present Shawansee and Farmington Roads. By 1850 the village center shifted to the new plank road on Grand River.

For P.D. Warner a succession of partners and general stores followed. It was during this time he also held various political offices.

During the political unrest before the Civil War, P.D. shifted

from the Democratic Party to the new Republican Party. The slavery issue was important in Michigan and influenced politics.

In 1865, the Warners adopted Fred Maltby. Fred's mother had died and his father was unable to care for him. According to the old stories, William Maltby brought the baby into the Warner store and explained he had heard that the Warners had only one child, P.D. and Rhoda adopted the infant.

The little boy was a joy to the Warner family and followed in the family traditions of business, politics and community service. Fred Warner held some of the same political offices his father had held. Then he ran for governor of Michigan. Fred Maltby Warner was the first

three term governor of Michigan.

Governor Warner lived all his life in the house his parents had built. Once they adopted the little boy P.D. and Rhoda had two adopted children. The Warners built a beautiful brick Victorian Italian style house on Grand River. It was probably built from a plan book.

It was called the Senator's House because P.D. was state senator at the time. There were originally seven acres of land.

The house P. Dean Warner built in 1867 was given to the city of Farmington in 1980. It is now a museum and a real asset to the community.

Ruth Moehman is a local historian and chair person of the Farmington Hills Historic District Commission.

CARING

FROM PAGE C5

the brain and spinal cord that causes progressive loss of motor control. He communicates primarily by computer.

Because he no longer has control over the use of his hands, Katz has a laser pointer attached to a headband. He aims the laser at the computer's keys to type a message.

"In addition to everything else, Steve has taught me how to become more proficient on the computer," said his volunteer. "He's amazing!"

'WONDERFUL FRIENDSHIP'

The admiration Kantich has for Katz is mutual. According to his wife, "It's been a wonderful friendship from the get-go," said Joanne

Katz. "Roz has become so important in our lives, especially Steve's."

"Also, Hospice has been a godsend. Having help and the emotional support of nurses, physical therapists, Roz and other volunteers has helped all of us, including our children." Their son Ari, 19, is a sophomore at Western Michigan University, and daughter, Michele, 16, is a junior at North Farmington High School.

Joanne added that her husband remains optimistic about his disease. "He says that he is living with ALS; not dying from it. Also, he continues to assist with the family business, which involves the sale of doors and hardware."

She added that although her husband is confined to a wheelchair, he "helps make all the decisions for both the family and our business."

Fantich believes it is

important for individuals with terminal illnesses to have the opportunity to continue to make decisions about concerns that affect them. "This is why I am such a supporter of the Hospice program. It empowers patients and their families to make all the decisions on care."

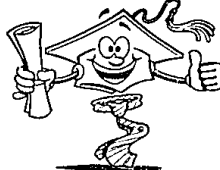
Fantich is also a Hospice volunteer services manager. She notes that Hospice of Michigan in Oakland County is in need of more volunteers to assist in patient care and invites those interested to call her at the Hospice office in Bloomfield Township, (248)253-2580.

"Over the Fence" highlights those who, through their actions, beliefs and deeds, are the fiber that help make our communities a better place to live. If you know someone who always takes the time to offer help or whose story is an inspiration, please e-mail Sandra Dalka-Pryby, sdpryby@hotmail.com.



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Monday, June 29 - Noon to 8 p.m.
Tuesday, June 30 - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

AUCTION
Wednesday, June 27 - 6 p.m.
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