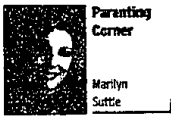


Examine expectations, goals when dealing with disappointment

Disappointment is a tricky emotion for parents. You don't want to be disappointed in your kids. Yet, it's easy to feel let down when kids don't live up to your expectations.



Parenting Corner
Marilyn Suttle

How do you handle feelings of disappointment? The way you handle disappointment will have a direct influence on your kids' future behavior.

Disappointment is defined as a failure to fulfill a hope, desire or expectation. If you expect your child to be perfect at all times, you're in for a lot of disappointment.

Childhood is a time of trial and error, learning from mistakes, figuring out beliefs and trying to be unique while still fitting in.

To side step disappointment, take a close look at your current expectations. Challenge yourself to set realistic expectations for your kids. Ask yourself these three questions:

1. Are my expectations realistic and age appropriate? It's not realistic to expect your three-year-old to quietly follow you around the mall for a long shopping marathon.

2. How have my expectations been clearly defined? If you expect your child to be home early, be sure to define what early means to you. Your definition of early could be very different from your child's definition.

revenge, or become negative attention-getters. You expect your child to be respectful and trustworthy. Instead she back talks, ignores your requests, gets caught lying, cheating or stealing. What do you do? Here are three helpful skills for dealing with your disappointment in ways that encourage kids to take responsibility for their actions:

1. Before you respond to your child, say these words to yourself, "It's not about me." With this message in mind, you won't escalate the problem with comments like, "How dare he do this to me," or "How could she make me look so bad."

Parenting out of vanity blocks you from being helpful to your children. Disappointment can turn into delight if you see your child's mistakes as learning opportunities. Put your ego aside and place your focus on the needs of the situation.

2. Help your kids accountable for their actions. Instead of yelling, fixing their mistakes, or building up resentments, ask your kids what they plan on doing to set things right.

Children have a natural desire to redeem themselves. Give them positive ways to make amends. They can't go back in time and undo their misbehavior. They can take responsibility for their actions and decide what they will do differently next time.

3. Know your parenting goals. Parents are most helpful when they see themselves as guides. When a child goes off-course, a parent is there to guide them back on track. A guiding parent doesn't criticize, condemn, or complain. A guiding parent redirects misbehavior, has unwavering faith in their kids' potential, and unconditionally loves and accepts them just as they are.

So far we have talked about dealing with disappointment over a child's behavior. What happens when you feel disappointed over things that are beyond a child's ability to change, such as gender, health, talents, temperament or personality?

the opportunities and value of the child you have.

Martin, an enthusiastic grandpa, attended a series of parenting classes. His joy in grandparenting inspired one whole group. When the class discussed ways of dealing with disappointment, he shared a pearl of wisdom that came from the pain of experience.

"When I was a young man, I always imagined raising a son, a chip off the old block. When my first daughter was born, I felt a twinge of disappointment. But, I figured the next one would be a boy, so I let myself enjoy the new arrival.

"Six years ago, I was divorced and dealing with a life-threatening illness. I wouldn't have had the strength to endure, if it wasn't for the constant care of one special person.

"Lily stayed by my side. As I came to rely on Lily, I discovered what an amazing young woman she is, so smart, so organized, so compassionate. It breaks me up inside to think

that my Lily grew up being less valued than the other kids because of my unwillingness to let go of an unfulfilled expectation.

"I may not have been much of a dad to Lily while she was growing up, but I'm determined not to waste what I have with her today. I don't let a day go by without thanking God for all my girls. The most amazing thing is, Lily didn't shut me out. She forgave me and welcomed me in her life. I even get to babysit my granddaughter while she works."

With glistering eyes, Martin posed and said, "Don't trick yourself into thinking your child is a disappointment. What you have is far more valuable than what you expected to have. Every child is a gift."

The next time you feel a twinge of disappointment, choose to respond helpfully to your children and yourself. Don't leave disappointment unresolved.

Use skills to redefine your expectations or redefine your child's misbehavior. Instead of longing for what you don't have, take action to value what you do have.

Marilyn Suttle provides keynotes and workshops on parenting, self-esteem and work-life balance strategies for corporate and educational groups. She is a professional member of the National Speakers Association. Email her at MsSuttle@aol.com or visit her web site: www.SuttleOnline.NET

BELIEFS & VALUES

If you want to submit an item for the religion calendar, fax it to (248) 477-9722 or write, Religion Calendar, Farmington Observer, 2340 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48832. The deadline for an announcement to appear in the Thursday edition is noon Monday.

Farmington Road, Call (248) 429-7906.

SUMMER SERVICES

Bethlehem Lutheran
Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 25200 N. Grand Ave. in Farmington Hills, is now offering a summer schedule of one worship service at 9:30 a.m. Sundays. Holy Communion celebrated first and third Sundays of the month and Festivals of the church year. A weekly informal worship service with Holy Communion will be offered 7:30 a.m. Thursdays.

First Presbyterian Church
First Presbyterian Church of Farmington is now offering a summer schedule of one worship service at 9:30 a.m. Sundays. The summer schedule will continue through Labor Day (248) 474-6702.

Antioch Lutheran
Antioch Evangelical Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills now offers its Sunday and Wednesday summer worship schedule Sundays at 9:30 a.m. until Aug. 24. A contemporary service called Praise Earth is held on the fourth Sunday. Wednesday evening services will be held at 7:30 p.m. with Bible study at 6:30 p.m. until Aug. 27.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

S.C.I.B.A.
The Farmington Hills Church of God will be holding vacation Bible school 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. July 28-Aug. 1 for pre-school-5th graders. This year's theme is S.C.I.B.A.- Super Cool Undersea Bible Adventure! The public is welcome. Please register by calling the church office at (248) 477-9144.

Kingdom Caper
Forest Park Baptist Church in Farmington Hills will host a visit on Bible school 6-9 a.m. Monday-Friday, July 14-18. This year's theme is The Great Kingdom Caper. This event is free and open to the public. Call (248) 474-5080.

EVENTS

Prince of Peace Events
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills will offer Music Camp 8:50 a.m.-noon July 7-8 and Summer, a day of fun and food for families 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, July 19. For more information call (248) 553-3380.

Coffee Talk
Single Point Lighthouse Cafe offers an evening of relaxation and fun while listening to live entertainment provided by other Single Pointers. Cost is \$5. Hot dogs, goodies and coffee provided. Call Single Point Ministries at Ward Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 40000 Six Mile Road (near Haggerty), Northville, at (248) 374-9920.

Antioch Preschool
Antioch Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills offers Christian based preschool for 3-4 year-old children. Class registration is now being taken. The church is located at 83 Mile and

ONGOING

Widow/Widower Support
New Hope Center for Grief Support, a Christian-based bereavement outreach center, offers support for widows and widowers with children on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The group meets at 11 a.m. at St. Gerard's Parish office, 14661 Haggerty, Plymouth. New Hope for Kids meets at the same time and place and is aimed at ages 4-7. (248) 348-0715.

Aglow
Aglow International, a community lighthouse for women, meets for dinner and discussion at 6 p.m. the second Monday of each month at Best Western Executive Hotel, 3525 N. 12 Mile in Farmington. For information or reservations call (248) 474-1053.

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