

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

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- "Love and Logic", a method devised by Jim Fay and Foster W. Cline, M.D. simplifies your life while giving your child a sense of self confidence and accomplishment.

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The Hard Questions

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Answers to Life's Hard Questions— Are You Ready?

Dear Joy,

I have a 14 year old son who is totally unmotivated. All he wants to do is play video games. He doesn't want to do his homework or even go to school. I know he's intelligent but how do I get him interested in the things that matter, like school?



I sympathize with your problem as your concern for your son's future tells me you are a hands-on parent. Scripture admonishes parents in Proverbs to: "Train up a child in the way he should go... and he will not depart from it"; and in Ephesians, "Parents, do not exasperate your children." I fear we don't fully understand the meaning of these verses—and they are complementary.

Having a child is normally the easy part. Raising them to be productive citizens who also desire to follow God presents the problem. I'm not sure what it is about our world today but if you're like most, you feel pulled in a hundred different directions, all screaming for your attention at the same time. This means something or someone gets the short end of the stick—many times that's our children. We rationalize that after all, if the schools, the church, the government were doing their job our kids would be okay with a minimum amount of input from us as parents.

But—and this is a big one—God entrusted the parent(s) with the task of bringing up their child (ren) and training him/her. So what do we do?

We automatically raise them the way we were raised even if we don't approve the method. There's a better way but it's a harder way however a far more rewarding way.

Training a child in the way he should go means tailoring the training to the child. So if you



have three children, the training will no doubt be different for each child. Therefore, the parent must know each child. Knowing a child entails knowing his likes, dislikes, how he handles problems, how he views others, etc. This seems like a natural thing to do but with all the distractions of today, it can be challenging. Plus,

there's the matter of both parents needing to work or the single parent working two jobs and then the day care people know your child better than you do.

If your child is in day care, you can collaborate with the leaders there and ask them to work with your child in the way you desire. This can head off problems down the road. Enlisting a family member to care for your child sometimes works out ideally, but you need to assess this carefully first.

The ideal way, once you know your child, is a method called, "Love and Logic", a method devised by Jim Fay and Foster W. Cline, M.D. This method simplifies your life while giving your child a sense of self confidence and accomplishment. You simply start allowing him to take responsibility for his own life as soon as he's capable. This can start as early as two or two and a half years. That's about the age of, "Me do it!" You start by giving him two choices you approve of. Take breakfast for example. If you don't have the time or energy to fix toast and eggs, you let him choose between two kinds of cold cereal. Not three kinds but two. Too many choices at this age confuses a child. When he

“How many of us have felt nauseous after the devilish thought: If I can’t handle a five-year-old in the grocery store, what am I going to do with a fifteen-year-old who seems to have an enormous understanding of sex and is counting the days until he gets a driver’s license.”?

Foster W. Cline
and Jim Fay

makes his choice, that’s what he eats and if he changes his mind, too bad. He either eats it or goes without. Believe me, a child will not starve himself for long.

This method is best started when a child is young but you can still use it with your fourteen-year old son. Going to school and doing his homework is his life work now and ultimately his responsibility. When you insist it’s his responsibility, not yours, then he must take it on or take the consequences. There are natural consequences and there are consequences designed by parents. A natural consequence in this situation would be that he flunks out and has to take the grade over. A parental concern of this consequence is that he will take the easy way out and become a lazy bum doing nothing but playing video games all day.

So you design consequences for him such as, take away his cell phone until his grades come up (without any nagging from either parent), take away his means of transportation, like his bike, take away his video games, Xbox, and / or whatever he treasures most, again until he brings up his grades (and again, without any nagging from either parent.) Nagging a child to do what he knows he should do

merely places the responsibility back on the parent and not on the child. I know, this is hard, because we don’t want our child to fail but it is **his** life and not yours. He is free to do whatever he wants with his life.

Sometimes parents get caught up in the fact that a child’s actions reflect back on them and may make them look bad as a parent. We all have to deal with this temptation from time to time. When you realize that that is a selfish reaction because it puts your feelings ahead of your child’s success then perhaps a parent can put aside this concern and decide to do what is best for the child.

There is a lot more to this method than I’ve described here but the crux of the method is letting the child not the parent take responsibility for his life. When we as adults take responsibility for ourselves, we experience good feelings and find more self confidence to take charge of our life. So it is with a child and then we will find we are “training a child in the way he should go... and he will not depart from it”.

Exasperating your children consists of angering or irritating them. Parents have the ability to exasperate their children through an unkind, overly critical attitude. This is not

training and it is detrimental to raising a child to love others and serve God.

Training by example is the best, most helpful way to raise a child. Children learn what they see. What you are like is what your child will become.

Therefore, the importance of getting our lives in order and following God’s instruction to us seems obvious. Think of the parent who has some bad habit—perhaps smoking but admonishes his child to not smoke. But every day he sees before him the dad he admires, smoking like a chimney. He may even unconsciously mimic the moves his father makes as he lights up and smokes. This child may not smoke when he’s older but the odds are stacked against him by his own father. Christian parents are different. We model the actions we wish to see our children imitate and when we goof up—and we will—we speak to our children in terms they can understand: that we fail at times, so we apologize and go on. Our failure and owning our failure helps a child to eventually do the same.



Web Sites:

[Love and Logic Institute](#)

[Love and Logic Basics](#)

Books:

[Parenting with Love and Logic](#) by Foster W. Cline and Jim Fay

[Parenting Teens with Love and Logic](#) by Foster W. Cline and Jim Fay

[How to Discipline Kids Without Losing Their Love and Respect: An Introduction to Love and Logic](#) by Jim Fay

RESOURCES & INFO

HELPING YOU FIND GENUINE JOY!

Genuine Joy Ministries

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QUESTIONS????? Write us.

Sometimes you come up with really hard, tough questions that you don't have the answers to.

At times you're too embarrassed or uncomfortable to ask your friends and family... and when you are brave enough to ask the questions, even they don't always have the answers.

You don't think you have anyone that you can talk to... well now you do.

Genuine Joy Ministries is dedicated to helping you find the answers to life's hardest questions.

Just for Fun

Favorite Love & Logic One Liners: (Just remember it's "how" you say it...) For more ideas check out the [Love & Logic Forum](#)

1. What would you like to happen?
2. How do you suppose that might work out?
3. On a scale of 1 - 10, how good a decision do you think that is?
4. Would you like to hear what others have tried?
5. Just because I like you, should I let you get away with that?
6. Try not to worry, I will let you know about...
7. Ohhh, that's sad. What do you think you will do?
8. I don't know... what do you think?
9. I wouldn't want you to be embarrassed in front of your friends - let's talk about this later.
10. Do you think I listen better when people are talking to me in a quiet or loud voice?



"When correcting a child,
the goal is to apply light,
not heat."
--Woodrow Wilson

If you know someone who would be interested in or needs to see this newsletter, you can easily add their email address to our mailing list.

Just send a quick email to: info@genuinejoyministries.org



THE HARD QUESTIONS — DO YOU HAVE ONE?