

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL

PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Parents are often concerned by the lack of respect shown them by their teenagers. This is a very important issue, for if parents allow their children to treat them with disrespect, it lowers the child's self-concept. Many parents, and even professionals, have this concept backwards. That is, professionals may tell parents that the child has a poor self-image and therefore the child treats them with disrespect. It is truly the other way around.

Sometimes parents have difficulty differentiating between a teen's assertiveness and disrespect or aggressiveness. Assertive behavior involves telling other people where we stand. Indeed, adolescents are very good at telling other people where they stand. That does not necessarily mean the adolescents are disrespectful. Aggressiveness, on the other hand, involves telling other people where to go. Adolescents should not be allowed to be aggressive with their parents. Disrespect also includes name calling, foul language, music played obnoxiously loud, and ignoring a parent who is trying honestly to relate.

It is essential for parents to understand their child's reasons for disrespect. Many adolescents are disrespectful because they are frustrated by unnecessary parental rules, regulations and harangues. When teens feel their lives are unnecessarily controlled by adults, their only response is angry, impolite, and disrespectful comments.

In summary, parents must ask themselves, "Do I or have I treated my teen with disrespect? Am I confusing disrespect with protest or assertiveness? Am I consistently loving and giving my teen freedom to make his/her own mistakes?" If parents are able to answer these questions to their own satisfaction, and their child continues to be disrespectful, then it is important to

discuss the situation. A heart-to-heart talk must be carried out when the teen is in a good mood, and not immediately following an incident of disrespect. It does not help to try and solve a chronic problem when a chronic problem is occurring. The following conversation might take place:

Parent: "Jack, how happy have you been at home recently?"

Jack: "I'm happy enough."

Parent: "Well, I'm glad to hear that. I thought, considering the way you have been talking recently, you weren't too happy at home. I wonder if you might be happier living somewhere else?"

Jack: "Where would I go?"

Parent: "Well, to tell the truth, I'm not sure. Do you know anyone who would find it fun to be around you right now?"

Jack: "Yeah, I've got plenty of friends."

Parent: "I'm glad to hear that. That's one of our options, to see if some of those friends want to put you up for a while. Or, we can figure out how to talk and listen to each other. Let's each make a list of the ways we can make this situation better. Let's both give it some thought and share our lists after dinner."

Ultimately, if the parent is respectful to the teen, not infringing on his/her freedom, and not confusing assertiveness with disrespect, the child will, in turn, be respectful. If the child continues to be disrespectful, it may be time to consider the tough love routine, with the emphasis on love. Out in the real world, no one puts up with chronic disrespect.

Allowing a Child to Treat Adults with Disrespect Lowers the Child's Self-Concept