

Parenting*Shifts*

50 Heart-Based Strategies
to Keep You Growing
in Your Parenting



Dr. Scott Turansky
and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN



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The National Center for Biblical Parenting is a nonprofit corporation committed to the communication of sound, biblical parenting principles through teaching, counseling, and publishing written, audio, and video materials.

To obtain a complete resource list or have Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller present their material live, you may contact the National Center for Biblical Parenting, 76 Hopatcong Drive, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-4136, (800) 771-8334 or visit the website at: biblicalparenting.org

You may also want to take online parenting courses at Biblical Parenting University.

Learn more at biblicalparentinguniversity.com

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About the Authors



Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN are the co-founders of the National Center for Biblical Parenting. Their heart-based approach to parenting is revolutionizing families. Instead of relying on simple behavior modification, they provide tools that have greater effectiveness for lasting change. They are the authors and editors of numerous books, parent training curriculum, and children's programs designed to strengthen the family. Turansky and Miller are also the co-founders of Biblical Parenting University, providing parents with easy access to parent training through online courses.



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A large, light gray decorative swirl graphic that frames the title 'Introduction' from above and to the left.

Introduction

This is a book of ideas. As parents we need all the ideas we can find. Each child is unique and the same tools don't always work with every child. Furthermore, parenting strategies that had an impact last year may need some tweaking because of developmental changes. The suggestions in this book will help you to be a better parent.

But Parenting Shifts is much more than a book of ideas. Each of the tools represented in the following pages is designed to help you develop a philosophy of parenting. Lots of ideas about parenting confuse even the best parents. Our goal is to give you a framework from which you'll be able to pick and choose from the advice and suggestions you'll receive from others in order to determine the best strategy for your home. By weaving together God's Word with practical suggestions, you'll begin to develop patterns that will make a tremendous difference in your life and the lives of your children.

The following chapters represent specific strategies to strengthen your parenting. Each chapter is independent. There isn't a particular order to them. They're tools. You may want to mark particular ones and come back to them at strategic times. By putting the chapters together and practicing the things in this book you'll find yourself carving out a parenting style. You'll take your personality and

allow it to be molded by a biblical framework and a grace-based, heart-based approach to parenting. In the end you'll find yourself growing faster than you had imagined in your ability to parent effectively.

As you read this book don't hesitate to put it down and consider how the idea in that chapter might best help you in your relationships with your kids. Jot down notes and plan how you might do things a little differently.

We've compiled a list of 50 parenting principles that we believe to be the best we've seen over the years. We've worked with thousands of families and taught hundreds of parenting seminars, received tens of thousands of feedback forms. Out of all of that, we've found these 50 ideas that can make the difference between the best parents and those who miss the mark.

With the information in this book you'll have a framework for parenting success. These principles aren't original. They come from our study of God's Word and from the experience of many families over the years. Some of the ideas were learned through testing in families like yours. Others were learned through our own mistakes in our own homes.

This book is the first of nine books in the Parenting Shifts Series. Each of the other books targets a particular developmental stage. A team of experts, working together with Dr. Scott Turansky, has collaborated to bring you the best in a heart-based approach to parenting at any age. Wherever you are in your parenting journey, these books will help you move forward with confidence and effectiveness.

Other books in this series include:

The Baby Adventure (Birth to 12 Months)

by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN

Toddlers on the Move (Ages 12-36 Months)

by Dr. Scott Turansky and Tess Worrell

Preschool Explorers (Ages 3-5)

by Dr. Scott Turansky and Diane Snyder

Elementary Foundations (Ages 5-8)

by Dr. Scott Turansky and Shannon Kulp

Kids Stepping Out (Ages 8-12)

by Dr. Scott Turansky and Julie Raudenbush

Teen Shaping (Ages 12-16)

by Dr. Scott Turansky and Paul Downer

On a Mission (Ages 15-20)

by Dr. Scott Turansky and Paul Downer

Launching into Independence (Ages 18-26)

by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN

We trust that these chapters will provide you with helpful ways to think about your role as a parent. Each chapter is just a few pages long, making it convenient to read in your busy schedule or even to read a chapter to your spouse or child.

If you find yourself needing more in-depth tools in a particular area, please stop by our web site at biblicalparenting.org to learn more.

It's our prayer that you will find hope and wisdom as you read this book. Parenting is a journey and we need all the wisdom we can get. We wish you the best in your family and remember, they grow up faster than you imagine.



Make Parenting Shifts

Much research has been done on the developmental stages of childhood. Babies learn to sit up, then crawl, and then walk. Kids have a greater ability to reason as they get older and logic makes sense as they move further into preadolescence. A logical implication of these developmental changes is that parents will need to make parenting shifts along the way. Some of those changes are minor or subtle; others are more significant. One mom said it this way, “Just when I thought I had it all figured out, my daughter changed and I feel like I have to start all over again.”

Parenting is a growing experience. We must make adjustments in the way we parent to effectively relate to children as they grow and develop. Unfortunately, parents get ideas in their heads about what good parenting is and then they lack the flexibility necessary to be effective. Although a strategy may work well at one stage, it may be necessary to modify or even abandon it at another stage.

For instance, when that tiny infant comes home from the hospital, the baby quickly becomes the focus of attention. The infant sets the schedule for feedings and

for sleeping. Often both parents have to adapt their lives around one small child. However, as your baby begins to grow and develop, you change too. You no longer jump for every cry. You begin to set limits on a mobile child and determine a meal schedule for a toddler. Infancy requires that the parent give up an agenda and respond quickly to a baby's needs. As the child gets older, a parenting shift takes place and the parent requires that a child wait more and fit into a schedule and learn to consider the needs of others.

Some parents try to simplify their jobs by setting policies they think will last for years, apparently believing that one parenting principle fits all. One dad said about his one-month-old son, "I'm going to stop the teenage rebellion right here." He proceeded to set some pretty strict rules about feeding and sleep times. That's a sad misunderstanding.

Paul acknowledges a spiritual parenting shift in 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, "Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it."

At each stage of development a child's parents must make modifications in their approach. A young baby must have physical and emotional needs met continually in order to develop a sense of security and to view the world as a safe place. As children grow to be toddlers or preschoolers, they need to develop two primary character qualities: responsiveness to authority and self-control. Elementary age children need opportunities to solve problems for themselves and a lot of teaching regarding relationships and how the world works. Teens need a completely different approach, carefully balancing firmness with extra dialogue as they develop their own value systems and de-

cide who they're going to be as adults.

Considering your child's developmental level and making appropriate parenting shifts can make all the difference between a child who accepts your guidance and a child who resists your leadership. Don't make the mistake that just because you allow your infant to eat on "demand" will mean that she'll be demanding when she grows up. On the contrary, infancy is a time to build trust and bonding and that often comes with fast response to their needs. Several stages of growth and maturity will take place between now and adolescence and you'll have plenty of opportunity to make adjustments that affect patterns in their lives.

Another example of failure to make the shift takes place as a child becomes a toddler. When parents still treat a two-year-old as if he's a two-month-old, then self-centeredness increases and hampers interpersonal relationships. It's not usually too long before parents realize the need to adjust and impose more limits. When parents are slow to make the needed parenting shifts at any age, then children often develop more dramatic symptoms to awaken parents to the need for change.

Often the signs of a need for a parenting shift are an increased friction and frustration in family dynamics. If family life isn't working, there may be a number of causes that need attention. Most of the time it means that parents will have to change the way they work with their kids. The old methods of relating don't work the same way anymore. In fact, they seem to cause problems instead. Sometimes the parenting shift is a result of developmental changes. Other times a different approach is needed because of a child's personality or because of a growing character weakness.

As your children grow, be ready to grow with them and make the necessary changes to influence them effectively. Even the best of parents must make some changes in the way they parent as their children grow up. As children move into adolescence you'll want to adjust many of the ways you relate. Although you may have been able to "control" young children, the key word for teenagers is "influence." Firmness is still important, but more so now than ever you're looking for ways to convince, persuade, and communicate the best way to live.

Change takes time, and your influence will produce the greatest results. Parenting is a complicated job with very few easy answers. The responsibility requires continual growth and flexibility to work with the changing needs of your child. Furthermore, having multiple children requires that parents work on several levels all at the same time. Rarely does it work to treat all children the same because each one needs something different.

Parents must be students in order to maximize their parenting. Your continued growth is essential. Studying God's Word will give you rich insights into your children, and reading parenting books and attending seminars will give you added tools to help your family. Be willing to make changes along the way and you'll have the most success.



Consistency is Overrated

We've all heard that consistency is the key to good parenting. But many parents believe that it's more important than it really is. If you're doing simple behavior modification then consistency is essential. Giving the reward or punishment every time you see the behavior will reinforce change.

Behavior modification as a science began in the early 1900s. Pavlov made some exciting discoveries as he worked with dogs. If he consistently rang a bell just before he fed the dogs, then he could get the dogs to salivate by simply ringing the bell. This discovery of how to motivate a dog was picked up by Watson in the 1920s and he began to apply behavior modification to people. In fact, it wasn't long before behavior modification became a primary way to help people stop smoking, lose weight, and deal with a host of other behavioral issues.

By the 1950s behavior modification became the primary tool for parenting. Giving rewards and punishment to children worked quite well to modify their behavior. And one of the things they all learned was that the key to behavior modification is consistency. The more consistent

you are, the faster you'll see change.

People, however, are different than animals because they have hearts and that affects the learning process. The heart contains things like emotions, desires, convictions, and passion. In short, the heart is a wrestling place where decisions are made. A child's tendencies come from the heart. When a child lies to get out of trouble, that's a heart issue. If a brother reacts with anger each time his sister is annoying, that's a heart issue. Simply focusing on behavior may provide some quick change, but lasting change takes place in the heart.

Parents who simply use behavior modification often end up with kids who look good on the outside while having significant problems on the inside. Consistency can teach kids to appear good, clean, and nice but other parenting skills must be added to the picture in order to help children change their hearts.

Rhonda finds this principle particularly helpful. "I used to feel guilty all the time because I can't be consistent. I have four kids and a house to run. Invariably I'd have to sacrifice consistency in an area with one or more of my kids to accomplish my other tasks. When I realized that there's more to parenting than just being consistent, it freed me up to work on bigger goals with my kids. The consistency trap produced a lot of guilt in me. Now I realize that there's much more to parenting and I feel freed up to use other tools as well. I'm continually asking question about my children's hearts and I'm learning a lot about how to mold and influence them to go in the right direction. I'm seeing more change in my kids with this new approach."

If training dogs to salivate, then consistency is essential.

But you're trying to raise children. You don't want children to do the right thing just so that they can get a reward. If you do, then kids learn to ask the question, "What's in it for me?" "What am I going to get if I do what you say?" Instead, you want children to change their hearts. You want them to ask the question, "What's the right thing to do here?" That shift in thinking is what we call "heart work."

As children grow older, you can move further away from a simple behavior modification approach. And when you do, and you're focusing on the heart, then another quality besides consistency becomes even more important: creativity.

The heart is where children believe things. It's where they develop operating principles about life. Kids learn through experience, stories, activity, and modeling. Sometimes children develop resistance in their hearts to a consistent approach. The same lecture over and over again builds up immunity through patterns of arguing, bad attitudes, and manipulation. Furthermore, kids tend to want bigger and bigger rewards for compliance.

Creativity has the ability to move around the resistance of children and allows a truth to explode with meaning inside the heart. The best teachers are the ones who use creative teaching methods to communicate their point. Ed is mean to his sister. Dave is trying to help his son develop kindness. Sometimes he uses a consequence to correct his son. Other times he requires an apology, or has his son practice doing the right thing, requiring three acts of kindness before Ed can go. Dave is also having his son memorize scripture, and they've had several conversations about cruelty in the adult world. Dave is helping his son develop compassion for people. They recently attended a

Special Olympics event to gain a greater sense of empathy for others who are different. Dave will be successful with his son. It'll take time, but his commitment to creativity will help his son develop a better response toward his sister and eventually to others in life.

Please don't misunderstand us. Consistency is important, especially when kids are young. But if you think more broadly about parenting and embrace creativity into your training, then you'll be more effective at molding the hearts of your kids at any age. Your primary task as parent is to teach your kids, and a little work in the creativity department can make all the difference.

Deuteronomy 11:18-20 not only tells parents to train their kids but it tells them how to do it. Notice the creativity designed by God. "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." If you take that verse apart you'll start thinking about your own home and your own kids and creative ways to teach them.

Even in Old Testament times God knew that kids learn best through life experiences. Add creativity to your parenting goals and you'll enhance your training ten-fold.



Teach Kids to Add Energy to Family Life

Some children have the ability to suck the energy right out of family life. These children are demanding of your time, need a lot of correction, and seem to be magnets for conflict. They're often emotionally explosive but almost always drain energy out of parents and other family members. Unfortunately then, these children develop a negative view of themselves based on the high amount of negative feedback they receive.

One solution is to teach them to add energy back into family life. The term “honor” describes the process of thinking of others above yourself. Honor is important in a family. God commands honor to be practiced at home. Ephesians 6:2-3 says, “ ‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise— ‘that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.’ ” Those verses teach that honor learned at home has ramifications for life. In fact, we would say that God has hidden within honor the secret ingredients people need to be successful.

Honor has rich meaning for parents and children. It can give direction in many of the frustrating moments you experience. In fact, every form of selfishness has an honor-based solution.

Honor means to treat people as special, do more than what's expected, and have a good attitude. Feel free to use this definition or make up your own. The point is that honor changes the way that parents relate to their children, the way children relate to each other, and the way children relate to their parents. Obedience gets the job done, but honor addresses the way people relate in that process.

If Jack gets people riled up each afternoon before dinner, set an appointment with him at 4:00 pm for several days in a row and ask him to look for three things he can do to add to family life. He may decorate the dinner table, encourage his brother, or prepare something nice for Dad's arrival home.

If Jack continually antagonizes his sister, you might tell him that he needs to think of three honoring things to do for her before he's free to play. Remember, don't tell him exactly what he needs to do. If you decide what Jack needs to do and tell him to do it, that's obedience. When Jack chooses, that's honor. Honor treats people as special and does more than what's expected. Jack needs to learn how to add energy to family life instead of taking it away.

Honor requires initiative by adding something extra or doing something that needs to be done. Many children wait for others to tell them to do something. Furthermore, it's hard to teach kids to take initiative because the very act of telling them seems to take the initiative away. That's why you may require your child to do something but not tell him what to do. You want to help him to start seeing a need

or solving a problem for himself.

Honor contains the idea of doing more than what's expected. That means seeing what needs to be done and doing it, and solving problems instead of leaving them for others. One family had a sign in their kitchen that read:

If it's broken, fix it.

If it's empty, fill it up.

If it's open, shut it.

If it's out, put it away.

If it's messy, clean it up.

If you can't, then report it.

That's honor.

Honor means that everyone contributes to family life. In fact, you may ask a child to go around the house and look for one job that needs to be done and do it, and then report back to you.

These kinds of discussions and exercises will help children think outside of their little box and discover that they have a responsibility to the family. They can contribute to family life by just seeing something that needs to be done and doing it.

People tend to take for granted those they're closest to. It was Jesus who said, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." (Mark 6:4) The family can be a place where people take each other for granted. Learning honor is just the solution kids need. Hidden within honor are the secret ingredients that make people more productive in relationships.

You're already honoring your kids in a number of ways although you might not be using the term. Now you might say to your daughter, "I went shopping today and I bought your favorite ice cream. I just wanted to honor you." Then

later you can use the same word to describe how you'd like your daughter to treat you with a better attitude when you give her an instruction.

One way parents can teach children honor is to include it in the instruction process. You might say to your child, "I'd like you to obey me by setting the table, then I want you to think of something extra to do to surprise me. That's showing honor. You choose; it's up to you. Report to me when you're done and I'll check your work."

You can use the concept of honor in correction or when things are going well. You can use it when you teach your children about money, time, and other resources and you can teach it when conflict comes around. One way to teach honor is on special occasions when someone wins a contest or earns a certificate. You may show honor by giving that person a fancy place at the table or by decorating his or her bedroom door.

Honor is fun. It's like oil in a machine. It gets work done with less friction and less heat. Every family needs honor. It's great when things are going well and essential when family relationships are strained. Work on it whether your kids are preschoolers or teens. It'll change the way your family relates.



Tasks, Problems, and Conflict

If you want to avoid much of the emotional intensity of family life then you'll need to understand the difference between tasks, problems, and conflict.

Tasks are the normal things you do each day. You get kids out of bed, make sure they're dressed, provide breakfast, check that they have all the things they'll need for the day, and get out the door. Then you'll stop by the drug store to pick up the prescription and drop by the library to return the books on your way home. Tasks are the to-do list of a parent. They are work but they are expected. It's part of the job.

The business side of a family requires that food be purchased, prepared, eaten, put away, and all cleaned up. Clothes need to get washed, put in drawers, and then back on people. Driving to various appointments, tidying up rooms in the house, and fixing things that are broken are all part of the business of family life. Every task between the time you get up in the morning until the time you go to bed at night requires effort. It's work. Those aren't problems. They're just tasks that need to get done.

Furthermore, training children is a task, not a problem.

The difference has to do with your expectations. If you're surprised by your son's resistance to instructions, then you're liable to view it as a personal attack and escalate to conflict. But the reality is that your son's resistance is an indication of a character weakness. Part of your job as a parent is to train your child. Develop a plan to challenge the poor character in your son and you now can approach the task of raising him using a calm, but firm approach. It's just another one of the tasks of your job as a parent.

Problems are different. They're obstacles that get in the way of your goals. Your son is playing with his video game when he should be getting dressed. You can't find the prescription you need and you're missing a library book. Your daughter's homework isn't in her backpack again and she can't find her other shoe.

It's not usually the tasks that create the tension in family life. It's the problems that get in the way. At that moment, you as a parent have to make an important decision. Are you going to move the problems down to tasks or are you going to escalate them to conflict?

Here's an important rule: Don't turn problems into conflict. Instead look for ways to turn problems into additional tasks by developing a plan to solve them. If more families would view problems as tasks instead of moving to conflict, then greater unity and more productivity would result. Unfortunately, many children and parents view problems and conflict as the same thing so most of the tasks of family life evolve into a battle. You'll know that a problem is making an attempt to escalate into a conflict when you hear things like a hurtful sarcastic remark or an angry tone, or you see a disgusted look or a bad attitude, or simply see the intensity increasing between two or more people in a family.

Conflict happens when problems are met with emotional intensity. Mom yells at her son because he's playing with the video game. She rolls her eyes at her daughter and then sticks her neck out and points her finger as she angrily commands her daughter to look for her shoe and her homework. Mom has just raised the family threat level to red by turning the morning routine into an emotional experience.

Mom feels like she's stuck in a common pattern. This isn't a one-time problem. This seems to happen every morning. Furthermore, the problem isn't limited to mornings. Things seem to get out of hand on a regular basis around her home. Mom doesn't like the fact that she gets angry but she feels like that's the only way to get her kids moving sometimes.

Part of the solution for Mom is to change the way she faces her day. If she'd move problems down to tasks instead of escalating them to conflict then she'd be much more at peace and she'd reduce the tension her family experiences.

Compare two families responding to problems in their morning routine. With family #1 problems are a recipe for disaster with yelling, dramatics, and tension flying around the room faster than anyone can manage. With family #2 parents and children work to find solutions to problems, minimizing the conflict as they proceed through the morning. The difference is a family that is committed to solving problems and reducing them to tasks instead of allowing them to escalate to conflict.

But what do you do when children escalate problems into conflict? In that moment it's important for you, as the parent, to be on guard because you don't have to follow

that same path. When kids generate conflict it's important for parents to recognize the problem and move it down to a task. If a child persists and refuses to work on the problem without emotion, it's best for the child to settle down. Rarely is it productive to try to move forward to solve problems when emotional intensity is high.

One of the greatest thieves of family closeness is allowing problems to move into conflict instead of keeping them as tasks. When a family works together to solve problems they have a positive sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, conflict polarizes family members causing them to feel like opponents instead of teammates. Ephesians 4:2-3 says, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." Your family can experience closeness together. That will happen as a result of intentional work in a number of areas but one of the most important ones has to do with your ability to turn problems into tasks.



It Takes Two to Argue, but Only One to Stop

Arguing can be defined this way: using logic and emotion to change someone's mind without considering how the intensity of the discussion is hurting the relationship.

The child who is prone to argue will often start with "Why?" in order to find ammunition. You, of course, view it as a harmless question, and since you have the answer on the tip of your tongue you graciously give it. The child responds with "But..." and now you're both off and running. These kinds of discussions aren't bad (in fact they can occasionally be helpful), but some children use them as manipulative techniques to get out of following instructions or to try to get something that you've already said no to. Arguing can become an irritating habit, but it's also a symptom of a heart problem.

Some parents try to talk their children into following instructions or have discussions to help them want to obey. These children sometimes can't follow a simple instruction without a dialogue and grow up to make poor team

members, difficult employees, and demanding friends. These parents think they're doing a good thing. "After all," they say, "isn't it good to dialogue with your kids?" The answer is "Yes, most of the time." However, there are some times in family life where dialogue is counterproductive. When children use the dialogue to delay obedience or try to wear you down in order to get a no answer changed to a yes, then you have a problem.

If you have a child who doesn't know how to cooperate, you might want to use a technique called, "Obey first and then talk about it." This technique simply reverses the sequence of two important elements, discussion and responsiveness. Children must first respond to your instruction and then you'll discuss the reasons for it.

Some parents who see a need for their children to give, not just take, require obedience by saying, "Because I'm the parent, that's why." Although these parents may have a handle on the problem, their authoritarian approach is inadequate because it focuses the solution on the parent instead of the child. Instead challenge children that the problem is theirs because they're mishandling dialogue. A child may need a period of time where following instructions comes before the discussion to foster the ability to give up one's agenda without always having to get something out of it.

When Amanda is asked to get on her pajamas and responds with, "But I'm not tired," Mom may say, "Amanda, I'd like you to obey first and then we'll talk about it." After Amanda obeys, then a discussion about bedtime may take place. It's surprising, though, how many children don't feel the need for a discussion afterwards. Dialogue for them was simply an attempt to delay cooperation.

Children who argue have good character qualities like persistence, perseverance, determination, creativity, and an ability to communicate their ideas. The problem with arguing is that your child views you as an obstacle, a mountain to tunnel through. The child who argues often lacks sensitivity, humility, and a proper respect for authority. Your challenge as a parent is to encourage the positive qualities and remove the negative ones.

When you sense that your child has crossed the line and is valuing the issue at the expense of the relationship, stop the dialogue. Refuse to argue. It takes two to argue, and you can stop the process from continuing on into unhelpful territory. Remember that good logic isn't the only consideration. You are also teaching your child to value relationship and learn to communicate with honor.

One of the reasons that arguing is dangerous to a relationship is that it sets the parties at odds. When children argue with their parents the relationship is at stake. Most parents feel uncomfortable with arguments, but they don't know why or what to do about it. The child who wants to argue puts the parent in an awkward position. The child takes on the role of attacker and the parent then becomes the defender. This relating pattern sets the two up as opponents instead of partners.

The difference between an argument and a discussion has to do with relationship. When the issue becomes more important than the people debating it, the discussion has turned into an argument. The best way to teach or even discuss a problem is with you and your child on the same side of the net. Instead of allowing issues to come between you, look for ways to make the issue the opponent and you and your child partners in solving it.

Sometimes an argument can move into a discussion with a little adjusting on your part. If you believe a discussion is helpful in a given situation you might move away from an argument mode by asking, "What are you hearing me say?" or saying, "Let's both try to think of advantages and disadvantages of you watching a video tonight." With these kinds of statements, you refuse to become an opponent and continue to look for areas of cooperation. The discussion then gives you an opportunity to teach problem-solving skills and good decision-making techniques.

Paul the apostle gave young Timothy advice about how to lead God's family, the church. In 2 Timothy 2:23 he said, "Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels." That's not only good advice for the church. It's great advice for the home as well. Quarrels or fights in family life often start with simple arguments.

One of the problems is that parents don't realize they're arguing until they're well into the discussion. That's okay. The point you realize that you are in an argument is the point where you'll want to take action. Use the discomfort you feel with the interaction to act as your signal that it's time for you to make a change. Refuse to continue. After all, it takes two to argue but only one to stop.