

Becoming a More Consistent Parent – A Simple Suggestion

Guy Harris

Consistency happens to be one of the biggest challenges I personally face in working with my children. I understand that it is an important issue. I write about it. I teach it in my business. And still I struggle.

I share the question on almost every parents mind : “How do I get my kids to do what I want them to do and not do what I don’t want them to do?” My struggle with consistency happens to be my weakness in this quest. One tool my wife and I have developed to address this issue is a family system.

We got the idea from our work in the business world. The emotional ties are different. But when it comes to structure, families and businesses have a lot in common. They are both organizations of people with a common purpose. So, what can we learn from successful businesses that will help us build more successful families?

Nearly every successful business has a well-defined system. Systems provide structure. Systems provide accountability. Systems provide mutual understanding of expectations. Systems make work easier. Systems are tools that allow ordinary people to obtain extraordinary results. Systems provide the results most parents desire -- a consistent method to encourage good behaviors and to discourage bad ones.

As you develop your family system you’ll want to define the following items:

- a simple set of family rules,
- minimum acceptable behaviors,
- unacceptable behaviors,
- a way to reward good behaviors and penalize bad ones.

You should also write it down and communicate it to everyone in the family.

My wife and I own a speaking, training, and consulting business. We speak and train on human behavior, leadership, and communication topics. Everything we have learned in the business world says two things:

- 1) Control and fear tactics create minimal performance, and
- 2) Positive reinforcement creates high-level performance.

We teach business leaders to use positive reinforcement to inspire their teams. Yet we sometimes find ourselves tilting more towards fear and intimidation when working with the people we love the most -- our children. Our negative disciplinary approaches are not usually the result of poor understanding. Instead, they come from fatigue, stress, and strong emotional ties.

A system also helps to remove stress and fatigue from the equation when handling disciplinary issues. Do the work to create pre-defined rules, expectations, and definitions of consequences. Then you will feel less stress and frustration as you work

to guide, correct, and instruct your children. You'll be free to focus on relationship issues rather than on task issues.

About the Author:

Guy Harris is an author, speaker, trainer, and consultant on human behavior at home and in the workplace. He has helped thousands of people across the country learn to practically apply the principles of human behavior. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Sandra, and two daughters.

Guy co-authored "The Behavior Bucks System™" to help parents apply behavioral principles in the home to reduce stress and conflict with their children. Learn more about this book at <http://www.behaviorbucks.com>

Learn more about Guy at <http://www.principledriven.com>

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