

Stepping over our problems and not right on them... wouldn't it be nice if solving all our parenting dilemmas were that easy! There are a few things to keep in mind to help it be a little easier as Dr Leman presented this week.

The first was the importance of giving our kids permission to fail. I have to remember to give myself permission to fail as well – because that happens a lot. It was pointed out in the group that this one is tough because of our own expectations for our children and how difficult it is to see our children struggle! It makes me think of a toddler learning to walk and being that parent who cringes, anticipating the fall. It's clear that without falling the toddler would probably never walk – without failing, our children have a harder time learning.

It also helped to understand three basic reasons why kids misbehave: attention (they are gonna get it even if it is negative attention, power (this is not about who is in charge but who is better at controlling the situation, ie: don't get pulled into that argument that gets you nowhere and the real issue is lost in the struggle) and revenge (when being right becomes more important than being a family).

We also had a chance to hear some practical tips for dealing with misbehavior. Dr. Leman shared some stories that hit close to home for some of us... the struggle in the grocery store when everyone wants something; the magnet toward mom/dad the minute the phone rings and everyone needs something. The struggle to determine how to deal with so many different behaviors can be mind-boggling. A few tips Leman offers:

- There are times when you should let your kids cry.
- Notice or recognize your child in positive ways.
- There are few, if any, warnings in reality discipline – focus on actions, not words! Get attention by taking action.
- Don't right all the wrongs in your child's life. Don't pay off the consequences of their actions.

In class we talked about several of these areas and shared our stories of how difficult it is to let our children fail. In some cases, we discussed how letting them fail is more about us than it is about them. We also talked about how letting them have the growing experiences now gives them the tools to use in their "toolbox" for later in life when things won't always go perfectly.

It is a delight each week to share ideas, discover new parenting techniques and walk through this course together.

Did you get a chance to fill out your hand-out or review the ideas on how to encourage your child? We can't wait to hear how things went this week as we transition from discipline and punishment into anger issues.

Until then... remember to step over them ;)

Staci and Karen