



Banana Moments: Help for parenting in the network culture www.bananamoments.com

Preparing Children for the Social Network

“Confronting the bully”

Consequences + Love = Empowerment

God’s love involves setting personal boundaries within the realm of hearts and minds that liberate us from the undue influence in the physical and cyber realms, including: bullying, exploitation, and addiction. Our aim is to create a home environment where the trustworthy character of God’s love is expressed as discipline. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

House rules involve boundary setting that relies upon individuals to take personal responsibility for thoughts and actions in age appropriate ways. The following are some criteria for establishing and enforcing cyber safe house rules:

- Consider internet access and smart phones as a rite of passage – not a right.
- No secrets, no surprises. Transparency is mandatory.
- Explain why each rule exists and how it benefits individuals and the family
- Regulate schedule and access to cyber tools
- Unplug phones at a designated time in the evening
- Only hit “send” if your mother could read it and be proud
- Establish and enforce consequences for rules violations
- Clean slate. Once a consequence has been enforced give your child a clean slate, expressing confidence in your child’s ability to stand corrected.

Bring clarity to key concepts, such as:

Brave v. risky: Both can make you feel discomfort. However, you are brave when you do the right thing even though you are afraid of displeasing your friends or being left out; while risky is ignoring your little voice warning you that it’s not right or dangerous.

Private v. secret: Private is when you decide not to disclose information about yourself in order to be safe. Privacy involves discretion and is active boundary setting. A secret, on the other hand, is something that is determined cannot survive the light of day because it is not acceptable: i.e., exploitive, harmful or illegal. Secrets nurture risky behavior.

Trust v. faith: Trust among people is always verifiable, while faith is reserved for God who does not require proof. Too often children expect trust and privacy, which are dangerous – especially in their on-line worlds. When we put our faith in children to handle things without guidance, we leave them vulnerable to risky circumstances beyond their ability to respond with confidence.

Forgive v. excuse: Forgiveness is liberty; it’s the act of letting go of the offense in your own heart and mind when someone has hurt or offends you. It does not mean you excuse the offensive behavior, give in to it, or enable it. It does mean that you do not allow yourself to become emotionally and spiritually bonded to the offense. The most powerful way to hold an individual accountable is to be in a state of forgiveness because you are not thinking and acting like a victim and makes possible atonement and reconciliation.

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Exercise 1: Expectation management.

What are your personal expectations for your children?

Do your expectations honor your beliefs and values that shape the child's character to resilient to undue bully pressure and self-govern?

How? _____

How are your expectations for your child communicated?

Exercise 2: Forgiveness as a strategy to confront bully pressure

What are some examples of when you had to forgive your child? Why do you forgive?

Think of some examples when your child was offended by a consequence or simply by you being the parent?

Think of some examples where your child might benefit by realizing they have the choice to forgive their parents for the things that have offended them. Would you be willing to ask your child to consider forgiving your offense to them – not because you are wrong and the child is right – but because the child has the power to let go of hurt and you both can learn something about one another (realm of hearts and minds)? Explain:
