
Eight Benefits of Dialoguing in Front of Your Children

Thoughts of the Month: February 2008

This may seem odd to many of you. You may be saying, "We don't even dialogue when we're alone! How can we do this in front of the kids?"

Maybe this is precisely the exquisite opportunity to begin. Think of your children as innocent sponges, automatically soaking in everything...every nuance of feeling in the family Space. Or think of them as silent Imago coaches, so wanting to have you each get validated and to actively love and respect each other.

Donna and I advocate using the Intentional Dialogue openly with each other and even with your children.

Here are eight reasons to commit to this:

- 1. Dialogue replaces hostility, cursing, and name calling.**
We know these things happen in many homes. It is deadly for the welfare of children. We are not faulting anyone. The reptilian brain is relentless in its pursuit of defense and survival! I've been there and done that myself. But there is a better way.
- 2. Dialogue increases the child's feeling of safety in the world.**
This benefit can improve your child's health, their grades, and their whole outlook on their future (and future relationships.)
- 3. Dialogue provides a great model for how to discuss anything, even conflict.**
What better experience can you give your children?
- 4. Dialogue automatically enhances the child's respect for both parents at the same time.**
"Do as I do, not just as I say!"
- 5. Dialogue normalizes a structure for talking about difficult things so the children will be receptive to the process when you are talking about difficult things with them.**
Kids love the dialogue even when they say they don't (even teenagers!) (And it is much more natural for them than for us! They're better at it!)
- 6. Dialogue will elicit the child's curiosity about the structure and process rather than the morbid task of having "to take sides" (even silently.)**
Children will often feel compelled to side with the "weaker" parent in a conflict. Dialogue "levels the playing field" because it is about connection and understanding rather than power (winning and losing).
- 7. Dialogue is a simple "rules of engagement" process that children of any age can understand and adopt.**
Children want to get along but they, like us, need structure and tools.
- 8. Dialogue gives children a way to validate different points of view.**
It is an in-home way of broadening your child's horizons.

You are probably saying, "Great, but how do we do this?"

Let me invite you to consider our parenting workshop, *Imago Again...a New Way to Parent*, March 8 - 9. We are going to be very practical and down to earth in helping parents apply Imago skills to the very difficult and most wonderful and rewarding experience of parenting.

With great encouragement and hope,
David and Donna

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