

## Good or Bad...We Are The Role Models

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Last month we talked about going brain dead to save your sanity. Have you been practicing your mantra? Good, because it's very important that your children feel secure in the knowledge that you have it together and it takes something more powerful than them to knock you off center?

Now let's work on the next step. Would you like your kids to live with a powerful, healthy role model each and every day?

It's not easy to turn a ranting and raving lunatic into a vision of tranquility but there are some tricks to get you started.

Remember to take care of yourself first. Modeling self esteem begins with you. Imagine the flight attendant instructing you to place the oxygen mask over your face before your child's. Then breathe, a slow calming breath. Keep in mind that you can't be the vision of tranquility when your face is red and your veins are popping out on your neck. Remember, you first must commit to neutralizing the arguing.

Just to refresh your memory...Remember your mantra. It will bring you to your senses fast. Practice it over and over again so it is on the tip of your tongue.

It could be something like..."I'm the adult". "Strokes & heart attacks aren't fun". "I love myself too much to engage in this battle".

Find something that works for you. Then calmly, look at your child, smile and say, "I love you too much to argue". Then, walk away. They'll probably follow you, just keep repeating, "I love you too much to argue". Remember to just go brain dead. The less words the better.

Think...duct tape over your mouth.

Pretty soon, you'll take the fun out of arguing. A cat stops playing with the mouse when it's dead.

Remember you're the role model. Wouldn't you love it if your kids learned how to control their emotions and act in a responsible way? Of course you would and so will their future spouses and your grandchildren.

It's no secret that you are teaching and role modeling every day. What you decide to teach is your choice.

Let's look at our behaviors and consider what we may be modeling, positive or negative. Ask yourselves these questions:

Do I gossip?

Am I kind?

Do I help others in need?

Do I smile and acknowledge specific positive attributes in others. Especially my children.

Am I accepting, or do I judge?

Do I ask open-ended questions to understand or... give advice because I think I know?

Do I respect my kids? Do I treat them politely like I would treat the next door neighbor?

Am I okay with letting my kids make mistakes and rejoice in the long term learning that comes from the consequences of do I want to spare them from short term suffering?

If you answer those questions honestly, you will know in which direction you need to grow. If you don't know, then ask your kids. They'll be happy to share. Pick one behavior you'd like to change. Say you've decided that you want to stop

nagging. (probably a good one to start with since it doesn't work anyway). You can monitor yourself, that's called self observation or you can ask for help.

I like to ask my family for help because they love to point out the errors of my ways. Actually, that's a lie, I don't really like to ask them for help, it's always hard to ask for help; but in order to change we must decide to do things differently. You could say, "Son, I've realized that I have a tendency to nag. I'd really like to change that, would you help me out and gently let me know if you notice me nagging? Thanks, you'd be doing me a big favor."

If you have a problem looking less than perfect to your children, I would ask you to look at what you are role modeling with that behavior. Pretending to be perfect is a heavy burden to carry around. Wouldn't it be better to role model, how to ask for help?

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