

**Parenting as a Team:
"That's Not How I Was Raised!"**

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ADAM by Brian Basset



The Myth of the Ideal Parent

- NO one ideal parent
- Each parent is different
- Upbringing; culture
- We *LEARN* how to be a parent
- Each child is different
- Each family is new

Consistency & Differences

Consistency=	Differences=
Clear expectations	Multiple models
Predictability	Flexibility
Faster learning	Problem-solving
Security	Enrichment

When Differences Create Problems



- Chronic tension & bad feelings
- We feel undermined or devalued

When Differences Create Problems



- Child in the middle--loyalty binds
- Child success in manipulating caregivers increases bad feelings
- A few children need EXTRA consistency

**For *MOST* children:
It's okay that different people
have different rules.**

What Makes a Good Team?



What Makes a Good Team?

- Shared goals
- Different abilities
- Use each other's strengths
- Commitment to work together to solve problems & meet goals

What Children Need

- Seeing us care about each other
- Commitment to working together
 - We stay involved
 - We support each other
 - We work together to solve problems
- Compatibility on core values & basic safety

Goals & Strengths Exercise

- What are your goals as a parent?
- What kind of person do you hope your child will become?
- Your unique strengths as a parent?
- Your partner's unique strengths as a parent?



“How I Was Raised” Exercise

- **Plan a time to talk**
- **Pick a topic**
- **Take turns:**
 - When you were growing up, how did your family handle this topic?
 - How did you feel about it at the time?
 - How do you feel about it now?
 - What do you appreciate now about how your family handled this topic?
 - What do you want to do differently & why?
- **Acknowledge differences**
- **Identify shared concerns & goals**

Choose Your Battles

- **Is this worth fighting about?**
- **Risk assessment:**
 - Immediate or irreversible harm to child?
 - Major conflict of values?
 - Impact on our relationship?
- **Who cares most about this?**
- **Can I “let it go?”**
- **Can I compromise?**
- **Is this a chance for partner to strengthen relationship with child?**

10 Tips for a Fair Fight

1. **OK to disagree in front of child?**
--It depends
2. **Don't argue when overwhelmed**
--Calm down first
3. **Stay respectful**
4. **Everyone has "good reasons":**
--What are yours? What are your partner's?
5. **Be specific without attacking:**
--What you see that bothers you
--How you feel
--What you would like to happen instead
6. **Stick to the issue**

7. **Problem-solve together:**
--Identify common goals
--Brainstorm new approaches
--Be willing to experiment
8. **Keep children out of the fight:**
--Don't put them in the middle
--Don't let them "divide & conquer"
9. **Let children see you make up**
10. **Create your own family rules**

Our Family Rules For a Fair Fight

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Prevent “Divide & Conquer”


- **Make it clear that we talk to each other & work together:**
“Did you already ask Dad about this?”
“What did he say?”
“OK, I’ll confirm that with him.”
- **Sometimes: consequences**
- **Agree to have different rules:**
“Mom doesn’t like kids sitting on her lap during dinner. It’s OK to ask Dad.”

Calling for Backup

- **What kinds of situations do you prefer to handle on your own?**
- **When do you usually want help from your partner?**
- **What kind of help do you usually want?**
- **What’s your “signal” for asking for help--or asking partner to back off?**

Cherish Your “Team”

Have fun	♥	Listen
Appreciate	♥	Help out
Spend time	♥	Show affection



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RESOURCES

When Parents Disagree and What You Can Do About It, by Ron Taffel.
NY: Guilford Press, 2003.

Practical advice about why parents disagree, and how to deal with disagreements while strengthening relationships.

The Five Love Languages: How To Express Heartfelt Commitment To Your Mate, by Gary Chapman. Chicago, IL: Northfield Pub, 2004.

How to strengthen your relationship with your partner.

Mom’s House, Dad’s House: Making Two Homes for Your Child, by Isolina Ricci. NY: Fireside, 1997.

Thorough guide for separated or divorced households.