

Demanding Children

Contributed by Leslie Karsner

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I have a simple rule for dealing with the children in my life: I never, ever, (shall I say ever once more, for effect?) do what a child demands of me.

Some children have such a sense of entitlement that they view their parents as servants or hand-maidens. They state rather than request what they want (e.g., "You've got to take me to soccer practice tomorrow at 6:00"). Their notion is that their parents' primary role in life is to accommodate their demands.

Parents who permit their children to make such demands on their time and services have allowed the family hierarchy to be turned upside-down. They have abdicated their role as executives of the family and have instead become subordinates of their children.

I recently met with a mother whose fourteen-year-old son told her the previous evening "You need to look over my biology homework to make sure it's right" before going off to play video games. Not only did he demand rather than request her assistance, he didn't have the decency to collaborate with her on the task which was his responsibility.

So, do your children respectfully request your help or do they demand your services? Are the words please and thank you used when

your assistance is requested and offered? Do you expect that they request your service with courtesy? If not, I would strongly encourage you to reconsider your approach. In doing so, you can right the hierarchy of the family and resume your rightful role at its top.

It's a beautiful hot summer day, yet some people just can't get out of bed. Depression is more than just a one day case of the blues. How can you distinguish depression from grief or a bad day and what do you do if you determine that you or someone you love is depressed? Depression vs. Grief Suffering any type of loss, be it a death, break up or even a move from one location to another is bound to bring up feelings of sadness. There may even be crying spells, loss of appetite and an inability to concentrate. While these symptoms can also signal major depression, the intensity and duration distinguish them from a depressive episode. A grief reaction may last several months to a year but one will notice that symptoms diminish with time. With major depression, symptoms stay the same or worsen and there is also a preoccupation with worthlessness, as well as suicidal ideation. There may be physical agitation and a loss or gain of weight. Those who are depressed feel that life is no longer worth living and find no joy in any activity. What to Do? True clinical depression requires treatment. Up to 15% of individuals with severe major Depressive Disorder die by Suicide (DSM IV). If you or someone you know feels depressed, the first step is to see your physician who can prescribe an anti-depressant or refer you to a psychiatrist. In addition, it has been shown that the combination of medication and psycho therapy can improve depressive symptoms in the long term. Depending on the issues, therapy can address family and personal concerns as well as provide ways to modify one's thought process to lessen the potential for future episodes. What else helps? If you are the person who is depressed, it is important to take care of yourself physically. Sleep patterns are often altered so getting enough rest might not be a problem. Rather, it is important to get out of bed regularly and get some exercise. Even a simple walk outside will be helpful in lifting mood. Eating balanced meals is often a challenge since loss of appetite is a symptom yet dehydration and lack of nutrition can worsen depressive symptoms

This book uses an approach called cognitive behavioral therapy that has been proven to help with depression. The title is Mind Over Mood: Changing how you feel by Changing how you think by Greenburg and Padesky. The title is self explanatory. Reading about doing this is much easier than actually changing long standing thought patterns but if you can master the techniques, it can be life altering. Often clients use the book in the course of therapy as it is easier for someone else to notice our less than useful thought patterns.