The Three Cons

CON ONE – BEGGING, BRIBING, WEEPING, WAILING, AND GNASHING OF TEETH

“Oh, please, Mom, please let me go out. I promise I’ll get my bed made tomorrow. I’ll make everybody’s on Friday. Oh, please!”

If we give in, we are saying to our children, “I don’t believe in you, I don’t trust you, and you’re not big enough to handle the consequences everybody else in this household can handle.”

1. Give them a responsibility
2. Give them a reasonable consequence
3. When they blow it – and kids will…
4. Give them a second opportunity to try the first responsibility *AFTER* they have experienced the consequence of blowing it the first time.

CON TWO – ANGER AND AGGRESSION

“You mean old mom. Nobody else on the block has to make the bed. I hate you. This is dumb. This is stupid. How come Maria doesn’t have to make hers?”

If we hook into Con Two, it affects our heart. We get angry back. (Don’t you talk to me like that, don’t you ever talk to your mother like that!”) If we get angry, the kids gets angry, then we get angrier and the kid gets angrier…

When you get angry, the adrenaline rises and shuts off the thinking portion of YOUR brain, not the child’s brain. After you have centered your energy and calmed yourself down, you then will have the opportunity to redirect your child’s energy and give life to learning.

1. Don’t argue.
2. Show her what she has done wrong
3. Give her ownership of her problem
4. Help her find ways of solving it
5. Most important, leave her dignity intact

CON THREE – THE SULK

“I’m not going to do it. You can’t make me do it. I didn’t want to go out anyway; it’s starting to rain. Spank me; it won’t hurt. Send me to my room; I’ll listen to my stereo.”

Normal, healthy kids will sulk for five minutes, gifted kids for ten. If you think you have a severely gifted child, what you actually have is a kid who has learned what a powerful con this is.

Con One we give in to, Con Two we hook in, but Con Three can throw US into a One or Two. “Oh, come on, let me help you; we can get that bed made real quick, and you won’t be late for your game.” or “Wipe that smirk off your face, or I’m going to wipe it off for you!”

The way to deal with Con Three is consistency and assertion. “You may go out as soon as you get your bed made.” Don’t be surprised if your child mocks you, bite your tongue. It is their way of saving face. You don’t need to ignore the comments but you don’t need to empower their comment through your reaction to it. The way you do this is to calmly say, “Yes, that’s right, you may go out as soon as you get your bed made.”

Your child sees that none of their antics are working; you have stuck with the original message, have not given in to begging or bribing, not hooked in to his anger, and not been thrown by his mocking tone of voice.

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By not giving in to the three cons, your kids will begin to understand that you say what you mean, you mean what you say, and you do what you said you were going to do. Your kids are counting on that consistency and structure.