

YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

Words: Tanya Curtis



THE TEAM AT FABIC ARE A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE WHEN IT COMES TO CHILDHOOD BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES. DO YOU HAVE A BURNING QUESTION? EMAIL EDITOR@HAVENMAGAZINE.COM.AU AND KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR THEIR EXPERT ANSWERS.

My husband and I disagree over the kids' rooms. I want their rooms to stay neat/clean. My husband doesn't care and therefore he won't help me manage them. How do we find a happy middle ground? Too frequently we make rules based on making sure our own pictures get met. That is, 'I want that room tidy because 'I' want a tidy house. Or, 'I' am not concerned about a tidy house so there's no need to make others have a tidy house. What if we don't make 'rules' about meeting our own pictures, expectations and/or attachments but rather we base parenting on offering life lessons for all, building a value system that supports all. What if we explain that the purpose of room cleaning is founded on an understanding that offering a clean room to the household brings in elements of decency, respect and consideration for all equally?

What if room cleaning is about supporting the family to live in an environment that embraces all,

with people being brought to the understanding that the mess in one room actually is a quality that all have to live in. Or the love, care and attention to detail that a person brings to their own space is a quality that we offer to all the family to live in together? Thus, the conversation does not become about a rule that must be met, rather it's about supporting the building of values of decency, respect and consideration for all equally - a value that will continue to support any person's future life - work, future households, visiting friends etc.

Can you give me three tips on bettering my children's table manners? The first and likely most important tip is to model the behaviours at the table that you would advocate for. Children are sponges and watch everything, thus always observe your own behaviours at the table and ensure what you are doing is what you would promote for others to do.

The second tip is to bring people to an understanding as to why we are a certain way at the table. Have discussions that support all people to come to the same understanding. For example, while we are at the dinner table, we allow each person to speak and not speak over any person to ensure that all people have a safe environment and feel supported to express themselves.

Lastly, develop a relationship with the words 'intended message' vs 'interpreted message'. The intended message is the message a person thinks they are sending. The interpreted message is the actual message received. Each message is being sent by everything we do and say - and what we don't do and say. Each person responds and/or reacts based on the message they have received. Thus, rather than talking about manners and the table rules etc, have discussions based on how is that behaviour likely to be received by others - negative or positive?

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