

Notes To Dad

by

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Conflict, the mere mention of the word strikes fear in the heart of humankind. Yet, conflict is an inevitable part of every day living, especially in close relationships such as we find in families.

We are all members of a family, it may be adult-child, adult-parent, parent-child or sibling-sibling. However the family is organized there will be inevitable disagreement. Conflict is not something negative that is to be avoided, but something that should be accepted as a natural part of everyday life and essential to productive growth and change, providing it is resolved in a constructive manner.

Conflict is defined as the product or outcome generated when two or more people differ in terms of expectations, desires, and opinions. It can vary from a mild disagreement to the extreme of physical and/or emotional abuse.

Here is an example of a mild form of conflict that my friend shared with me the other day: Dale's (a pseudonym) son was ready to leave for school. As he was going out the door, his father noticed he was wearing a pair of jeans with holes in the knees and the hems frayed and torn, a t-shirt, over which he was wearing his father's flannel shirt that hung to his knees.

Dale feels very strongly that dress influences the behavior of the individual. Therefore, he didn't want his son dressing for school as if he were going out to

clean the barn. He confronted his son on his choice of clothing. You guessed it; his son expressed his difference of opinion.

"What difference does it make what I wear to school. Everyone dresses like this. I'm old enough to wear what I want to."

This is a good example of a typical conflict within a family; however, the degree to which this conflict escalates is dependent upon how skillful my friend is in managing the situation. Dale is a savvy Dad, he chose to deal with the conflict in a constructive manner. They both agreed to discuss the dress code when his son came home from school with the outcome being a negotiated compromise.

My friend's first response could have been saying, "Young man you're not leaving this house until you've changed your clothes," which would have escalated the conflict. His son would have refused to change, leading to yelling, name-calling and the ultimate parental control effort of grounding. Thus, ruining the day for both Father and Son.

It is helpful to think of conflict as a circle. It has a beginning, but if not stopped it has no end, it keeps going around. In the previous example, the school attire was the trigger around which Father and son had a difference of opinion or conflict. Dale confronted Jordon (a pseudonym), his son about his choice of clothing.

Jordon's reaction was an argu-

mentative remark. At this point, Dale has subconsciously had a choice to make. He can evoke an immediate emotional reaction by saying, "You're not leaving this house wearing those clothes!" That choice will accelerate the conflict. His other choice is to control his emotions and not show that he was hurt and angered by Jordon's remark, which will interrupt the conflict cycle.

Dale chose to be a responsible adult controlling his emotions. He made an appointment with Jordon to talk to him that evening about appropriate school attire. By keeping his tone light, his son would not dread the talk that night, when they would discuss the clothing situation.

Rather than becoming discouraged and frustrated, Dale is getting away from the problem and by agreeing on a designated time to reopen the discussion with his son. The time away from the intense and immediate emotions of the conflict allows time for relaxation and reflection; this break will enable both Dale and Jordon to gain new insight and perspective about the issue. The discussion can be reopened with more creative alternatives in mind.

A wise parent realizes conflict is inevitable and will utilize skills to manage it to an agreeable outcome. An equally important lesson in resolving conflict is to manage emotions. Both are critical in stopping the cycle of conflict.

Newest Milk Stars Encourage Kids To Explore Milk Flavors

SquarePants in several new got milk?

Milk Mustache ads launching this spring is an effort to show kids that milk is a lot "cooler" than they may think.

Why Flavored Milk?

Kids too often reach for a can of soda or juice drinks instead of milk. This could be the reason 90 percent of teen-age girls (ages 12-19), 70 percent of preteen girls (ages 6-11) and teen-age boys (ages 12-19) and 60 percent of preteen boys (ages 6-11) do not meet their daily calcium recommendations. Experts are troubled by this statistic because a diet that is calcium deficient may help lead to stress fractures now and osteoporosis later in life. Fortunately, fun milk flavors like chocolate, banana and strawberry offer kids great taste plus a package of nutrients all in one. Drinking at least three glasses of milk a day makes it easy for kids to get the bone-building calcium and other nutrients their growing bodies need.

"Chocolate milk has always been a favorite among kids, and the dairy aisle now offers even more kid-friendly flavors like strawberry and banana. Because flavored milk has the same essential nutrients as regular milk and about half the added sugar found in regular soda and most juice drinks, parents can definitely feel good about stocking up on these nutritious new beverages," said Cindy Weimer, spokesperson for the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program.

Power Up With Milk

When Cartoon Network's The Powerpuff Girls aren't fighting off the bad guys, they power up with milk to grow strong and healthy bones. Their new milk mustache print ad shows Bubbles, Blossom and Buttercup sporting the latest in milk mustache fashion — banana, chocolate and strawberry-flavors. The

ad launched March 13 in Cosmo Girl and copy reads: "Banana, Chocolate and Strawberry milks are tasty and yummy with vitamins and minerals to help you play hard. Once again, the day is saved."

Another "Malcolm in the Middle" Milk Fan

Erik Per Sullivan, Dewey of "Malcolm in the Middle," looks up to big brother Malcolm who recently appeared in a milk mustache ad. And, like most little brothers, Dewey had to have what big brother's having...milk! This month Dewey appears in his own milk mustache ad sporting a chocolate flavored mustache. He wants moms to tell their kids chocolate milk is better for them than soda because milk includes nine essential nutrients growing bodies need. Dewey's ad debuted March 19 in USA Today and Time Magazine with copy that reads: "They'll drink it if they know what's good for them. Chocolate milk has the same nine essential nutrients as regular milk and is a more nutritious treat than soft drinks. Tell your kids. They're all ears."

SpongeBob's Got the Secret to Soaking Up Milk's Nutrients

Nickelodeon's SpongeBob SquarePants is "soaking up" the health benefits of chocolate milk as the latest celebrity to don a milk mustache in the popular got milk?/Milk Mustache campaign. SpongeBob and his starfish friend, Patrick, remind kids how fun it is to drink on chocolate milk mustaches in a new television commercial and print ad. The print ad debuted in March issues of Sports Illustrated for Kids, Disney Adventures and Nickelodeon magazines with the ad copy. "Milk Mustaches don't last long when you're a sponge. Which means I may have to drink another glass of yummy chocolate milk. Or two. Or three. Or four."

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Home Canning Program

BEAVER (Beaver Co.) — In recent years, canning has reemerged as a popular way to preserve food. While it is an excellent way to enjoy your favorite foods throughout the entire year, safe canning methods are important and necessary to protect your family and friends from contracting a foodborne illness.

Penn State Cooperative Extension will be conducting Blue Ribbon Basics for Canners, a program providing tips to successfully can foods and enhance chances of winning the blue ribbon at your local fair. This session will provide safety information and judging criteria for home-canned fruits, vegetables, meats, and pickled products.

The program will be conducted on Apr. 10 at Penn State Beaver in Monaca from 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. To register, call (724) 774-3003.

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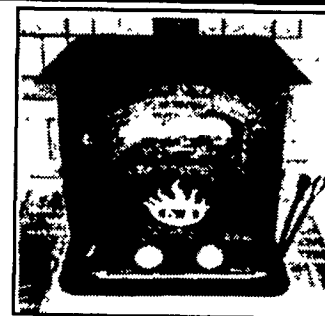
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