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Accepting That You Are the Problem

By Mark Brandenburg MA, CPCC

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Although many of you out there fancy yourselves as warm, loving, and competent fathers, you are sometimes the problem in your relationship with your kids. This may be difficult to hear, but if you make this secret the cornerstone of who you are as a father, you'll increase your chances for success and effectiveness with your kids. Deny that this is ever a problem, and you'll continue to create problems without your knowledge of it. Sound complicated? It's not, just read on.

It's incredibly easy to get to a place of judging your children harshly and blaming them for problems in your family. If you're married, you may also get to the same place with your wife.

Fathers can easily see themselves as hard-working dads who care about their family and do all of the "right" things for them. You may have a hard time seeing your own contribution to any problems your family has.

But there is an important reason that you are the problem, and it's a concept that can be used in any relationship in your life: In any relationship that you're in, the other person really knows how you feel about them! Words don't have to be spoken here. Your loved ones have an intuitive sense about your feelings for them, and they're usually quite accurate.

When you're not feeling good about your son or daughter, when you're feeling they are embarrassing you or aren't living up to "your standards," you're letting them know in some way that they're failing.

When they pick up on those feelings, what you will notice is that you will get more of the very behavior that you are disturbed about. If you see your son as incapable, he will tend to "live down" to your expectation and be incapable. If you see your daughter as weak and dependent, you'll get a good dose of these qualities as well.

Do you see how you're the problem here?

Accepting That You Are the Problem

It's important to note that this initial "seed" of blame will have a tendency to cycle and grow stronger. The more your kids feel blamed for their behavior, the more negative feelings will come your way. In their book, "Leadership and Self-Deception (2000)," the Arbinger Institute talks about how easily we deceive ourselves and blame others, causing our relationships to worsen. Not only do we easily blame others, we are totally unaware of how we contribute to the problem by initiating this blame.

It is not being suggested that you should never have any negative thoughts about your family. These kinds of thoughts will come and go. What's important to remember is that blaming your kids isn't just ineffective, it's destructive!

So why do it?

What will work is to find ways to be more aware of how you're pointing fingers and to take on the responsibility of lessening the impact when you're doing it.

The most important way you can do this is to love your kids unconditionally. You can see them as the wonderful, resourceful, loving people that they are and not as their flaws.

It's also helpful to realize that your ego will often manipulate things so that you can't always see the best in your kids. This effectively prevents you from having to consider your own contribution to the problem. Accepting this as a permanent condition for yourself will allow you to be more aware of the problem when it does surface.

So what can you do when you begin to see your kids or your family as "the problem" and your relationships begin to suffer?

- Be committed to staying aware of this tendency and to get accountability from your wife or others around staying away from it.
- Know the behavioral signs when you are judging others as the problem— you feel irritated, angry, argumentative, etc.
- Don't try to change your kids; they'll know what you're up to and will resist you.
- Always look at what you can do to change—this takes a lot of courage.
- Get support; for a long time fathers have believed that they should be able to do it all on their own. Enlist other fathers or a coach or mentor to help you to be as effective as possible.
- Find a way that you can "practice" the skill of loving your children unconditionally—being loving and supportive when they're not at their best is one way to do this.

Since any of us can remember, we have tended to look at others in our family and believed that they are the "cause" of problems we have.

Accepting That You Are the Problem

There is another way to look that demands more courage and is much more effective.

Have the courage to honestly face the fact that you are often the "problem" in your family.

Your loving relationship with your kids may depend on it.

Mark Brandenburg MA, CPCC, is the author of "25 Secrets of Emotionally Intelligent Fathers" (http://www.markbrandenburg.com/e_book.htm#secrets). For more great tips and action steps for fathers, sign up for his FREE bi-weekly newsletter, "Dads, Don't Fix Your Kids," at <http://www.markbrandenburg.com>

Digging To The Root Of Your Problem

By Selena Richardson

Most people have some aspects of themselves that they would like to change. But how often do you dig deeply to find the root of the problem?

You have to address the issues that need to be changed. Without doing this you will be stuck in a cycle of trying to change but you won't make much progress. Denying that there is something holding you back doesn't make it disappear or magically turn you into who you want to be.

You can't change what you don't accept. So if you have problems accepting what you need to change, you're going to have more problems making that change.

If you want more money in your life and are having problems achieving that you need to dig deeper to find something you may have missed about yourself. Do you have any long held beliefs about money that would prevent you from attracting what you say you want in your life?

Until those beliefs are addressed and accepted you won't be able to attract the extra money into your life. Our thoughts, feelings and beliefs are what shape our reality. If you think you want more money in your life but your beliefs about money don't match what you're thinking and feeling it's going to be difficult to attract it into your life.

There may be times when money will show up for you but you won't have the steady flow that you want to achieve. Not until you accept that you have limiting beliefs about money and then change them.

You say you want to find your soul mate, your other half. But the people who keep showing up in your life lately don't fit the bill. You're starting to wonder if you will ever meet Mr. or Ms. Right. He or she is out there somewhere but do you have any beliefs about yourself that might be holding you back from attracting that perfect mate?

Again, you need to dig deep and search for any limiting beliefs or fears you might have about yourself and/or relationships. Until then know that the perfect relationship will come at the perfect time.

Accepting That You Are the Problem

Remember that the answer always lies within. Resisting and denying aspects of yourself won't get you to where you want to be in life. Only by digging out beliefs that don't serve you well and accepting them as no longer being useful to you can you make a change in a positive direction.

Selena Richardson, coach and editor of *Creative Possibilities*, a free newsletter helping people focus on and reach their goals. Are you ready to create your journey in life? To subscribe,

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information on her upcoming courses and on-going workshops.

Digging To The Root Of Your Problem

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Accepting Change

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