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**"Bad Boys/Good Boys" -- The Pitfalls Of Being An Insensitive Dad**

**By Lee Wise**

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Author: Lee Wise

Copyright date: 2003

Word count: 1139 w/bio

Characters/line: 60

"BAD BOYS/GOOD BOYS"

Avoiding The Pitfalls Of Being An Insensitive Dad

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I WAS AMAZED

I could hardly believe what I was hearing. A father and his son had entered the men's room. While I was washing my hands, I listened as the father wielded a series of demanding and demeaning statements at his son as if they were swords in a battle for ... who knows what?

And all about going to the bathroom quickly!

It was the perfect victory. The enemy (the son) had been slain. The battle was won. The general had summoned his one-man army to do his bidding.

It was also totally and completely ridiculous. There was no consideration for the feelings or physical needs of the young person.

The "bad boy" had won the day -- and the bad boy was not the son.

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It was the son's insensitive dad.

I WAS SADDENED AND ANGRY

This incident occurred while on vacation. I loved vacation except for one aspect: watching fathers deal with their children.

I was sad. And I was angry.

The "interesting" thing was that when I related this

observation to my daughter and son-in-law, they proceeded to share with me \*their\* same discouragement while they were on a recent trip to a theme park.

Their message was the same:

"We had a great time.

The only discouraging thing was seeing dads with their children."

I AGREE: IT'S NOT EASY

I am a father and I would be among the first to declare that raising children is not an easy task.

Parts of it are rough. Real rough.

I would also be quick to admit the times I have failed as a father.

But I do hope that no one has ever said this about me after observing my relationship with either my children or grand-children:

"We saw the most discouraging thing today.

This guy was a jerk. The way he treated those kids was awful.

No respect. No honor.

Only demands and unrealistic expectations. I tell ya, it was sad."

## WE KNOW THERE IS A BETTER WAY

Let me be quick to add: all is not bad. I have seen many loving, caring fathers throughout the years. I \*love\* watching those types of dads relate to their children. It is one of my personal delights in life :)

With that in mind, I am offering a few simple suggestions for a better way: a better way for fathers to relate to their children than the two negative examples I have shared with you.

I will center my suggestions on five themes:

1. Consideration
2. Respect
3. Humility
4. Compassion
5. Love

Two comments as I transition into my suggestions:

\*You will quickly discover that this will not be a long and drawn out discussion of these themes. Enjoy.

\*Many of the points will be shared through using simple "affirmations" -- or descriptive comments if you please. These affirmations will help you personalize what is said.

So...

We have discussed a few of the "bad boy" characteristics.

Let's turn our attention to five characteristics of the "good boys." That is, men who are determined \*not\* to be thought of as "one of those insensitive dads."

## CONSIDERATION

Consideration says...

"I adjust my expectations according to the needs, maturity level and emotional capabilities of the child I am relating

to at the moment."

Because of the important aspects of the statement you just read, I'm going to repeat it and break it down for you.

That's my part.

Yours will be to reflect on each aspect as you read it one more time. Reflect on it through the lens of how you would have liked to be treated as a young-person-in-the-making.

"I adjust

My expectations

According to

The needs,

Maturity level

And emotional capabilities

Of the child

I am relating to

At the moment."

RESPECT

Respect says...

"I see this person entrusted to my care as one who is worthy of my honor, approval and love."

This mental stance provides for me a frame. A frame I wrap around my child \*to begin with.\* The child is worthy of my honor, approval and love -- from the beginning.

It is a part of the package each child should \*sense\* in me from "Day One" so-to-speak.

HUMILITY

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Humility says...

"Because I am still learning, I give my child space and time to learn."

"Because I still fail, I forgive and support my child when he or she fails."

"Because I respond poorly when people are angry with me for reasons I do not understand, I resist all uncontrolled and self-centered anger when dealing with my child."

### COMPASSION

Compassion says...

"I am a 'show and tell' person.

\*I show my child I care.

\*I tell my child I care."

"I strive to be gentle, not harsh."

"I care and my child senses it."

### LOVE

Love says... all of the above.

### A DISCLAIMER

Let me make something perfectly clear: children can -- and do -- hurt their parents.

Good parents. Parents who in a very real sense lay down their lives for their kids and still get kicked in the guts while trying to help their children be happy and succeed in life.

These parents know a special kind of pain. A pain that no one really wants to understand. I salute those parents.

You may be one of them.

So my disclaimer is...

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\*I realize this is a two-sided fence

\*My purpose is not to add guilt to a conscience already plagued by the "Why's" of their child's bad attitudes and behavior -- in spite of hundreds of hours of trying to do what's right.

Rather, if you happen to be one of those parents -- and especially a dad since that is the topic of these comments -- I want you to hear these words:

"I thank you for trying."

I thank you for trying and for the lonely hours you have spent that only you, and possibly your spouse -- and God -- knows about...

The tears. The heartache and the pain that goes on and on as each new report surfaces about some action or attitude your child has displayed."

For those times, tears and heartache -- I reflect to you my appreciation. And I'm sure I represent only one of many voices that would echo the same to you if they could.

Therefore, review these comments and take note of each positive thing you have done. Take a

bow. You deserve it."

Yours for a day filled with beautiful moments in time,

Lee

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Lee is a seminary administrator, has a part-time business at home, and writes two motivational ezines: "A Beautiful Moment In Time" and "Hope For Daily Living." Permission is given to distribute article. This paragraph must be included. Email: [Lee@motivation-for-daily-living.net](mailto:Lee@motivation-for-daily-living.net)  
Link: <http://www.motivation-for-daily-living.net>

Lee is a Seminary Administrator, has a part-time home business, and enjoys writing two family friendly ezines that are motivational in nature.

## **Sublime Drakensberg Experience! The Drakensberg Boys' Choir**

**By Brian Kemp**

Travelling to South Africa? Well, you're going to Cape Town, right? And you want to see if you can get the Big 5? Here's something that's better than Cape Town. Better than the Big 5. And it's the Drakensberg Boys' Choir.

There are quite a few things that are unique or world class in South Africa, and the Drakensberg Boys' Choir is one of them.

Doors opened in 1965 to the first 20 pupils. The dream was of a multi-racial, multi-cultural Choir School to rival the Vienna Boys.

Not in the middle of a history-rich, ancient European city. But in the boondocks. In a beautiful, rural, sparsely populated valley in the Drakensberg Mountains of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. The first and only one of its kind on the continent.

Today the annual intake is 100 boys between 9 and 15, and auditions are held nation-wide.

Can you think of anything more sublime than crisp, mountain air, majestic mountains, azure skies and natural beauty as far as the eye can see, complemented by the pure tones of counter-tenor harmony?

The Drakensberg Boys' Choir tours overseas every year and is internationally recognized as one of the best in the world. And they aren't just holier than thou brats either - after hours they're into rapids tubing, abseiling and hiking in their Drakensberg paradise. They work hard and play hard.

Be prepared for diversity. If you like a good dirge, stay away. The Drakensberg Boys' Choir has very catholic tastes. The first half of the concert is classical. You might hear Bach or Beethoven or Mozart. The second half can be anything. It could be Queen. (Freddie Mercury would have loved it). Or folk, or jazz, or sacred music. Or African harmonies you've never heard before that will bring tears to your eyes.

Come with tissues. And a jersey, for the goosebumps. But whatever you do, BE THERE. The Drakensberg Boys' Choir performs most Wednesdays during term time at 3.30 p.m. There is a world class auditorium on campus.

So if you're coming to South Africa - sure Cape Town's good and you need the Big 5. But you really shouldn't miss this. Sublime Drakensberg experience!

Brian & Janette Kemp own

, a 4-star retreat in the foothills of

the

in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.



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