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Spare the Child, Ditch the Rod

By Mark Brandenburg MA, CPCC

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This philosophy's been around a long time.

In fact, a study done by Zero to Three, a nonprofit child-development group, found that 61 percent of the adults who responded condone spanking as a regular form of punishment. The percentage of parents who actually use spanking is believed to be much higher.

And when my five year old son's behavior went beyond annoying a few days ago, I felt inclined to join the majority and swat him to "teach him a lesson."

Most parents reach this point with their kids. We feel as though we can't take any more of what our kids are dishing out. It usually happens when we're tired, stressed, and overdone.

So what are our choices when we reach this point?

Spanking certainly can take care of things quickly and can temporarily change your kids behavior. But there are many reasons to question the practice of spanking your kids. Here's five of them:

1. Do you really want your kids to be afraid of you?

Kids will sometimes obey more readily when they're afraid of you. Is this what you really want? What happens when they're six feet two and two hundred pounds? Effective parenting is based on love and respect, not fear.

2. Spanking shows your kids that you lack self-control

The huge majority of spanking incidents come when a parent is angry. What is quite clear to your child is this: when my Dad or Mom gets angry, they hit me. And when the same child hits his sister when he gets angry, do you demand that he shows

better self-control?

Something's wrong with this picture. We teach our kids best through our own actions.

3. You may breed resentment and anger in your kids

Kids who are spanked usually don't learn a great deal about "correcting" their misbehavior. They don't usually sit up in their rooms and say, "Gosh, I can really see after getting spanked that I was wrong. I'll do better now." They do think about how angry their Dad or Mom is, and they can develop a good deal of resentment for their parents.

4. Spanking shows your kids that "might makes right"

Adults make mistakes in their lives too, right? Can we use our imaginations and feel what it would be like for someone four times our size to pick us up and swat us on the butt? What would we learn from that? Would we feel any injustice? You can bet that your kids are feeling some.

5. Spanking isn't effective in the long run

Parents who are asked why they spank will report that they use it to "teach their kids a lesson," or so they won't misbehave again. Many kids who are spanked will go underground with their

misbehavior and become more cunning to avoid being caught. (Wouldn't you?) If you're spanking your kids fairly often, doesn't this show that it's not working very well?

I don't believe that kids who are spanked occasionally are ruined for life. Nor do I believe that spanking is necessary to discipline a child. There are countless examples of disciplined and responsible young people who were never spanked by their parents.

Parents who don't spank their kids use time outs, re-directing, or distracting with their kids. They can pick their kids up and let them cool down, or simply leave the area themselves so they don't do something they'd regret later.

While these methods aren't always perfect, they help to form the foundation of a certain kind of household: One in which violence is not "taught" as a means to better behavior.

After all, we live in a world that's filled with violence.

Can't we provide a place for our kids where there isn't any?

Mark Brandenburg MA, CPCC, coaches men to be better fathers and husbands. He is the author of "25 Secrets of Emotionally Intelligent Fathers" <http://www.markbrandenburg.com/father.htm> 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>.

Hanging Curtains? Don't Forget the Rods and Finials!

By Heather Peters

Probably one of the most overlooked features of window are the curtain rods and finials. For a lot of people this is the last thing they think about if they've chosen a curtain that covers most (if not all) of the curtain rod anyway. Who cares what it looks like? Well, someday you may fall in love with a curtain style, such as a button tabbed curtain, that prominently displays the rod underneath. You don't want a \$2 tin stick beside your adorable window treatments, you need something that makes a similar

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statement as the curtains.

This overlooked feature can really bring pizzazz to your décor and needs to complement both the window and the curtains you have chosen, as well as be appropriately functional.

Hardware for window treatments is available in a wide variety of styles. Some curtain rods are designed to be covered by the curtains, while others are best displayed prominently due to their highly decorative nature. If the rod is meant to be featured you could hang the curtains from decorative rings sewn into the top panel. Considering both the curtain and the rod at the same time will save you the disappointment of having pieces that don't complement each other.

Today's Lesson: Do you know what finials are? They are the decorative ends on the curtain rod. I didn't know their official name for several years. I just called them "ends of the curtain rod." They can be wooden, wrought-iron, glass, or plastic.

The most standard types are:

hook

the onion (or ball)

the swirl

the dagger

Finials can range widely in price, from the \$2 plastic pieces to \$100 very heavy fancy pieces. Consider your budget but also know that what you choose will make a certain statement in the room and that statement will last longer than the effects of spending a little extra money. You also have to be sure the finials will fit where you are hanging the curtain. Consider the shape of your window and the molding around it. In some cases there just isn't room for large fancy finials, nor is it always appropriate for the style of curtain you've chosen.

Learn more about what

can do for you at the curtain review. This is the

companion site to

.



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