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


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Curing a Rivalry Problem for a Child of the First Marriage



Nicholas Pollak / June 17, 2012 /

OP-ED (<http://www.thefrontpageonline.com/category/op-ed>)

  Nicholas D. Pollak    A young mother recently asked whether I could help her 11-year-old daughter who was constantly arguing – with her mother, her two sisters and her stepfather.

Further, she was arguing with her father, her stepmother and their children.

Every five days, the poor kid was transferred between homes. Needless to say, there was no consistency between homes in structure and in discipline. Therefore, it was no surprise this sweet, intelligent kid was confused.

She loved her parents and her step-parents. When I delved deeper into her relationship with all of the adults, it was obvious she was a lucky girl. The love was strong from her to them and from them to her.

often causes resentment from the children of the first marriage. They feel their parents don't care for them as much as they did before. It is fair when you realize that the child is being shuttled between homes while the new children get to stay in their own homes 100 percent of the time.

Understanding the Nuances

In the case of the child under discussion, her anger was not severe. We worked with it. Shortly, she was much better, arguing a lot less. Everyone felt relieved because the solution was easy and quick.

Our first move was to ensure that both homes agreed to the same rules for all children. The four parents had to come together to create a structure that was the same in both homes. This can be difficult but the parents cooperated.

One idea that was raised was the tough love option. This would have meant that everything would have been taken from the child's room except for the mattress, one blanket, one change of clothes as well as having the door removed. Although the child's behavior was not that extreme, but she was told it would be kept as an option.

Instead, we used an "earn-as-you-learn" technique. Pretty simple. The child would be given points for performing regular hygiene, schoolwork, chores and demonstrating good behavior.

The child was told there was no chance at negotiation once the program was in place.

How It Worked

She gained points by doing what she was supposed to and lost points by failing to do so. If she lost too many points, the tough love option kicked in. If she did well and gained points after an agreed period, she would be rewarded. Finally she was told she could not negotiate with her parents in regard to the right or wrongs. If she felt something was unfair she was to call me. I would give the final opinion. This takes the burden off the parents, making me the bad guy if necessary.

Among her tasks were cleaning and flossing her teeth twice a day, showering, putting away clothes, picking up after herself, not fighting with siblings, washing dishes, taking out the trash, gaining good grades at school, reading for 20 minutes a day.

Having seen psychiatrists for this problem, the mother told me we had accomplished more in one session than nine months of psychiatric visits. The child herself was happier and far less angry. She still is shuttled from home to home. But she is thriving with the consistency of the new structure.

Eleven was an important age for the child.

For all of us, behaviors are formed between the ages of zero and twelve. Once in place, they stay for a lifetime. Learning the right way means she will have developed good habits and behaviors for life. A smart girl, she understands the benefits of what is happening, learning that to get anywhere requires work.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone, 310.204.3321, or by email at nickpollak@hypnotherapy4you.net (mailto:nickpollak@hypnotherapy4you.net). See my website at www.hypnotherapy4you.net (http://www.hypnotherapy4you.net)



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