

Friday

The Doc Is In . . . and It's You

Today is the day you pull your game plan together. Your mantra:
"I can't wait for that kid to misbehave, because I'm ready!"

The Kickoff

1. As you launch your game plan for having a new kid by Friday, what is the one thing that will be most difficult for you to do—the thing you'll have to stick to your guns about? Why?

2. Knowing you're weak or tend to back down in that area, what can you do now to prepare?

Watch

Watch "Friday—The Doc Is In . . . and It's You" on *Have a New Kid by Friday DVD*.

Discuss the DVD

1. Why is it so important for you as a parent to believe in your kid—and in who he is and the person he is capable of becoming?

2. Why is a “sneak attack” better than explaining the game plan to your kids?

3. “Warnings are disrespectful acts.” Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

4. Pick one situation that occurs frequently in your house (for example, your child not getting up when the alarm goes off or your child mouthing off to you). Answer the following three questions about that behavior.
 - What’s the situation?

Friday

- If you were a shrink, how would you diagnose what's happening?
 - What's the purposive nature of the behavior? In other words, what purpose does the behavior serve?
5. In the situations you know you'll face as you launch your plan, how can you let reality be the teacher? Be specific.
 6. Do you tend to allow "slow leaks" to happen, or are you the type that forces a blowout? Explain.
 7. What benefits are there to forcing a blowout?

8. Answer the following questions about the first situation you know you'll face.

- What would I normally do?

- What is the new, committed me going to do differently?

Taking It Deeper

I'll let you in on a secret. Sometimes you're too good a mother. You're too good a father. You do way too many things for your kids. On Friday, Fun Day, you need to level the playing ground, using the "B doesn't happen until A is completed" principle.

None of us are perfect. Your children need the three-pronged foundation of Acceptance, Belonging, and Competence in order to become healthy, functioning members of society. They also need the character building of truth-telling and encouragement, rather than the false and empty platform of praise. Most of all, they need consistency. They need a mom and/or a dad who will stand up and be a parent. Even if that means being Public Enemy Number One of your kids for a while.

1. Now that you know your particular parenting style, how can you approach the launching of your game plan as an authoritative parent?

Friday

2. Why is consistency your ace in the hole?

3. What do the following passages have to say about the process of teaching and training a child? About the benefits?

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. (Deut. 4:9)

So that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. (Deut. 6:2)

4. If your child is a powerful child, set in his patterns of behavior, what is he likely to do in response to your game plan? How can preparing for this solidify your resolve (and gain you a needed sense of humor?)

Getting Ready for Fun Day

**Want a new kid by Friday?
Here's what it takes, in a Top 10 Countdown style.**

(For a summary, see page 69.)

10. Be 100 percent consistent in your behavior.

Think of it this way: you're trying to forge a new and different path in life. You're retraining your kid—and yourself—to behave differently. Your kid needs to know you mean business.

Okay, I realize that none of us are going to be 100 percent consistent. The point is that you will pursue excellence (but not perfection) through being as consistent as humanly possible.

9. Always follow through on what you say you will do.

No matter the circumstances, what you say is what you do. Never ever back down. Don't be a wuss. It won't gain either you or your child anything. In fact, it will put you in an adversarial position with your child, who will wonder, *Hey, when is she serious, and when isn't she?*

8. Respond, don't react.

Use actions, not words. Flying loose with your words will only gain you trouble. So close your mouth, think, and respond to the situation rather than reacting to it.

7. Count to 10 and ask yourself, "What would my old self do in this situation? What should the new me do?"

Let's say the siblings in your home have been going after each other for nine years. What do you usually say and do? What will the new you do differently?

6. Never threaten your kids.

The problem with threats is that our children know we don't mean them, because we rarely follow through on them. Even more, our threats often don't make sense: "All right, no more candy for life!" "If you don't stop standing on that chair, you're going to break your neck!" Even the youngest child can figure out when there's no action or truth behind the threats.

5. Apologize quickly when you get angry.

As soon as you get angry, you'll be back at square one. I understand that there are triggers—things your kids do that make you angry. But you're the adult in the situation. You are the one who ultimately decides when you get angry. Don't let your children control your moods. An explosion of anger is like throwing up all over your child. The release in tension may feel good temporarily, but look what you've done to your child.

Okay, so you're human. If and when you get angry, apologize quickly. For example: "Honey, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that."

4. Don't give any warnings.

If you warn your child, you're saying, "You're so stupid, I have to tell you twice." Your goal is to get your children to listen once, hear what you have to say, and act on it.

3. Ask yourself, "Whose problem is this?"

Don't own what isn't yours, and don't force the ownership on a sibling either. You need to keep the tennis ball in your child's court. Don't take over what she should be doing herself.

2. Don't think the misbehavior will go away.

I've got news for you. Kids won't stop misbehaving on their own. They gain too much by it. You have to intercede and administer loving and consistent discipline. You as a parent are responsible for informed guidance. In other words, you can't let the prisoners run the asylum.

1. Keep a happy face on, even when you want to . . . do something else.

Let's face it. We all have our days. But remember that you're the adult here.

5. Do a little dreaming. As you forge a new and different path for your relationship with your child, what do you hope to accomplish?

If you stick with the *Have a New Kid by Friday* plan, you'll get there! Having a new kid by Friday isn't rocket science. Any parent can do it. Your kids need you to step up to the plate so life in your home can be the way it should be—a place of love, respect, and accountability.

The key to any action plan is consistency and follow-through. So many parents I've talked to say they've tried everything—spanking, taking away allowances, withholding privileges, etc. They've read all the books and consulted a bunch of experts, and nothing works.

But what they've been trying to do is like a frog jumping from lily pad to lily pad and never landing on any particular one for long. Is it any wonder that both children and parents are exasperated? So much confusion is created by the parents continually "switching the plan" to try to find something that works better.

The Leman strategy is simple. Say it once. Turn your back. Walk away. Let reality be the teacher. Learn to respond rather than react. B doesn't happen until A is completed.

It'll win the game every time. Guaranteed.

Remember

- If your child is thrashing like a fish out of water, you'll know you're on the right track.
- Don't own problems that aren't yours.
- Always follow through on what you say you will do.

Friday

My Game Plan for Today

1. After reading "Have a New Kid by Friday Plan for Success" (Appendix 1, pp. 67-68), which sessions do I want to reread to make sure I've accomplished the goals listed for each one?

2. What mountains do I want to address?

3. How do I usually react to stressful situations with and demands from my kids? How will I respond now?

- For example, a situation that happens over and over in our home is:

- What I usually say:

- How I'll respond now that I can think through the plan in advance:

4. Which of the 10 points in "Getting Ready for Fun Day" (pp. 60–61) pose the greatest challenge to me personally? Why?

5. Get ready, get set . . . go!

Aha Moments

Prayer

- For remaining calm and rational, not owning what isn't mine, and having a sense of humor.
- For the focus and ability to stick with the plan . . . no matter what is slung my way.
- For each member in the group, as we get ready mentally and emotionally for Fun Day.