

Tuesday

Disarming the Dude (or Dudette) with the 'Tude

Attitude, Behavior, and Character are the most important ABCs of all. You can teach them in a way your child will never forget.

The Kickoff

1. Which child do you butt heads with most in your family? Is that child the most like you or the least like you? Explain.

2. Which is more important to you: to say the right things or to do the right things? Or are they both important? Explain.

Watch

Watch "Tuesday—Disarming the Dude (or Dudette) with the 'Tude" on *Have a New Kid by Friday DVD*.

Discuss the DVD

1. Have you ever wondered whether all the things you do with and for your kids will make a difference? How does Dr. Leman's personal story encourage you to view current situations with your kids in a long-term perspective?

2. What are the top three concerns of parents? (Hint: Use the acronym ABC.)

3. Think back to the stories about the picky eater and the child potty training. How do we as parents sometimes up the ante on ourselves by catering too much to our kids?

4. What is "parental poker"? How might you play parental poker in a current situation with your kids?

5. Think about the story of the 11-month-old boy who liked to pull books off the bookshelf. How can you tell the difference between

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disobedience and age-appropriate behavior? Between defiance and simply an accident?

6. Which of the three simple strategies for success do you most need to work on in order to have a new kid by Friday?
- Let reality be the teacher.
 - Learn to respond rather than react.
 - B doesn't happen until A is completed.

What steps might you take today in working on that strategy with your kids?

7. Think about the challenges you face with your kids. Which ones are mountains?
8. Which challenges are molehills—ones that won't matter in the long run?

9. How would you have responded if your teenage son came to the dinner table and announced he was getting an earring? How did Dr. Leman and his wife respond, and why? When should you let your kids dream, and when should you let reality do the talking?

10. Dr. Leman makes the statements, "Kids are always looking up. They're taking emotional notes, spiritual notes, on how we live our lives," and "With character, you are who you are. And don't think kids don't know the difference between who you say you are and who you really are." How do these statements provide perspective for the way you think about your kids and the way you'll respond to the curveballs they throw you?

Taking It Deeper

When it comes to disrespect, how do you know what's normal, what's "just a phase," and what's an attitude to be dealt with?

Almost 100 percent of the time parents *know the difference* between respect and getting dissed, but they choose to ignore it. Why would they do that? Because many parents today want to be their child's friend. But this never works in the long run.

Kids are kids. Just accept the fact that they'll say and do the dumbest, most embarrassing things you can imagine. As 1 Corinthians 13:11 says,

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“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.” Every child will fail and make mistakes. But there’s a big difference between being dumb and exhibiting disrespect.

1. Think back to the last time your child misbehaved (for some of you, that will be just minutes). Ask yourself, “What is the purposive nature of the behavior?” (In other words, why is your child doing what he does? What does he have to gain by such behavior?)
2. How did that behavior make you as a parent feel? (What you think about the situation and the emotions you generate have everything to do with the way you respond to the situation.)
3. As you look back on the situation, would you consider it a mountain (something that will matter in the long run) or a molehill (something that will take care of itself or is a small concern in the grand scheme of what you’re trying to accomplish in your child’s life)? Did your response match appropriately? If so, how? If not, why not?

4. How can asking yourself the three questions—"What is the purposive nature of the behavior?" "How does the behavior make me as a parent feel?" and "Is this situation a mountain or a molehill?"—put any of your child's behaviors (or misbehaviors) in perspective? And perhaps even change your feelings?

5. Attitude is the entrée into a child's head and heart. What your child thinks about herself—how she views herself and what happens to her—speaks loudly through her behavior. What does your child's behavior say about how she views herself right now?

6. What issues have led to the way your child feels about herself? How might you sensitively address them with her? Brainstorm here.

7. Kids catch attitude faster than anything. Take an honest look at your own attitude. Does it mirror your child's in any way? If so, how?

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8. "Character is what really counts. It's who you are when no one is looking." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

9. How can you encourage and reinforce good character traits in your kids in a natural, positive way? What hints does the following verse give? "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut. 6:7).

10. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." What wisdom and encouragement does this provide about the time you as mom or dad spend in the trenches with your kids every day?

Your attitude has everything to do with how you live your life. It has everything to do with how you behave. And it has everything to do with the character you develop. What kids see in you is what they will model in their own lives. As you work together on Attitude, Behavior, and Character, you can work toward a relationship that's mutually satisfying.

Remember

- The key to changing your child's attitude is to change your own.
- Learn to distinguish mountains from molehills.
- Character is not only everything, it's the only thing.

My Game Plan for Today

Answer the following questions:

1. If I'm being honest with myself, what are my attitudes toward my kids?
2. How does my behavior on a daily basis reveal those attitudes?
3. What changes do I need to make in my behavior toward my kids in order for them to want to change how they behave?
4. What kind of character do I want to be known for? How can I get there?

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Aha Moments

Prayer

- For God to reveal any blinders I might be wearing concerning my attitudes and actions.
- For clarity of thought and humility to make changes.
- For each member of the group, as we work toward becoming people of godly character.