

UNIFYING PARENTING STYLES

Couples rarely disagree on anything more than how to parent their children. It is no wonder that this becomes quite an area of conflict for many parents. No two parents were raised alike. Our own parent's disciplinary style is likely to be quite different from our own. Children benefit and parenting becomes easier as we work towards a "happy middle ground" of raising children.

Without realizing it, most common errors made in parenting is when one parent attempts to overcompensate for their partner's strictness by becoming overly lenient, or visa-versa. When this happens, typically the child picks up on the difference and plays one parent against the other. Then chaos ensues. Here are some ways parents can increase their parenting power:

- 1) Discuss differences in upbringing. Remain respectful of your partner's view of parenting even though you may not always agree. Decide what you like about each other's parenting ideas and history and reach an acceptable compromise for parenting your own children,
- 2) Avoid the temptation to overcompensate for your spouse's laxness or strictness.
- 3) Avoid open confrontation about parenting styles when the children are present as this undermines your partner's power. Discussions concerning parenting should be reserved for a time when the kids are not in earshot.
- 4) If your children are older, hold a family meeting, letting your kids in on whatever changes are to be made.
- 5) Cover potential loopholes with your spouse to establish ways to best handle.
- 6) When all else fails and a child asks for permission, ask the child "what did mom (dad) say?"
- 7) Honor your partner's convictions and compromise whenever possible.
- 8) Keep in mind what is best for the child and not get stuck in attempting to gain control for the sake of being in charge.

Once your parenting styles become more unified, parenting becomes easier and your children will be less confused about rules and more compliant.