

Take the Time to be Fair

There is no substitute for spending time with our children or students. You may read articles that speak about “quality time.” It is important that we give our children or students our full attention. But do not think that playing the “full attention” game legitimizes less time.

This was driven home to me when Claire stormed into the office. She felt she had been unfairly treated. I had received a phone call from another school complaining about Claire’s behaviour on the bus the previous afternoon.

Quietly I invited Claire to sit down. It was she against the world. It was not helped by the fact that she was in foster care. She had been shifted from home to home with regularity and had grown strong defence mechanisms to cope with all that.

The story shared with me appeared to have another side as Claire shared her view of what had transpired – and how it had all started. The two stories did not match.

I spent a lot of time that day checking with the bus driver, other students on the bus and her foster carer. Eventually it became clear that in fact it was the students at the other school who had created the wrong story.

Near the end of the day, I went to Claire’s class and asked her to come to my office again. I shared with her what I had been able to find out during the day. I affirmed her for the way she had behaved, not retaliating when things were thrown at her and harsh, inappropriate words were said to her.

Her face beamed. It was as though she had not expected to be believed. I learnt a very valuable lesson that day. As parents and teachers, we must take the

time to get both sides of the story. Sadly we often see a rebound reaction of one student and respond to that alone, while the instigator sits there quietly, smiling inside.

God always takes the time to get perspectives on the event. He even seems to give hardened sinners like Ahab (1 Kings 21:27-29) and Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:12) the benefit of the doubt when they turn to Him in repentance. How can we do any less than make sure we take the time to get the full story in order to be as fair as possible in each situation?

“

As parents and teachers, we must take the time to get both sides of the story. Sadly we often see a rebound reaction of one student and respond to that alone, while the instigator sits there quietly, smiling inside. ”

Ben Martin¹ suggests there are 5 C’s that help parents and teachers be effective in their discipline:

- Clarity – Be clear when you set rights, rules and limits.
- Consistency – Be consistent in enforcing rules.
- Communication – Talk about rules and limits regularly.
- Care – Use support and encouragement in preference to highlighting the negative.
- Create – Instill a sense of social responsibility in your child.

We all want to be fair and see the best development possible in our students and children. We all want to see them make a positive contribution to society. Start by making the investment of time in their lives today.

¹<http://psychcentral.com/lib/the-5-cs-of-effective-discipline-setting-rules-for-children>



This newsletter was created by CIRCLE, a service linking Seventh-day Adventist educators and resources globally. Read archived issues of parent newsletters at circle.adventist.org/browse/?browse_node=756