

I am so the Boss of you

Kathy Buckworth—2013

Introduction

- Come on, admit it. You know you do. But what if we were talking about the boardroom and not the kitchen? What if an employee didn't hand in a report or failed to complete a project on time? Would you do it for them? Doubtful. Would you put a note in their personal file? Likely
- A two-year-old should not be dictating her own bedtime any more than a marketing intern should be determining the "brand voice" of a successful | and established product.
- And yet child-centric parenting models are all the rage, putting forth an idea that the child is equal to the parent. . That's the ideal? Are you kidding me? Be the boss. Embrace being the boss.
- I recently met with an executive at a public relations firm who said one of her staff wanted a task removed from her job description because it "took too long to do, and it was boring." Really? First of all, shut up. Second, who raised this person? Oh wait, we did. We created this monster, and others like her, by making our children believe that they don't have to do anything they really don't want to do. Awesome. And now they're out in the workforce, and they've traded in their overprotective mommies for frustrated supervisors.

STEP ONE EMBRACE THE PHILOSOPHY

- When my son Alex was five years old, he took part in a skating show. In the same show was a friend of his, a little guy with a knack for running his parents around in circles. Minutes before the kids were supposed to take their Teletubby-outfitted selves onto the ice to perform, this mom asked, ever so politely: "Jimmy, would you like to put on your mittens now?" Of course Jimmy said, "No." To which Mom replied, "Well, you have to because the show is about to start." His reply? Wait for it...: "No." You can imagine how this ended. She got angry, and he started crying. She said, "If you don't stop crying and put these mittens on, we're not going to McDonald's afterwards." He kept crying, didn't put the mittens on, and missed the show. And what did his mom and dad do? They took him to McDonald's.
- This is Democratic Parenting at its very worst – a situation in which a child is given an inappropriate amount of power. Why on earth did this mother ask her son to do something he had no choice but to do? It's not like she was about to accept anything but yes.

STEP TWO KNOW THYSELF

- Let's say your mission statement is "Cleanliness at any cost." Kids leaving half-empty milk glasses on the kitchen table? Unmade beds? Shoes in the front hall? A little reminder about what your mission is can work wonders. (It's important to focus on the mission statement here and not the fact that Mom might be a tad anal.) Other examples might include "Tuned to success" (television watching is just fine with this family), "Providing quality meals at affordable prices" (better embrace that tuna casserole, kids), or "Kids are people too!" (The type of people who have to vacuum, do laundry, and sweep every once in a while).

STEP THREE GET YOUR DUCKS IN A ROW

- That your husband took the garbage out. Oh, he has to do it, but he doesn't have to announce it each and every time. But he does;
- Enthusiastic employees take on the smallest of tasks. Not only do they do them exceedingly well, they often find better ways to complete the job, and they do it with a smile on their face. If an employee is constantly whining about his responsibilities, or unable to get his job done, he's in the wrong job. It's as simple as that.

STEP FOUR CONTROL THE CHAOS

- And then (and here's the really important part) stick to your decision. Kids can smell uncertainty a mile away. Give them an inch and you'll be giving them another twenty dollars. It's important for children to know that you are listening to them, and that they have been heard, even if it doesn't alter how you've chosen to deal with the complaint. Because you know one day they're going to say, "You don't remember me telling you that, do you?" and you want to be able to counter it with the advice you gave the first time.'
- Later that afternoon, as he sat on the floor of the grocery store screaming because I wouldn't buy him some fruit gummies, I asked Mr. Freakin' Courtesy why he acted like this with me but obviously not with his teacher. "Because I know you better," he replied. Right. The old familiarity-breeds-contempt rule again. (Well, I was certainly contemptuous of his familiarity with a meltdown.)
- Listen to the way your children speak to other adults and correct them. They are not / their equals, and they shouldn't be allowed to treat them that way.
- Five Tips for Encouraging Healthy Interfamily Relationships
 - Remarks about personal appearance are never allowed particularly regarding things that cannot be changed (size of nose, height, birthmarks, etc.).
 - Questions regarding parentage – or speculations as to the nature of said parents – are discouraged.
 - Any sort of physical touching, pushing, poking, pinching. Smacking, slapping, tripping, kicking, shoving, whacking. Snapping, flicking, picking, or bopping is frowned upon. Even if it occurs "by accident."^
 - No food throwing. Ever.
 - They are not the boss of each other. You are the boss of them. Ergo, they can't boss each other around. Put a stop to it, early and often.

STEP FIVE GET ORGANIZED

STEP SIX MANAGE THE MESSAGE

- "My children are little lambs/angels/rays of sunshine/ darlings/365-day-a-year-Valentines." In my experience. There's a reason Mom or Dad is spouting off like this. Their kids are just as rotten as everyone else's, but they think if they polish up the apple a bit, you might a) feel jealous or b) make the mistake of inviting their kids over to play so she can go out. Don't fall for it.
- "My kids never fight" or "They're each other's best friend." I'm only going to say this once: all siblings fight.

- “Well, I just won’t let them be assholes when they’re teenagers.” This statement can only be made by parents who have zero experience in raising teenagers, most likely when their child is still in utero or, at a minimum, not past the age of cuteness (about six months).
- Bill Cosby claims that the ^first law of advertising is to avoid concrete promises and cultivate the “delightfully” vague. That’s funny, Bill, because the first law in parenting is also to avoid the concrete promise (“I swear I’ll come and play that video game in five minutes”) and cultivate the delightfully vague (“I’ll be there as soon as I can)
- If you resent these other moms, ask yourself why. Do you think she’s neglecting her kids by taking an extra twenty minutes to look good? Is she showing off^? Narcissistic? Trying to impress the teacher? Maybe she’s just taking care of herself first sometimes. Isn’t that something we should all try to do? Sometimes? What’s the message she’s sending?

STEP SEVEN Know WHERE YOU MEED HELP

- There comes a time in every boss’s life when a universal truth must be faced. Some bosses – the good ones – learn and accept this truth early on, and their lives are better for it. For others, the realization is slow to come, and some pain and suffering may occur as a result. So what is this truth? What is the secret to sane and rational boss-hood? It’s so simple it’s almost obvious: you cannot do it all. You. Just. Can’t.
- Do you need to say it again? The sooner you realize the essential, rational, logical brilliance of this statement, the better off you’ll be. Moms are the best at trying to do it all, and the worst at blaming themselves when it isn’t all done. All the time. So listen up. Of course you’ll still have a to-do list that’s a mile long, but you’ve now given yourself permission to get some help with that list.
- On the contrary, the idea here is to take a few things off. How? By asking yourself if that thing a) really needs to be done or b) really needs to be done loo percent, exactly, perfectly. What I’m talking about here is a quick foray into the world of quality control, followed by a lesson or three on the art of lowering your expectations.
- Here’s a good example. I have very low standards when it comes to keeping my house clean. While I don’t (really) think I’m at risk of being profiled on Hoarders, I also don’t have an issue with:
- But ask yourself this: is it really a weakness or is it a brilliant management tactic?

STEP EIGHT HAVE FUN WITH IT

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