

Monday

Where Did They All Come From?

Why do your kids do what they do—and continue to do it? Here's the secret you need to know.

The Kickoff

1. What is your number one challenge with your child right now?
2. How does your current response to that challenge impact your relationship with your child? What would you like your relationship to be like?

Watch

Watch "Monday—Where Did They All Come From?" on *Have a New Kid by Friday* DVD.

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Discuss the DVD

1. If you have more than one child in your family, what are the things that they fight about most?

2. What are the specific techniques kids use to ramp up the battle between them?

3. How does learning that fighting is an act of cooperation (it takes two) change your perspective on how to respond to sibling rivalry? In what practical ways can you keep the ball of responsibility firmly in the squabbling children's court?

4. When do kids tend to have major meltdowns, like the four-year-old in the scene on the DVD who decided he wanted a treat?

5. When you identify a child's trigger point, how can you effectively throw him or her a curveball and provide a teachable moment?
6. Attention, power, and revenge are the three reasons a child will misbehave. Which one of these is best demonstrated by the four-year-old in the DVD? Why do you think that?
7. Why is it important for children to get attention—any kind of attention—whether positive or negative?
8. If you had to wake your child up and endure power struggles every morning, would you do what Dr. Leman suggested? Why or why not? What else would you try?

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9. How can realizing that children are creatures of habit help you form game plans for success in changing their behavior?

Taking It Deeper

Why is it these days so many children diss their parents—and get away with it? And why are so many parents caught in the roles of threatening and cajoling and never getting anywhere?

It all comes down to who is really in charge of your family. Is it you or your child?

1. What is more important to you—to be your child's friend or to be their parent? Be honest. Explain.
2. Every child has a predictable strategy. In the daily game of trial and error, designed to get the best of you, he's motivated to win because then you'll do anything he says. That means if he tries something and it works, he'll try it again. But he'll ramp up the efforts a little. How have you seen this truth play out in your own home? Give an example of a recent real-life scene.

3. The esteemed psychiatrist Alfred Adler talked about the “purposive nature of the behavior.” What proof do you see that when your child misbehaves, she’s doing it to get your attention?

4. What are some ways to give your child attention for positive things he does?

5. Do you ever win in a power struggle with your child? Why or why not? Which of you has the most to lose? Explain.

6. What do the following Scriptures say about the roles that God gives to children? To parents?

Children, obey your parents; this is the right thing to do because God has placed them in authority over you. Honor your father and mother. This is the first of God’s Ten Commandments that ends with a promise. And this is the promise: that if you honor your father and mother, yours will be a long life, full of blessing. (Eph. 6:1–3 TLB)

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Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD. (Ps. 34:11)

7. Do you consider always telling a child what to do and making choices on her behalf disrespectful of her? Why or why not?
8. Why does asking questions sometimes backfire?
9. Go back to what you wrote or shared about your number one challenge with your child right now. How might you use the following principles to help with that situation?
 - Say it once.
 - Turn your back.
 - Walk away.

10. What proof do you see in your own children that they are creatures of habit? (For example, some night when you're tucking in one of your children, just leave out one part of the routine and watch your kid turn into Judge Judy: "Mommy, you forgot to rub my chin with my blankie. . .") How might you use that truth of human nature in forming your game plan of having a new kid by Friday?

Parent, it's time for you to step up to the plate. Your child needs to know that you mean business—what you say is what you will do. You will not be dissed, and if you are, there will be consequences. Immediate consequences. And you will not be talked out of them.

Today's children need guidance. They need accountability. They need to be taught that there are consequences for their actions (or their inactions).

Remember

- Kids do what they do because they've gotten away with it.
- When you choose to do battle with your child, you'll never win.
- Say it once, turn your back, and walk away.

My Game Plan for Today

1. Observe what's going on in my house.

My notes:

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2. Think about things that I want to change.

My notes:

3. Decide to take the bull by the horns.

My ideas:

4. Expect great things to happen.

My dreams:

Aha Moments

Prayer

- For the courage to step up and be a parent, even when it's difficult.
- For the reminder not to follow my feelings (guilt, anger, etc.) but to choose my actions wisely.
- For my group members, as we uphold each other in accountability.