

PARENTING TIPS

Let Children Learn From Life

Parents can sometimes accomplish more by allowing life to be the teacher. We all want our children to grow up to be wise. Wisdom sometimes means that kids struggle with life by themselves and then come out victorious. In order for this to take place, however, parents must give up the role of problem solver and take on the role of coach or counselor.

It's a challenge sometimes to know when to solve problems for children and when to let them struggle. We don't like to see our children frustrated or suffering. Sometimes though we, as parents, suffer more just watching our children deal with life. One mom said, "I can't stand to watch my four-year-old tie his shoe. I just want to grab it and say, 'Here, let me do it.'" But allowing our children to struggle through a problem to a solution or experience the consequences of foolishness often results in more effective learning than we can produce otherwise.

We can't abandon our children though. When undue frustration builds or a situation becomes dangerous, we need to step in and help. Stepping in as a counselor or coach is the best way. Jesus used this approach with his disciples. He allowed Peter to walk on the water and fall but was close by to pick him up again. When the disciples failed at healing the epileptic boy, Jesus taught them a more complete way.

Some of the most valuable lessons come from experience. If parents can make the switch from rescuer to coach, children will learn more and develop wisdom. So the next time you see your child struggling, put on the coach's hat and watch learning take place.

For more practical ideas for working with your family, consider the book, [Home Improvement, The Parenting Book You Can Read to Your Kids](#) by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.