

Peak at Parenting Why peaks are important

For those of you who have been reading my articles for a while, it should come as no surprise that I think parenting is one tough job. Even with a parenting toolbox full of creative ideas, it's not always easy to stay calm enough to use them and there's never any guarantee the tool we've chosen will work. I think part of the problem might be that our kids haven't read the scripts – then, when they are being unreasonable despite our clear attempts to do 'what's best' – we lose it! The other part of the problem is that we tend to grab the same tools over and over even though we know that method hasn't worked in the past. We get the same results and then tell our friends, "my son/daughter just doesn't get it – we fight about the same thing day after day – he'll never learn."

The truth is there are very few (if any) parents who can say they manage to deal with every situation in a calm, clear, and constructive way. We all have our moments (peaks if you will) when we shine at parenting, we also all have our moments when we don't. It's when those non-shiny moments become the regular flavour of the day that most of us recognize something needs to be done.

This is interesting because what we're saying is that when things get bad we'll seek out help. In theory that sounds reasonable - if it ain't broke don't fix it! But what if it was our car that was 'misbehaving'? Let's say every couple of weeks the car stalls for no apparent reason and smells like it's burning. When this happens, the car typically starts again after 5 minutes, the smell disappears and all is fine for a couple more weeks. How many people might decide to get this situation checked out before reaching the day when it won't start again or the burning smell has become an actual fire? Now I know some of you are saying you would wait - no time, no money, don't believe it's a problem, might be your reasons. Well let's do another analogy... Let's say you are building a house when a huge storm hits... do you try to get everything done (besides the critical cover ups) during the major storm that's tearing down everything you put up... or do you wait for a break in the weather and get as much done as possible during that time? Given the choice most of us can see the logic – let's make hay while the sun shines.

Parenting, like so many things in nature, works in cycles of peaks and valleys. So the question becomes do we take the time while things are good (during the peaks) to learn new ideas, put supports in place and really build our relationship with our child? Or, do we wait for the storm to hit (the valley) to do something about it? Only you can answer that question for your family and in the end it will be you who feels the strongest effects. Parenting is not always a walk in the park... but maybe on days when it is, we can take advantage and make some small adjustments to help us be ready for whatever might be hiding over the next hilltop. In the meantime let's enjoy those peaks!

By taking advantage of the peak times and working to build a loving, supportive and open relationship with our child(ren), we will have shorter valleys and it will be much easier to deal with things when storm clouds do roll in.

- Take note of what your child was like at 2 – 3 years old and making his/her first moves toward independence. Many people find similar behaviours (only with a much bigger child) when their kids move into their teens. Do you have the tools you will need to handle this?
- Take stock of your parenting toolbox. Ask yourself, "How often do I use my parenting power to get things done? Do I have a variety of other things to try and am I practicing using different ideas?" If you are constantly using your 'power' it's time to learn some alternatives.
- Self control is taught best through role modeling. Really focus on the one thing you can control – yourself - and practice this in every aspect of your life. Getting control of your 'inner beast' is a positive and beneficial move no matter what your reason is for doing it.

Debbie Pokornik is the owner of empowering NRG. She is the author of *Peak at Parenting; Natural, Realistic Guidance for the Busy Parent* (releasing late 2009) and believes all parents can use support at some point in their parenting experience. For other great parenting tips or to book Debbie for keynotes/workshops, go to <http://empoweringnrg.com>