

# *Marriage is a Four-Letter Word*

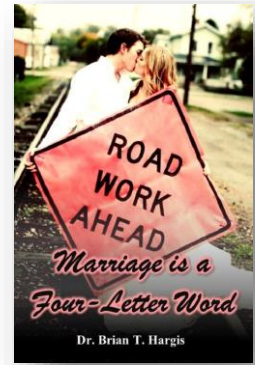
by Dr. Brian Hargis

## CHAPTER 9: Reasonable Rules for Raising Rug Rats

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### FORCING A SQUARE PEG IN A ROUND HOLE

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Too often parents push their children into sports or hobbies that their children have no interest in. It's proper to positively influence, train and nudge them along gently, but understand that your children have a different personality than you do. You like mushrooms, they like carrots. You enjoy basketball and they like swimming. You like landscaping, they like bugs. You golf, and they think it's boring. You use a blackberry and they want an Android. Different doesn't mean "wrong," it simply means different.

Let your kids be kids and help them develop their own identities, desires, likes and dislikes. Enjoy them where they are young and be involved in their developmental growth! Teach them to enjoy the life and talents that God gave them, even if they are different from yours.



*"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."* James 1:17

If your daughter wants to try out for T-ball instead of the school spelling-b, allow her. If your son wants to play in the music band instead of playing football, encourage him. If your teen wants to be a Junior Usher or sing in the choir, enable them. If they'd like to be a

Boy Scout and you'd rather not sleep outside in a tent, put aside your comforts and do it together. Don't try to force them into your one-size-cookie-cutter mold because it may only backfire on you leaving a trail of resentment and strife.

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Ritchie Moody, a close friend of mine, was a fantastic left-handed baseball pitcher out of Oklahoma State, pitching the college world series in 1991. He was drafted by the Texas Rangers shortly thereafter, an era when Nolan Ryan was still smokin' 96 mph fastballs!

After several years and a few shoulder surgeries later, he had to retire early. He moved back to his home state of Ohio and began coaching baseball and giving private lessons.



As his son grew, Ritchie naturally steered him towards baseball. Baseball, baseball, baseball. It was eat, drink, sleep and live baseball. Shockingly, the day came when his son quit baseball. It simply wasn't something that interested him any longer.

One night on Ritchie's driveway we were shooting hoops and he opened to me privately about his feelings. "How could my son not want to play baseball?" He remarked. I could sense the hurt in his voice. "Let him go Ritchie," I said. "You can't force him to play baseball when his hearts not in it. He's not you. Let him figure things out on his own and he'll probably come back around."

A few years passed, and his son matured into a teen and decided to play baseball—all on his own. Amazingly, the kid has an arm like his father. Later still, his son took up the electric guitar and found out that he has talents that his father never had.

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The moral is this—be careful trying to force your children to become what you did or didn't become. Don't try to make them the super athlete, soldier, doctor, lawyer or preacher you weren't. They have their own ideas, dreams and desires, so let them choose on their own. Encourage them for the right things, guide them, lead them, give them a nudge every now and then...but don't force them.

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For more of Chapter 9: **Reasonable Rules for Raising Rug Rats**

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