



Can your kids confide in you?

Do you have angry outbursts?

Angry outbursts from parents are one of the main reasons kids don't feel like confiding in them. And besides being frightening, and damaging relationships with your kids, angry outbursts have been shown to shorten your life.



A large study at Johns Hopkins University showed that young men who quickly react

to stress with anger have three times the normal risk of developing premature heart disease. Also, these men were five times more likely than men who were calmer to have an early heart attack, even if they didn't have a family history of heart disease!

Another recent study asked a group of teens and young adult women to anonymously identify why they wouldn't confide in their fathers. The reasons:

- "He would blow up."
- "His reaction. I'm scared about his response."
- "He would start yelling at me."
- "I'm afraid of what he will do."
- "He will reject me."
- "He will freak out."

In the case of many fathers, impatience and anger surface when they're faced with situations that feel "out of control." Men feel most comfortable when there's a sense of control. When they're at work, they feel comfort from a familiar atmosphere that stresses a "bottom line mentality." At home, this mentality fails miserably, because it doesn't address the question that's really important for families: **"What does my family need?"**



Parents with a "bottom line mentality," and a need for control, often find themselves struggling with their patience and anger.

And if they want to avoid angry outbursts that will distance them from their kids and shorten their lives, they should consider the following steps before they start talking:

- Take responsibility for your anger. Nobody causes you to be angry except you. Accept this without compromise.
- Prepare well with your kids. Do your best to avoid situations that stress everyone. Start preparing your kids early to get them out the door, and make sure you give them warnings, so you don't take them by surprise.
- Find someone whom you're accountable to for your anger. This can be your spouse, or it can even be your child. They'll help you to stay aware of it, and they'll help you remember the steps.
- Become more aware of the physiological signs of your anger-mind racing, sweaty palms, etc. Speak up when you feel these signs. "I'm beginning to feel angry," is a great thing to say to increase control of your anger. Make this part of your "plan" to reduce your anger.
- Determine what your needs are. Think about it - breathe - name your need.
- Find the do behind the don't. Angry people often focus on the behaviour they want the other person to stop. Focus on what you want not what you don't want.
- Think of a clear action request. Start with "would you agree to.....". Not a tell or a command.
- Think about the other person's feelings and needs.
- Now start talking. Don't blame or criticise.
- Continue the respectful communication dance until everyone's needs are met through actions everyone agrees to take.

Source: Mark Brandenburg - Dad's Don't Fix Your Kids

"A coach is someone who tells you what you don't want to hear, who has you see what you don't want to see, so you can be everything you ever wanted to be."

Tom Ladry