



An Iron Hand In A Velvet Glove

Oh, what challenges we have as parents trying to find the right fit for our parenting style. If we come down too strong on an issue, we think perhaps our need for control is bubbling over. If we ignore a problem or allow bad behavior to get its way, maybe we've given our power away. When we vacillate between an authoritarian and permissive style, our children flounder under the inconsistencies. Many of us are plagued with guilt as we over-react and then back down in dealing with our children.

How can we be both kind and firm?

First we need to act instead of react to situations. When we are involved in a conflicted situation, we need to stop, step back, observe and think before we act.

What do we really want our children to learn from our handling of a situation?

To be bossy, look for blame and learn punishment as a teaching tool?

Do we want our children to think that they are the center of the universe and nobody else's needs should be considered?

When we step back, observe and think we find common ground and solutions instead of fault, and realize that we, as parent leaders, are the ones that need to change first in order for our children to change. This takes some inner resolve.

After we have come up with a solution, we need to get over our past mistakes.

Make your parenting a guilt free zone.

The past is done and we shouldn't spend anytime about the shoulda-beens, coulda-beens, mighta-beens.

We make the best decision with the information we have. If we use the power of love in our decision-making instead of succumbing to the power of guilt, we give those around us, as well as ourselves, permission to make mistakes, to learn from those mistakes, and to learn to be compassionate. Not permissive. Compassionate.

When we are kind and firm our children understand that they are part of a family where power is shared. Our children understand that there are boundaries but those boundaries can be enlarged with learning skills and accepting responsibility. When we find the right balance of kind and firm we delight in truly understanding the unique personalities of our children. With our loving guidance our children trust us to try to make the best decisions we can for our families. Our children grow into capable, caring adults when we trust them to learn and grow from their lives' lessons—their accidents, mistakes, along with accomplishments.

As parents we take one step at a time, day by day, acting instead of reacting, expressing love instead of guilt or fear, and seeing learning opportunities in situations where permissiveness might lead to overprotection.

With the balance of kindness and firmness we can walk hand in hand with our children, wearing a soft velvet glove on a strong, yet loving hand.