



How to Get Kids to Behave: The Manual that was Supposed to Come with Kids

Richard O'Keef

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When I was a young parent, I had a reoccurring thought about being a parent. It went something like this: “What did I get myself into? This is not what I signed up for. If things don’t change, I’m in trouble and so are my kids.” You see, I figured that love and common sense and natural instincts were all I needed to raise children.

I had observed other parents struggling to “control” their children, and I vowed that would never be me. My kids were going to be cooperative. You can guess what happened. Reality is a hard master. I came to understand and appreciate how those struggling parents felt as I joined their ranks.

I was frustrated by my children’s behavior. I thought if I just hung in there and endured, things would change. Then something happened to make me realize that if my kids were going to change, I would have to change first.

One evening my wife, my two daughters (ages 3 and 4) and I were sitting down to dinner. We were having the usual drama and chaos that accompanied our meals, but for some reason I wasn’t in the mood for it. One of my daughters complained that she didn’t get as much mashed potatoes as her sister. Something in me snapped. I put my hand into the bowl of mashed potatoes, scooped out a handful, and threw it down on her plate with a splat. I said, “Happy now?” My daughter cried and I angrily left the table. Up until now I was a nice guy, kind and considerate. My daughters had made me into a monster. I knew something had to change, and soon, before something worse happened.

My wife and I decided to buy a book on parenting. You’d think that would be a pretty easy task, but there were so many books, it was confusing. Did they all teach the same thing or were they all different? If they all taught the same thing, then why so many? If they were all different, then which one was the best? We finally settled on a book called *Children the Challenge*, by Rudolf Dreikurs. It was green so we called it the “Green Book”. My wife and I would constantly ask each other, “What does the Green Book have to say about that?” It was a long book by our standards, and took us a while to read. But over the following months and years it gave us direction, something we had gone without for too long.

Fast forward 25 years. I have six children now, all grown up, some having started families of their own. One day, another life-changing moment occurred. I will not tell you about it here, but my book begins with that story. This experience caused me to remember back to the days when I was at the end of my rope as a parent. It made me wonder how many parents are in the same boat that I was in – wanting to make a change, but not knowing where to begin.

I thought if I were in their shoes, here is what I would want. I would want a book that promises to bring out the best in me and my children. I would want that book to be short and to the point, easy to understand and easy to do. I would want that book to contain the best parts out of the best books.

So I set out to create such a book. I studied what the best experts had to say about raising children. I combed through thousands of pages of parenting books so parents wouldn’t have to – over 40 books. I selected what I considered to be the essential information all parents needed to know – the best parts from the best books. I

simplified the information to make it easy to understand and easy to do. Then I condensed the information into a short book that only takes a couple of hours to read.

This is the book I wish I had when I was a young parent. Now it can be yours.

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