

Parenting Tip

Parents: Try Thinking Beyond Punishment

By John Rosemond

The human desire for short-term gratification is satisfied by jet planes that travel coast-to-coast in four hours, fast food outlets, and all manner of new and ever-faster electronic technologies. Because people are no longer accustomed to waiting patiently, they tend to become quickly frustrated when natural processes can't be circumvented and they are forced to wait for a solution to "mature."

When that happens, people are inclined to begin unwittingly engaging in self-defeating behavior.

Over the past few decades, I've noticed this becoming more and more typical of today's parents concerning disciplinary solutions. In other words, when a parent's disciplinary response to a specific misbehavior doesn't result in a near-instant cure, the parent becomes frustrated and begins zigging and zagging all over the parenting playing field, trying one approach after another, accomplishing nothing.

Some of these parents eventually talk to me. They tell me they've tried "everything." That's the problem, of course. When I ask one of them to describe the history of their approach to the problem in question, it's almost inevitable that at least one of the strategies - or some variation thereof - probably would have borne fruit had the parents stuck to their proverbial guns.

Then there's the problem of the magnitude of the consequences that today's parents use. Most of them try to stop charging elephants with flyswatters (e.g., 4-year-old hits his mother and receives ten minutes in time-out). When I propose using the disciplinary equivalent of an atom bomb (e.g., said child spends a month in his room, except for absolutely necessary "paroles," with early bedtime to relieve his boredom) the common reaction is momentary speechlessness, then "Isn't that, well, rather harsh?"

Not even close. He has a nice room, doesn't he? Ultimately, it is in the best interest of a child that misbehavior be stopped as quickly as possible.

The best research consistently says that the most obedient children are also the happiest. That makes sense, especially given that in adulthood, disobedient and disgruntled go hand-in-glove.

I tell parents to think beyond punishment.

Merely punishing a given misbehavior often does nothing but minimize it, therefore requiring ongoing punishment.

Think instead of eliminating the misbehavior - to use your great-grandmother's parenting vernacular, of "nipping it in the bud." The first time a given misbehavior occurs, respond with a consequence that is "atomic" - one that sends a calm, determined message of complete intolerance. Stop fighting one small skirmish after another. Use the A-bomb right off the bat. Then, wait. Sometimes, even A-bombs take time to work their magic.

Several weeks ago, a parent wrote to tell me that after eight years of almost complete restriction - almost no social life or any other privileges - her son, now a sophomore in high school, is finally making the grades he was capable of making all along (and is a much happier camper as a result). Eight years, during which time he complained constantly to his parents that their expectations were too high and that nothing he did would ever satisfy them, all the while performing well below par in the attempt to prove his case. To their inestimable credit, they stayed the course, all the while taking lots of flak from their peers, many of whom, I'd venture, are experts at flailing away with flyswatters.

Their story simply proves that there is no such thing as McDiscipline.

Marriage Tip

No. 76

10 Ways to Ruin Your Relationship

By Susan B. Weir

Ever feel that your relationship suffers from a unique brand of frustration, tension, distance, or any number of other troubling feelings? The reality is, there is struggle in every romance. "If you are experiencing disillusionment, well, join the human race," says relationship expert Helen LaKelly Hunt. She and her husband, Harville Hendrix, PhD, are co-creators of Imago Relationship Therapy and have been helping couples for more than 30 years.

Hendrix, author of the bestselling book **Getting the Love You Want**, started examining the question, "why do couples fight" in the late 1970s. After studying and working with thousands of couples, he and LaKelly Hunt have found that there are 10 common bad habits that couples engage in that make relationships miserable and can lead to a breakup or divorce.

Avoid a ruined relationship by steering clear of these 10 bad habits:

- 1. Being critical.** Even "constructive" criticism can make your partner defensive and reduce the feeling of safety in a relationship. Being harsh and judgmental when angry can trigger a "flight or fight response."
- 2. Insisting your partner be exactly the same as you.** Hendrix and LaKelly Hunt say "absolute compatibility" is an express route to a dull relationship. If you insist that your partner have the same feelings and perceptions as you do, it can lead to despair and misery.
- 3. Fleeing from intimacy.** If you habitually avoid being physically or emotionally close with your partner by escaping into work, hobbies, television, or other activities, you risk creating a divide between you and your partner that may become impossible to breach.
- 4. Playing the blame game.** Using "you" language when upset will make your partner put up their defenses. When your goal is to communicate in a way that fosters intimacy, use statements that begin with "I feel" instead.
- 5. Bargaining.** Hendrix and LaKelly Hunt say that both "giving conditionally and receiving cautiously" erode relationships. They warn against doing something for a partner only when you want something in exchange.
- 6. Being casual about romance.** No relationship can be spontaneously joyful forever. Once the initial excitement of a new romance wears off, some couples think their relationship is over and give up trying. They risk missing out on experiencing a deeper kind of love.
- 7. Focusing on the negative.** If you constantly think and talk about your partner's flaws it can amplify your discontent. Hendrix points out that the paradox of most forms of couples therapy is that you spend your sessions complaining about your partner - something that can actually be detrimental to your relationship.
- 8. Refusing to listen.** Thinking you are the right all the time and engaging in a one-way monologue is a great way to end up in a relationship . . . of one, warn LaKelly Hunt and Hendrix.
- 9. Hiding your needs.** If you don't express what you need and want to your partner, you'll constantly feel deprived and frustrated. Hendrix and LaKelly Hunt say it's crucial to share "the things that truly touch your heart."
- 10. Expecting a fairy-tale romance.** Fairy tales are just that and eventually we all have to come down to earth. Demanding the fantasy go on forever prevents your partner from ever being their authentic self and fosters resentment and distance.

Hendrix and LaKelly Hunt know from firsthand experience how hard it is to sustain a genuinely loving commitment. About 15 years ago, after working together and raising five kids, they found themselves on the brink of divorce. Using their own methods, they worked their way back to what they say is a renewed love that feels as genuine as it did 30 years ago. Their most recent book is **Making Marriage Simple: 10 Truths For Changing the Relationship You Have Into the Relationship You Want.**

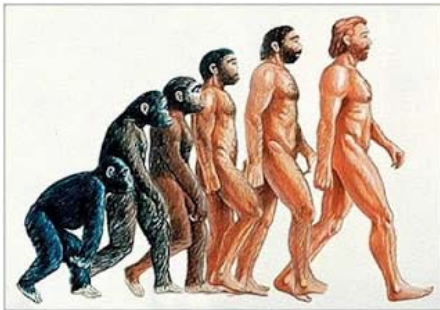
Spiritual Tip

101 Proofs for God: #1 Male and Female

By Jim Stephens

From the website:
www.101ProofsForGod.Com

When people see in their minds a chart of evolution, typically it looks like this:



This shows man evolving from an ape-like creature to a man. However, one extremely important and totally essential part is left out of this picture.

At every single step of the evolutionary process, there must have been a female developing exactly simultaneously alongside the male with the same genetic advancements. Humans cannot mate with monkeys.

If there were to be an "evolution" in the male body, for example, human thumbs, but no simultaneous and corresponding evolution of thumbs in the female body, then thumbs would not likely propagate to the next generation. If it did, would all of the children necessarily have thumbs, or just some of them? Why wouldn't some have thumbs and

some not have them?

Since all of the people in the world have thumbs, then we have to assume that we all descended from that one man and one woman who had thumbs.

Also, why wouldn't there be people around today without thumbs? If some of my ancestors had no thumbs and some of my wife's ancestors had no thumbs, wouldn't there be odds that some of my children would have no thumbs.

(Note: This scenario would also have to hold true for animals and fish or any species with males and females. Obviously it holds true for every organ and muscle and limb of humans.)

As an even more complicated example, when the male develops a penis and sperm, the female must necessarily have to develop a vagina and ovum. Otherwise, what advantage is the penis?

If you study the female human reproductive cycle, there are many changes taking place throughout the month. For example, her vagina is normally toxic for sperm. Only during a few days each month does that change and her vagina actually becomes very hospitable to sperm and a mucous is created with fibers that help the sperm along their way to fertilize the egg. This is a phenomenal development that must have occurred at the time that a man got a penis.

And that's not all. Even if a male body develops a change and some female body develops a corresponding change, they still

have to meet each other and mate successfully. A big "if".

In other words, they have to live in close proximity to each other. They both have to be of child-bearing age. They have to mate. That mating has to produce a male child or a female child that inherits the new advanced trait. Then when that child grows up he or she must also find a mate with the same advanced trait to mate with successfully.

Are you thinking about the odds of all this happening?

I suppose you could assume that the new advanced trait is dominant. Then if any one individual has the mutation, then all of his/her offspring would have it. But isn't that a faith based assertion.

You could also hold onto faith in randomness and believe in very tiny changes taking place over millions of years. But you still have a theory based on faith and not scientific proof. That's not any better "proof" than my proof. And mine is far more elegant. Somehow I'm not able to imagine that such a method produces a viable and compatible penis and vagina system through tiny incremental changes.

Evolution theory has to postulate that any advancement somehow spreads throughout the entire human population of all males and females. In other words, every one of us had an ancestor that had the trait. Either we all descended from a distant male and female couple that had the trait or else all those born without the new trait totally died out and never reproduced.

When the odds of an event A happening are 10% and the odds of a second event B happening are 10%, then what are the odds that both A and B happen? This is calculated by multiplying the odds together. In this case, the odds of both A and B happening are 1%.

Even being extremely generous, I can't imagine the odds of some of the circumstances described above being anywhere in the neighborhood of 10%.

To believe that the above process happened at random without an intelligent creator invisibly guiding the process requires a huge amount of faith, faith in randomness and chaos to produce order and beauty. That's more blind faith than most religious people have.

There must be a God.

My blog (www.101ProofsForGod.com) was inspired by a prayer where I felt God's helplessness against all of the attacks against his existence. Very few believers can adequately defend their faith against the onslaught of atheists and evolutionists. However, modern day science is overflowing with evidence for a creative intelligence far superior to that of all humankind. It's just that most people haven't heard about it. That's what my blog is for. The more scientists investigate any field of research, the closer they get to the undeniable truth that life and the universe did not happen by accident, but was created by an intelligent designer.

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