

Let there be music

by Lisa McKimm



In my work with parents I often talk about the importance of respect in relationships. Whilst most parents agree that it is highly desirable – creating the reality can sometimes be a mission! There are many ways that this can be achieved.

Consider the way we share and then either accept or criticise each other's taste in things. Music for example. I have a friend who admits that he struggles to see any redeeming features in the music that his kids enjoy. Britney, Pink and a host of 'boy bands' simply do not match his own tastes. He has respectfully organised for each of the kids to have a CD player in their bedroom so that they can play their favourites without interruption. However he tends to still fall into the trap of regularly criticising their choices (and hence, their tastes!). 'How can you listen to that technologically enhanced rubbish? It totally manufactured. They can't even sing'.

Listening without criticism can gift a number of things to your children.

Firstly, it will give them the confidence to share their opinions with others. Many adults still have a hard time doing this, for fear of being shot down.

Secondly, it will deepen your bond with your child as they feel the warmth of your unconditional respect for them.

And thirdly, as the communication remains open between parents and child, you will get to learn more about them and take your connection to deeper levels.

Whilst I am not suggesting that you pretend to like something that you don't – it is possible to listen with judgement. I have always tried to do this with my own four kids. They in return have been open to listening to my musical choices. We have learnt a lot from each other in this way. I love the fact that my son introduced me to Nirvana. And that my girls will regularly say to me "there's a new video clip that you're going to love Mum". My daughter's friends are always amazed that she can sing along to all the popular songs from the sixties – which she always attributes to 'Saturday nights when my parent's mates get their guitars out'!

My own Mum introduced me to Tab Hunter, Nat King Cole, Jazz and many 'show tunes'. I love musical theatre. Last week I took three of my kids, and two nephews (age ranges from 10 to 21 years old) to see the Hamilton Operatic production of 'Buddy'. We had a great time! The show was fabulous and caught the entire crowd up in a musical celebration and tribute. I loved the fact that the kids loved it as much as I did. This was a fabulous way to create a lasting family memory, and once again share a musical experience.

This week, whether it means 'getting down to the Wiggles' or listening to something that you've never taken the time to before – hold on the thought that great relationships can be build on such things!

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