

## **Today's mothers are intimidated by their children**

By John Rosemond

Tuesday, September 25, 2012, 2:38pm

One of the greatest ironies of our time: Today's women have inherited from their mothers the freedom to claim authority in the military, corporations, churches, the professions, politics, and higher education, but have been persuaded, largely by their own gender, to all but completely abdicate their authority over their children.

Sixty years ago this month, I entered first grade in Charleston, SC. The class picture shows fifty children. There are no names under the picture save the teacher's, so I only know that fifty kids showed up the day the photo was taken. I am certain that my first grade teacher had fewer problems out of us during the entire school year than today's first grade teacher, with half the number of students and an aide, is having during the first week or two of any given school year. Oh, and by the way, most of us early baby boomers came to grade one not knowing our ABCs, yet by the end of that first school year we were outperforming today's kids (most of whom learn their ABCs at age 3 and have started reading by the time they enter first grade) in every subject. And we continued to do so through college. And our parents did not give us regular help with our homework!

The reason we learned so effectively within such "overcrowded" (and "underfunded") conditions is simple: We came to school having already learned that women possess a natural authority. We had already learned that when a woman said "this is the way it's going to be," that was the way it was going to be. Period. Today's kids do not come to school with these same understandings, and that, not IQ, is what defines a successful student.

Sixty years ago, the American child was afraid of his mother. Oh, and by the way, all the statistics clearly indicate that child mental health was a whole lot better back then than it is now. Being afraid of one's mother (while at the same time secure in her unconditional love) is a good thing for both parties, but especially the child.

Being afraid of one's mother has nothing to do with spanking, by the way. My mother (a single parent during most of my early years) never spanked. I don't even remember her yelling. And yet, I was afraid of her. All she needed to do was look at me a certain way and my spine began tingling.

All too many of today's mothers are afraid of their children. They are intimidated by their children's tantrums, disrespect, disobedience, petulance, and so on. I submit that this, not any other "liberation" issue, is the biggest problem facing women today.

Women once wore their authority over their children like it was the most natural of habits. They no longer do. When they talk to their kids, they bend over, grab their knees, and look like they're

petitioning the king for a favor. And they sound like it too!

"Billy, how about helping Mommy pick up these toys before the real estate agent gets over here, okay? Do you think you can help me with that like a big boy? How about if we do it together, and while we pick them up we can sing the 'I'm Helping Mommy' song!"

And then this same mother complains that her son doesn't obey her. Fancy that!

It's high time America's mothers reclaimed the authority their grandmothers had over their children. They can start by giving instructions in ten words or less, as in "It's time for you to pick up these toys, now." And then, to the inevitable question, saying "Because I said so, that's why."

*Family psychologist John Rosemond answers parents' questions on his web site  
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