

## *Helping Parents Manage Anxious Times*

With Liz Gentry and Dr. Michael Bishop

### **The Goal of Parents is Not**

- To get your kids to be or do what you want them to
- To become what your kids want you to become
- To get your kids to think the way you want them to think
- To think the way they want you to think
- To think, feel, or behave the way your family of origin or your spouse's family wants you to think, feel, or behave
- To think, feel, or behave the way your spouse wants you to think, feel, or behave
- To think what your minister or the wisest person in the world thinks
- To be liked

### **Twenty Ways to Invade Your Child's Boundaries**

For most of us, invasion of boundaries is all too easy. A few examples would be:

1. Tell her what to do when you know she knows what to do
2. Dress her when you know she can dress herself
3. Check his room needlessly
4. Take too much part in school activities
5. Talk about him to his brothers/sisters
6. Talk about her to her friends
7. Worry
8. Hover
9. Make a bigger deal than necessary out of hairstyles and dress codes
10. Think about her more than you do yourself or your relationship with your spouse
11. Ask too many questions
12. Have too many rules
13. Always have to win at games
14. Overschedule him
15. Don't allow any alone time
16. Demand certain friends; prohibit certain others
17. Treat her as if she were younger than she really is
18. Let his achievements determine your sense of emotional well-being
19. Take on her unacceptable behavior as your own problem without letting the natural consequences do their necessary work
20. Make him or her eat everything on the plate

### **Twenty Ways to Allow A Child to Invade Your Boundaries**

1. Answer all questions
2. Ignore kicking or screaming or other unacceptable behavior that is affecting other people

3. Need to always be liked by your kids
4. Need to always rescue
5. Allow children's "divide and conquer" techniques to cause trouble in your marriage
6. Feel you must buy/supply anything asked for whether you can afford it or not
7. Defer to children on making major family decisions
8. Don't lock your bedroom door when you want time alone
9. Worry about your kids when you are out for the evening
10. Lose sleep because of unresolved curfew behavior
11. Allow your children to decide what you think about things
12. Allow your child to sleep in your bed past infancy
13. Be unable to articulate to your kid what it is you really think about important issues
14. Be unable to have fun on a vacation or never go on one without the kids
15. Allow your children to take your things without permission
16. Drop everything on demand
17. Allow a child to interfere with your marriage
18. Allow your child's tantrums to keep you home when you need to go out
19. Never say no to community child-oriented activities you really don't want to do and/or don't have time for
20. Make your kids the center of your life

Gilbert, R. M. (1999). *Connecting with our children*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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