The Art of Gentle Persuasion

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View Motherhood & Fatherhood as an Art

Proverbs 29:18
“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”
“I’d love to homeschool my children, but there are just a couple of them that I couldn’t get along with in that setting.”

“I quite homeschooling because my children would never listen to me. They do so much better with a teacher.”

View Homeschooling as an opportunity to figure out and strengthen your relationship with difficult children & to mold your own character.
What are the greatest things I have ever done?
The overarching goal is not to get our children to do what we want them to do, but to get them to WANT it and CHOOSE it. Thus it takes PERSUASION an not compulsion, fear, or force.
To **PERSUADE** means to

- Influence
- Encourage
- Convince
- Sway
- Urge
- Inspire
- Change
- Impact
- Shape
- Motivate
The art of **PERSUASION** is something we should **STUDY**, **PRACTICE**, and **REFINE**.

How do we do that?
How to study the art.

- Christ is the ultimate example.
  - Patience, long-suffering, not easily provoked, cheerfulness, gratitude, gentleness
  - Woman on the magazine.

- Identify the techniques. Write them down. Study them. Practice them. Without clearly understood goals, we move nowhere.

What are some of the techniques?
Start with yourself.

- Our own minds, bodies, and spirits must be in top form.
- Focus on gaining the traits you want your children to gain.

You don’t have to be perfect!
#1: Study the child.

- Artists study the tiny details of a scene.
- Artists are trained to look for and bring out the beauty in the subject.
Little Men by Louisa May Alcott:

She took down a thick book, which seemed half-full of writing, and opened at a page on which there was one word at the top.

“Why, that’s my name!” cried Nat, looking both surprised and interested.

“Yes; I have a page for each boy. I keep a little account of how he gets on through the week, and Sunday night I show him the record. If it is good I am glad and proud; but, whichever it is, the boys know I want to help them, and they try to do their best for love of me and Father Bhaer.”

“I should think they would,” said Nat, catching a glimpse of Tommy’s name opposite his own, and wondering what was written under it.

Mrs. Bhaer saw his eye on the words, and shook her head, saying, as she turned a leaf, “No, I don’t show my records to any but the one to whom each belongs. I call this my conscience book; and only you and I will ever know what is to be written on the page below your name. Whether you will be pleased or ashamed to read it next Sunday depends on yourself. I think it will be a good report; at any rate, I shall try to make things easy for you in this new place, and shall be quite contented if you keep our few rules, live happily with the boys, and learn something.”

“I’ll try ma’am;” and Nat’s thin face flushed up with the earnestness of his desire to make Mrs. Bhaer “glad and proud,” not “sorry and disappointed.” “It must be a great deal of trouble to write about so many,” he added, as she shut her book with an encouraging pat on the shoulder.

“Not to me, for I really don’t know which I like best, writing or boys,” she said, laughing to see Nat stare with astonishment at the last item. “Yes, I know many people think boys are a nuisance, but that is because they don’t understand them. I do; and I never saw the boy yet whom I could not get on capitally with after I had once found the soft spot in his heart. Bless me, I couldn’t get on at all without my flock of dear, noisy, naughty, harum-scarum little lads, could I, my Teddy?” and Mrs. Bhaer hugged the young rogue, just in time to save the big inkstand from going into his pocket.

Nat, who had never heard anything like this before, really did not know whether Mother Bhaer was a trifle crazy, or the most delightful woman he had ever met. He rather inclined to the latter opinion, in spite of her peculiar tastes, for she had a way of filling up a fellow’s plate before he asked, of laughing at his jokes, gently tweaking him by the ear, or clapping him on the shoulder, that Nat found very engaging.

“Now, I think you would like to go into the school-room and practise some of the hymns we are to sing tonight,” she said, rightly guessing the thing of all others that he wanted to do.
Study the child.

- What are the child’s weaknesses and strengths.
- Pray for the child and pray for direction.
- Become interested in what the child is interested in.
- http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/children/
A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

#2: The way you speak.

- How would you want to be spoken to?
  - Role Play
- Strive to never talk to a child out of anger.
- Never compare to other children.
- Never make threats you won’t follow through with.
- TALK to your children. Be there at their comings and goings. Don’t always be on your devices.
- Get in the habit of sharing things you see, things you read.
- Talk about things you are learning yourself. (Kisses from Katie)
Be positive as often as you can. If you want positive behavior, use positive language.

(Little Lord Fauntelroy.

“I think you must be the best person in the world,” he burst forth at last. “You are always doing good, aren’t you?—and thinking about other people. Dearest says that is the best kind of goodness; not to think about yourself, but to think about other people. That is just the way you are, isn’t it?”

His lordship was so dumfounded to find himself presented in such agreeable colors, that he did not know exactly what to say. He felt that he needed time for reflection. To see each of his ugly, selfish motives changed into a good and generous one by the simplicity of a child was a singular experience . . . you are the kindest man I ever heard of. And you are always thinking of other people, and making them happy and—and I hope when I grow up, I shall be just like you.”

“Just like me!” repeated his lordship. . . .he knew [what] Fauntleroy did not, that . . . there was probably not one person . . . who would for an instant have thought of calling him “good,” or wishing, as this simple-souled little boy had, to be like him. And it was not exactly pleasant to reflect upon, even for a cynical, worldly old man, who had been sufficient unto himself for seventy years and who had never deigned to care what opinion the world held of him so long as it did not interfere with his comfort or entertainment. And the fact was, indeed, that he had never before condescended to reflect upon it at all; and he only did so now because a child had believed him better than he was.”
#3: Listen and Wait with Patience

- agree where you can, and don’t deal with divisive issues until you have created an atmosphere where calm discussion can take place.
- Avoid punishing or trying to give correction when you are angry.
- Patience is a virtue that has to be learned.
#4: Diffusion Techniques

- First evaluate possible problems: tired, hungry, attention-deprived, too much screen time, stress with friends
- Validation - Listen and offer words of understanding and comfort
- Humor (never sarcastic or rude)
  - The Happy Machine, Tickle Cloud, Magic Mommy Hugs, Hammering Nails
- Distraction - Let's open the window and see if we can hear any birds. Can you be my helper? I want to make pudding, and I need someone to stir it with the whisk?
Sample Scenario

Child gets new handwriting book, flips through it and sees he is going to have to learn cursive, he pushes it across the table and says, “I will not learn cursive.”

Options

1. Don’t make him learn cursive.
2. Tell him, “Sorry, you’re going to learn it anyway.”
3. You heave a long, heavy sigh and act downtrodden and defeated.
4. If you have time at the moment: Diffuse, Listen, Validate, Let Calm Down, Understand, Ponder the Issue. If you don’t have time: “I want to help you with your feelings, James, but I have to feed the baby right now. I’ll write this down (in my mind or in a notebook), and we will can work together on this in a little while.”