



## Tyrannical children

Author:

Javier Urrea. Dr. en Psicología con la especialidad de Clínica y Forense. Primer Defensor del Menor de la Comunidad de Madrid. Escritor.

**Translated by** Pablo Ocaña Escolar

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In the middle of a street, in an airport or in a park you can see a child, a small one, who slaps his grandfather when he wants to kiss him.

The grandfather steps back, he is surprised, looks at the boy, smiles at him, looks to the child's parents and sees that the response – if there is – is just a whisper.

The child does it again, and hits the grandfather's face with his fingers.

Shall we reflect on the example above? There are no words to be said. There must be clear, concise, quick and menacing responses. The child must understand and see in that moment that what he has done is certainly wrong and that he would never be allowed to do it again, or even try it. Parents and grandfather, altogether, cannot allow that for their own and for their children's sake because this is the beginning. In many houses, the child has become the ruler, he decides what to see on TV, the family goes out and comes back when he wants to, food is served according to their preferences.

Any change that implies his loss of power or rule means stress in family life. The child usually gets depressed or aggressive. He knows that crying and getting angry are tools that enable him to reach his goals. These children are fussy and capricious, they follow no rules and they have no limits. Their desires are always important for parents who do not know how to say no.

I want to see the cartoons now!  
I don't love you, you are bad because you don't buy me any sweets! I am not your son any longer!  
I don't want to do my homework! You can't force me to do so!

Parents get angry with them, they disturb people by their side and they want to be the focus, they want to be heard but they do not obey. They can't cope with flops and frustration. They blame others about the consequences of their actions.

Emotional hardness grows, tyranny is learnt if there are no limits.

There are 7-year-old children (or even under) who kick their mothers and they just say "don't do that" while they laugh. Others throw homemade sandwiches to the ground and later, their mothers buy another sandwich for them.

We must remember the children which have made us suffer and become disruptive because of parents who did not establish limits for them.

Tyranny can end up in parents' offence against their children if they believe that the state of violence and aggressiveness affects family environment. Other linked facts are running away from home, school absences and behaviour close to social conflict. In other situations, a child can get in contact with drugs and becomes then aggressive. Some children use their parents as "cash machines", bully them or show lack of affection towards them.

Who makes parents feel violent?

Generally speaking, they are underage (from 12 to 18 years old), a third of them are girls and hit their mother. They lack the attempt to understand other people and they lack the ability to reflect on their actions and dominate themselves: "I feel like..."

These types can be divided into:

1- *Hedonistic-nihilistic* ("selfish"): the most widespread. Their principle is "first me and then me". Some use their house as a hotel, spend weekends out and feel that their parents' responsibility is to feed them, clean their clothes, let them live and pay what they want to (we cannot say need to). If parents don't satisfy their desires, an aggression may occur. A big number of these do not go to school.

2- *Pathologic*: due to a love-hate relationship with their mother or to drug problems. This makes them steal in their own home to buy forbidden substances.

3- *Violence due to learning*: these children have seen or suffered some abuses and their parents lack control about their education. When they become adult they follow this

patterns and become rulers (as they have previously seen).

All the types have common traits as family problems, "lack of" a father, who can be unknown or divorced or suffers from an illness. The child is not informed by the mother about this to avoid the conflict father-son. There are no differences regarding social, economical and cultural levels. Generally, the child is the only one or the only male or the rest of siblings has already left home. Most of children are aware of these problems, they talk about it seriously and very realistically, which can be really impressive.

Tyranny becomes a habit which is growing popular since violence means more violences. We are obliged to say someday NO but this negative word is not understood or accepted due to the fact that in the children's lives there have been no limits.

The *reasons* for tyranny lie on a society which brings children up with their rights but not duties. There are common mottos as "no limits" and "let do" and these do not allow children to get mature. There is also an underlying factor: lack of basic values.

Concerning media and, above all, TV, we have to acknowledge that the excess of violence and sex diminish the facts' seriousness.

Typical parental functions do not exist any longer. This is positive as long as responsibilities and educational patterns are shared but it can be dangerous if there is certain abandonment regarding these responsibilities.

In order to avoid this problem, we must educate our children from early childhood and teach them how to live in a society. They must see, notice and feel affection and we must transmit values. We must teach them a sense of empathy, motivate them, talk them about rights and duties and give them a sense of ethics which fosters reasoning, critic ability and the responsibility of assuming the consequences of their own behaviour. We must teach them to be congratulated, to cope with frustration, to control their emotions and to get on with other people. All in all, we must promote reflection and dialogue as a counterpart with action.

We, men and women, will promote that school integrates and dedicates more time to difficult children and avoid to say: "leave the classroom, leave the school". If we all work together, we can help families to be coherent and to eliminate violence.

## **Bibliography**

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