



From Dr. Dobson:

Q: What immediate changes would you make in junior and senior high schools to improve the learning environment there?

A: Most important, we must make schools safer for students and teachers. Guns, drugs and adolescence make a deadly cocktail. It is unbelievable what we have permitted to happen on our campuses. No wonder some kids can't think about their studies. Their lives are in danger! Yes, we can reduce the violence if we're committed to the task. Armed guards? Maybe. Metal detectors? If necessary. More expulsions? Probably. No-nonsense administrators? Definitely. When schools are blessed

by strong leadership, like the legendary Joe Clark at Eastside High School in Paterson, N.J., they make dramatic progress academically. Above all, we must do what is required to pacify the combat zones in junior and senior high schools.

We will not solve our pervasive problems, however, with the present generation of secondary school students. Our best hope for the future is to start over with the youngsters just coming into elementary school. We can rewrite the rules with these wide-eyed kids. Let's redesign the primary grades to include a greater measure of discipline. I'm not talking merely about more difficult assignments and additional homework. I'm recommending more structure and control in the classroom.

As the first official voice of the school, the primary teacher is in a position to construct positive attitudinal foundations on which future educators can build. Conversely, she can fill her young pupils with contempt and disrespect. A child's teachers during the first six years will largely determine the nature of his attitude toward authority and the educational climate in junior and senior high school (and beyond).



Excerpted from Dr. Dobson's book Complete Marriage and Family Home Reference Guide. Used with permission of Tyndale House Publishers.

Putting your foot down

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From Julie Dozier:

Q: During the summer, my husband goes fishing every weekend. I understand he needs time to himself and with other guys, but I don't know why he has to go so often. Is it OK for me to put my foot down and tell him to limit his fishing trips?

A: You certainly need to address this issue with your husband. If you don't, you will likely begin harboring resentment; over time, resentment can contribute to the demise of a marriage.

"Putting your foot down," however, is not a response that will inspire him to spend more time with you. Think about why you want him to stay home more often. Your motive probably has something to do with your need to feel loved and valued by your husband. If you put your foot down and he agrees just because you give him no other choice, then are you really getting what you want? Although you may get outward compliance, your craving to be desired and chosen would still be unmet.

A better option is to discuss this issue as a couple. But before you go to him, first pray Psalm 139:23—ask God to search your heart

and identify any ways you've actively or passively added to the problem. Then confess and repent to the Lord.

When you approach your husband about your concern, try to create a safe atmosphere where he can be open with you. You can do this by being open and vulnerable with him. Admit your mistakes and shortcomings, request forgiveness and commit to change. Your respect for him will foster his love for you.

Then you can discuss—using "I feel" statements—how his leaving every weekend affects you. After the hurts have been addressed and the relationship restored, you can work together to resolve the issue.

Although fishing may fulfill a legitimate need for your husband, he must make sure your marriage is a priority. Perhaps you can offer to join him on occasion. You may also want to ask him to set aside some weekends for the two of you to do other things.



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