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Mommy, I hope God is nicer than him

Sunday, October 07, 2012

That was the comment of my 4 year old son when he was lying on the couch sick one Sunday morning. I hadn't noticed that his cartoon program had ended and he was watching a local preacher known for his fire and brimstone delivery.

Thirty-three years have gone by and our family still uses that phrase whenever we encounter someone whose advice is presented in an unnecessarily harsh, mean spirited, arrogant or ridiculing manner.

There are some situations where a severe approach is warranted. Marine drill sergeants have developed their tactics over generations of practice. Parents have employed "tough love" when demanding uncompromising adherence to house rules.

However, in the overwhelming majority of cases, a positive, supportive approach is much more successful. I'm not talking about false compliments or denial of a problem, but the wrong tone can make the recipient of the advice tune out the message.

I've only been active on SP a short time, but I'm happy to say that I've observed a general atmosphere of support and acceptance that is conducive to success, especially here on the Maintenance Team. Of course, in any online community this can't be 100% true. The recent article on the healthiest frozen meals comes to mind. Some comments sounded like anyone consuming one or serving them to the family had committed the culinary equivalent of mortal sin.

We are limited by the printed word, devoid of visual cues. Perhaps it's the striving toward a common goal, but I'm very glad to have found a place in this welcoming environment.

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WATERMELLEN

It's so easy for "tone" to go missing from emails etc.



But gotta say: most of the SP community is extraordinarily kind and supportive!

And I do love your 4 yo's comment -- what a family keeper indeed!
3171 days ago





MISSUSRIVERRAT

I have found the Spark community to be extremely positive, kind, friendly, and supportive. It has been wonderful for me.

What came to mind with your preacher example was health celebrities that are like nasty drill sergeants, not mentioning any names. I just run the other way and can't understand why some people are so attracted to that unkind, over the top negativity. I much prefer Leslie Sansone's positive, encouraging approach. After listening to her constant pep talks as a background for her exercise routines (do 4 miles about 4 times per week), I think she is starting to brainwash me into being a more positive person. OK, I must admit that in the past I just plain thought she talked too much, but she is really starting to grow on me.

3171 days ago



MJZHERE

Very well said! I, too, was pleasantly surprised by the wonderful atmosphere at the Maintenance team. Great source of support!

3172 days ago



SUZYMOBILE

So well said! There are, as you said, contentious people on every online community, but it's funny how eventually they disappear. The old adage about honey and vinegar applies.

However, I have to confess to outrage over those daily email mini-quizzes that Spark used to send--along the lines of "Which [totally unacceptable junk food] is better for you?" I've stopped getting them, so they may have discontinued due to reactions like mine!

3172 days ago

Comment edited on: 10/7/2012 10:44:19 AM



CELIAMINER

"Belief in a cruel god makes a cruel man."
- Thomas Paine

I've heard there are some teams with very contentious members who make nasty, hurtful comments, so I'm happy I haven't had to deal with that. I did get a very snotty comment on a member suggestion I made one time (back when SP gave a point for liking or submitting a suggestion), and even though I told myself that woman was probably happiest when she was unhappy, the comment still comes to mind, or I wouldn't be mentioning it here.

As for frozen meals, there are some great ones out there, notable Helen's Kitchen (organic veg) and Organic Bistro. And I love that you shared the wisdom of your son that you've carried with you through the years.

3172 days ago



LESLIE871948

Ok, I was loving this well written blog from the beginning, but that bit about the frozen meals is classic. I am going to have to say that my mental view of those is that they are a sin and a shame for the most part, when compared to local real food. Then I am going to have to go on and say I am a sinner. I try to sin with Amy's meals or some other with recognizable ingredients, and I try to keep it to days when I am tired and overwhelmed by a very busy schedule. I have empathy for any person who needs to use frozen meals for whatever reason. And that had to be a good place for people who have to use them to find quality ones, right? I have been guilty of posting things that people get offended by, but I really try to tone it down if I have strong feelings. I am nowhere near

as nice as God, but I want to go that direction!

3172 days ago

THANK YOU!



CD12758218

Love your son's comment! Little kids are such crack ups. I am also amazed at how overwhelmingly positive and kind people are on SP. I have never belonged to such a consistently positive online community before. I really look forward to reading what people (like you!) have to say. I am learning so much and daily get little jewels of wisdom and encouragement.

3172 days ago



MISCHAKEO

I agree with you...a supportive environment is so helpful. Your 4 year old made a good observation. I enjoy the support at Spark also. It is very helpful to have people who understand your weight issues...especially in maintenance.

3172 days ago



CD4382497

So sweet, it's those moments that make you stop and think.

Thank you for sharing!

3172 days ago

THANK YOU!





NCSUE0514

4-year-old wisdom could teach many folks a lot, couldn't it?
3173 days ago

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