

How to Break Your Child's Heart in Ten EASY Steps!

By Cindy Rushton

Got your attention?

This is an excerpt from our new book AND workshop entitled *Ministering to the Heart of Your Child* (more details at the end of this newsletter on how you can order your copy!). Before I get into this chapter, I have to tell you about Elisabeth's reaction to this...it was PROBABLY much like yours as you turned this page!

One evening, I took Matthew and Elisabeth out to dinner. As we were dining, they wanted to hear about the ideas in my new book. Oh, it was one of those 'holy-moments' as my darling children poured forth their ideas to add into the pages of our book.

Not far from the end, Elisabeth excused herself to use the restroom (VERY typical of her!). While she was gone, I changed modes into this section of the book. As she came back, she had NO clue about my transition of modes from ministering to the heart of the child to breaking the heart of the child in ten EASY steps! She sat patiently listening...then had a horrified look on her face...finally after hearing a few points, she interrupted gently to say, "Momma, THAT would break the heart of a child! This is just unbiblical teaching! I cannot approve of this teaching!"

This is EXACTLY right! We as godly parents certainly don't want to break a child's heart, but these are the little and big ways, which children are shattered into pieces day by day! In the following points, maybe you can find those little snares that lead to the heart of rebellion so that you too may minister to the heart of your child!

ATTENTION: This is funny! In NO way is this intended to be based upon any REAL family that I KNOW OR that anyone could imagine knowing!

SPECIAL NOTE...The suggestions below are not intended to take the place of God's Word or leading. If you have a concern, please contact your husband or mental health professional for guidance. Again, Mom's do not TRY this at home without the CONSTANT supervision of a man with a straight jacket or hand-cuffs! These steps might just work...and we will not be held responsible!!!!

- ◆ **Assume that they are ONLY children...EVEN if they are fifty!** My goodness, how on earth can a mere child understand ANYTHING about life?? We all know that children are just going to make the exact same mistakes that we have made and we must protect them from those errors since we are their parents! Of course saying this, we all must realize that they are probably NOT going to listen to us (just like we did not listen to our parents!) or appreciate our gracious input into their lives (just like we have never truly appreciated our meddling parents!). The only difference is that we KNOW that they are only children...they do not have the abilities, understanding, or vision that we have since we are now older and more mature! Of course, that is because you know how those 'kids' are

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these days!

- ◆ **Don't believe in them...**YOU know what I mean! Goodness, we are talking about Johnny here. You know what I mean, especially IF you have a Johnny in your home. Those children are the most undependable, forgetful, troublesome children there are. They are our 'special' children. We, being the godly parents that we are, KNOW that they are just going to disappoint us, so we have to work real hard on the others...Johnny is just a lost cause. Yes, lost cause! You know you cannot do anything with one of those wild children with no initiative...silly dreams...raging anger...constant forgetfulness...and of course, an excuse for everything! I say don't believe in them, but I have to note that you CAN believe that there is NOTHING on earth that you can trust little Johnny with...he is a lost cause. But of course, that is just Johnny...we all know that he is special!
- ◆ **Push them...**they NEED to develop godly character somehow! There are three really easy steps to help you as you try this technique. The first is to be sure that your children never miss those opportunities that you missed growing up...down to that EASY BAKE OVEN that your parents did not buy you because they thought you would make a mess (can you imagine?! Homeschooling gives you TIME to dig into ALL that your community and church offers. Surely they would not offer these wonderful activities if it were not God's will for us to do them, right? Taking full advantage of what is available might just help fill those holes that will unravel if you homeschool... after all, you are JUST a mother! A second tip is to push them just a little beyond what they THINK they can do! It will make them tough! That is what children need to be in the real world. That gentleness is for babies! The third tip actually branches off from the last point...stay on the go! Children just need to get over that whining! Keep them on the go...there are just too many excellent activities and good deeds that only WE can do!
- ◆ **Critique the little critters...**it will make them better! There is no greater way to make our children better than to constantly point out those things that they need to change...surely they will eventually get those habits down. You know...how they speak, their manners, their posture, their writing!!! YOU be picky! They only have ONE mother! If you are easy to please, what will they become??? Use more correction than affirmation, you only have just SO many years left. How will they know all that they need to know if you do not tell them?? Be attentive, there is a fault hidden in every little thing that they do!
- ◆ **Discipline them carefully...**You only have two choices! You will either be permissive or you will be harsh. It really does not matter which way you go. Kids are just kids...they will rebel anyway! But don't worry, God promises that when they are old, they won't depart from the life we live before them! They will treat OUR grandchildren with the same love and kindness that we treat them. Of course, this will be so engrained in them that they are not too likely know why they do what they are doing...prayerfully, they won't ask why!
- ◆ **Stay too busy for time with them OR to listen to them!** You only have just SO much time to live your life. Pursue your interests! Go for those opportunities that come your way! If you do not let God use YOU instead of your family, how on earth will you ever reach your dreams??? Also, because there is NO time for fun, be sure that you stick to your schedule so you can attain all of your life pursuits and responsibilities. The key to having life in the fullest is finding a Ministry...build it like a business and don't let ANYTHING or ANYONE distract you along the way! Oh, if this seems a little harsh for you, then by all means don't feel guilty as you put off a minute here and a minute there with your children...you will have time when they are grown to have time with them. Surely they will have their priorities in line so they will spend time with you then!
- ◆ **Toughen them up!** If there is one thing that no one can stand, it is one of those whiny little brats! The answer for those little twirps is a good dose of reality! Well, wouldn't you like to just slap a kid

like that...especially in the face?? Oh, if that would leave a mark, surely words won't hurt! Stirness will bring compliance. Poking a little fun will teach them to take a joke! Calling them names won't hurt either...they need tough skin! If they are not toughened, we will find them later going around all over the place blaming US for the sin in their life. We all know that there is no reason for them to judge us! A little exaggeration or a little white lie is no problem and kids just need to get over it! Probably the biggest problem with children these days is that they are just a little pampered. Showing them that you mean business when you discipline them will teach them quickly who is boss! If they don't get it, then nag...scream...and slap them until they get it! Ohhh, before I leave this point, we need to remember that children do not need that pansy talk that these plastic Vacation Bible School teachers dish out! You can do more good in the life of a child if you tell it like it is... and show NO mercy!

- ◆ **Don't listen to them!** Doesn't it just make you soooo sick when a parent stops to listen to a little child? What do they know? If we are going to take time to listen to a child, the least we can do is constantly point out ways that they can say it better and we simply MUST critique what they are saying, because it is necessary that our children learn to say the right things at all times! This is all for their good. Children need to learn from an early age that we expect perfection AND when they are older, we will have more time to listen!
- ◆ **Don't worry about your witness!** The most important thing that you can do in life is show your children how to act in public. It is really no one's business what you do at home...especially not your child. There is just too much bondage in thinking about living like a holy-rolly! One day children are going to see that ALL families have a skeleton in their closet. They need to learn forgiveness and grace! They will get over your fake face to the world!
- ◆ **Don't let them KNOW you!** It is very important that you set your tone in your home. The parent who is a friend and companion to their child runs a risk of that child knowing too much about the parent and their life. You can RUIN a child that way! Instead why not live your life privately. Children do not need to see a parent who is passionate about ANYTHING...those parents are unduly shaping the life of their children to their own twisted beliefs! Children do not need to sit around under our feet trying to be just like us! They need to get out there in the real world and find their place...their job! The biggest problem associated with homeschooling is the great risk that children will be tuned into the emotions of the parents. God-forbid that the child be exposed to the grief, pain, sin, struggles that foolish parents so commonly expose homeschooled children to! THEY MIGHT GROW! Nothing is more annoying to the world than children that can carry on a conversation with adults...they need to stick to people their own age! If that is ot annoying, have you ever noticed those children that seem to glow? They seemingly absorb the joys, delights, strengths, power (in the Word and in prayer), heartbeat, and life-message of their parents! Shouldn't kids just be kids?? Parents do not need to impose their faith on the child or their children will one day resent their interfrance. Things need to be just like they have always been!

All right...I am now rolling on the floor laughing! This has been a fun (do I have a TERRIBLE sense of humor or what???) article to write. It is just *so* opposite of the direction that God is leading our hearts. In reading back over this article, I have felt pangs of deep pain for the many children who are broken each and every day.

My prayer is that you will step up to the great call of ministering to the heart of your child. There is no greater ministry! There is no greater call!

It is as we pour our WHOLE heart into ministering to the hearts of our children that we will find blessings beyond measure! May this be your heart beat! Have fun and ENJOY your treasures!
