

Intentional Parenting Conversations

WEEK 3 / PRUNING / KEY CRITERIA FOR DISCIPLINE

Each week, we'll have an outcome we're working toward. This week's outcome is a list of criteria that you plan to apply discipline to.

To review, in week 3, we discussed:

1. How we naturally, instinctively respond in discipline moments.
2. How we want to learn to respond by habit to counter-act these unhelpful instinctive responses toward control instead of care.

Now the prompt is:

What you want to respond to? What is the criteria that you want to be disciplined in attending to?

What “suckers” do you want to see pruned before they grows into patterns and habits that drain the life from fruit-bearing and flouring in your child's life and in your family? What is on your list?

If you have a spouse try to answer first and then compare notes.

Some examples:

Disrespect

Lying

Meanness

Not listening right away

Defiance

Create your own list below:

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What are “Suckers”?

When you are growing tomatoes, it’s important to prune what are colloquially known as “suckers.”

Suckers are shoots that grow in the V-Shape between two stems. And if left untended, they grow into another stem. And they are often pruned to focus the plant's energy on fruit production. They are called

“suckers” because they “suck” the plant’s resources and energy away from fruitful development.

Removing suckers has numerous benefits:
Improving air circulation so the whole plant breathes better,
Reducing disease risks, and
Resulting in larger, better-quality fruit.

And get this: they are best removed (or "pinched") when small, using fingers or sharp pruners. They don’t harm the plant especially when you catch these things early. Pruning helps the plant grow and bear fruit.

So—
What are the patterns in our children’s lives that are “suckers”?

What is drawing away energy from what will produce fruit in their lives?

What is drawing energy away from what is fruitful in your family’s life together? And... as best as you can tell, in the broader communities you are in?

Sit with that question for a moment.

What are these suckers in our lives?

Well, I think James Baldwin is right on the money when he says this—

“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitated them.”

Ha here’s what I take that to mean:

We are always learning to discipline our children as disciples.

We can only learn to be attentive to our child’s lives by learning to be attentive to our own lives.

We can only spot the suckers in our children’s lives if we are learning to spot the habits that draw our energy, our focus, our vitality—

Phone usage,

Overworking,

Perfectionism,

Grasping for stuff that promises to make your life better but leaves you with less money and less attention,

Escaping into obsessions...

What is it for you?

Seasonally, Lent is a time of pruning.

Pruning the suckers so that

the resurrection life of Christ, life to the full,
may abound

not just for us but also for the sake of others.