

Mothering Little Men from Mars

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Revisiting Mars: Boys are Self-Reliant

Accepting help = weakness

Don't offer assistance prematurely, but equip him in how to handle frustration

It honors him to let him struggle instead of rescuing him

Male Brain is Linear

Life is handled one piece at a time

Don't try to start a conversation until you break his concentration.

Boys don't listen well

They honestly don't hear the words being poured into their ears; their capacity is smaller than girls'

Reach out physically and touch to get his attention

When they connect, communicate in short bursts

Start with the bottom line; don't unfold in delicious detail

Boys usually don't multitask, and can't understand it when we do

Show respect by giving your full attention

Boys are More Physical

More testosterone, less of the calming hormones + higher metabolism = need to move

Give boys a way to release their energy

Get him involved in activities where fighting, laughing, running, tumbling, and yelling are acceptable (soccer, karate, Little League, football, etc.)

Desperately need to be supervised.

More volatile

Less stable emotionally

Founder in unstructured chaos

"We don't roughhouse." → "We don't roughhouse *in the house.*"

Boys are Competitive

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." *Prov 27:17*

Make competition work for you

Contest against another family member or the clock

Boys Bond Shoulder to Shoulder

Don't insist that he always look at you when you're talking, *especially when there is conflict.* Only when apologizing.

Go for walks or drives

Dim light in his room

Talking: For Conveying Facts and Information Only

Wait for them to initiate conversation

“What are you thinking about?” “Nothing.” Believe it!

Aggression Nurturing

Tolerate what might look like cruelty or rudeness to you

Non-hostile slugging, prodding, touching etc.

Provide a way out: code word for “enough”

Calling names: “kid up, not down”

Check motive: to help another belong, or to exclude him?

Boys Need Respect

“Respect bucket”

Created in the image of God: worthy of great dignity and honor

Honor them by offering small choices, moving on to more significant choices

clothing and food choices

room colors

Sports

Listening and not interrupting

Not offering advice unless asked for, or being indirect about it

Not being sarcastic, not shaming or condemning

Don't talk down to them as inferior simply because they are not adults

Greatest fear is *failure*. Underlying that is the fear of rejection, of not being good enough.

Question attached to every male heart: “Do I have what it takes?”

Ricky Chelette, Living Hope Ministries: “You're good enough, you're strong enough, you have what it takes.”

A boy needs to feel capable.

Powerful affirmation: “I believe in you.”

Let them overhear you praising them to someone else

Quotes from Living Hope (same-sex strugglers) about respect:

1. Well, my mom typically would make me feel bad when I did something wrong, and then wouldn't let me clean up my messes. If I spilled a cup of milk, she'd get upset then push me out of the way and say “Oh, I'll clean it!” She didn't respect me when she didn't let me take responsibility for my actions. She wouldn't give me a chance to redeem myself. She kept me in a perpetual state of “being wrong.”

2. I would urge mothers to respect their sons' personal boundaries. Your son is your son, not a substitute for or an add-on to your husband. What needs your spouse won't meet, you are not to go to your children with. In the same way, don't run to your sons to complain about your marriage or your spouse. We are not your counselors or psychologists. And please, most sons love their mother, but have no interest in seeing them naked. EVER.

Speak love and encouragement, even when we don't seem to care. Poisonous remarks

will not make things better. Finally, mothers, LOVE your sons. We need you to be there.
3. First off, my mom did a lot of stuff right. She was not overbearing, as is the stereotype for those who struggle with SSA [same-sex attraction]. She was/is a gentle, caring mom. I think that's part of why I struggle with SSA.

My dad was kind of obnoxious and loud, so I detached from him and wanted to be like my mom. I think the biggest mistake my mom made was LETTING me attach to her so much. She just thought she was loving me, and had no idea I would one day struggle with SSA, but she spent more time with me than my dad because it was easier, since I was drawn to her.

I have a twin sister... and in just about EVERY picture from when we were younger... my dad is holding her and my mom is holding me. I also distinctly remember when we were 11 or twelve... my DAD went into my sister's room and my MOM came into mine... to explain sex to us. They were great parents, and they didn't know any better. But there are certain things in a child's life that a FATHER needs to do, and certain ones that a MOTHER needs to do... however uncomfortable (considering that I know I would have asked for my mom had my dad come into my room).

What Men Want Moms to Know

Don't try to turn him into a girl.

Don't make him one of your girlfriends.

Celebrate his masculinity and his sister's femininity - they are not the same.

Don't teach him to be good, teach him to be godly. "Good boys" lose their soul and their determination to speak truth into chaos. Godly men know how to do just that.

Boys need men to imprint masculinity on them.

If you really want him to be your son, let him be his father's boy, not yours.

Push him toward his father. You can't give him what only his father possesses.

Mothers are the gatekeepers between kids and their dad. Encourage that relationship!

Conversation from one of my son's novels:

Boy: What are you doing?

Girl: The Lady is teaching me how to be a woman.

Boy: Hah! Nobody teaches us how to be men, we just are.

Girl: That's probably why you make such a bad job of it then.

Respect your son, his dad, and men in general.

Eph 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Don't speak negatively about men, especially his father, because you'll tempt him to detach from masculinity in an attempt to please you.

The only way he will learn to love and respect Dad is if he sees you modeling it.

"Medal of Honor" is not only for military heroes: give him the "Medal of Honor and Respect" every day.

Respect his privacy: knock first.

Allow him to make mistakes as a normal part of life. It's not a disaster!

Don't be mushy/goosey with him around his friends. (Including taking his hand in public.)

Don't suppress his emotions by saying, "Oh, you shouldn't feel that way" or "Don't be angry."

Above all - always respect his father and insist that he respect you both.

Affirm him.

Delight in who he is and not just what he does.

Accept him as he is.

Tell him you love him.

Don't comment on his body unless it's positive: boys are very sensitive about body image.

Be specific about what you appreciate about him, and praise him for it with no "but" attached.

You are *training*: it's a process, not just a goal. Affirm the process and the steps along the way, however imperfect and immature.

The opposite of affirming is RIDICULE. Don't participate, don't allow.

Treat late bloomers as their chronological age, not what they look like. Affirm that somebody's always going to be the last ones to bloom, but they always do. "God saves the best for last!"

Assignment: think of three things you appreciate about your son and tell him.

Don't expect a huge reaction

Won't make it obvious he heard you

Don't be overprotective.

Moms want to protect kids from pain, but pain is necessary for learning.

Risk-taking is part of masculinity.

Moms must risk letting their sons experience pain.

It's OK for him to get hurt on occasion. It is what will help him to know consequences and boundaries. Don't rescue him.

Let the dad be the one who decides safety issues

Encourage some kind of sports; boys need to feel competent in their bodies. If not contact sports or martial arts (in a Christian studio), soccer or track and field.

If your son is injured, sit quietly in the stands (praying silently); if the coach needs you, he will call you.

Let him pull away first from a hug.

Don't try to fix all his problems.

Don't worry so much about him.

Start letting them go as soon as they learn to walk.

Some moms don't want their babies to grow up. Resist the urge to keep him as "your boy."

Don't take it personally when he separates from you. God's plan: attach first to mom, then to dad, then to same-sex peers, then opposite-sex peers. There has to be a

separation from mom for the rest to happen = healthy child development.
Encourage independence, not dependence.
Ask him to do “manly” things around the house (killing bugs, etc.)
Remember he is your child, not your friend. You have a responsibility to raise him and train him, not provide him with a buddy.
Don’t have unrealistic expectations academically, which creates unnecessary stress.
Never call him a sissy or “acting like a girl”—you may be reinforcing what he hears at school
If others call him gay, that probably means “I don’t understand you so I will shame you.”
He needs to be reassured that he’s not.
Don’t give the sex talk. He needs to hear it from dad or a trusted male.

Dirt is not sin.

Dirt won’t kill him.
Getting dirty is one thing that distinguishes boys from girls and from Mom.
There is joy in getting dirty, and it washes off.
Messses and accidents happen. Don’t shame him.

Sometimes fighting is good.

To fight is not bad so long as it is for moral good and truth and things that are right.
“Peace at any cost” is not peace at all but the loss of self.
Warrior Week swords: “Dangerous For Good”
Don’t fight his battles for him
Equip him to defend himself (martial arts)
Equip him to fight against molestation
Give him vocabulary: “uh-oh feeling,” uncomfortable, anyone (other than parents and doctor) touching what a bathing suit covers, inappropriate touch
Tell stories, even made-up stories, of other children who were sexually abused
Tell him that if anyone ever makes him feel bad inside to *tell you*; you promise you’ll never be angry with him, and you will believe him.
BELIEVE HIM!
If you ever find out that your son *has* been molested, tell him, and have his father tell him, that ***it wasn’t his fault***. Otherwise he will blame himself.

I wish parents would put this on their bathroom mirror: “LOVE FIRST, FREAK OUT LATER”