

# Whose Interest Prevails?

A thought I've had recently, "whose interests should prevail, the parent's or the child's?" Take a couple without any children. The man wants to go see this movie, the woman wants to go see that movie. Whose interest prevails? Obviously, their interests are deeper than what movie to see. They both want to keep each other happy, too. Whose interest prevails? They can both prevail. Each tries to persuade the other, lovingly and peacefully. It usually works out, both are happy. The relationship won't last very long if they don't learn to meet each others' needs, to help bring to pass each others' every-changing interests.

Now, take a married couple with 1 child, a baby. It may seem that his interests always prevail, but it is the parents' interest in keeping the baby that they love alive and content. Everyone's interests prevail. As the child gets older, his interests are less automatic, less certain. They are more sophisticated. He wants to play with this, now he wants to watch that. Dad's at work and Mom's doing laundry. Mom's tired from chasing Junior all around the house, keeping him happy, and now she wants to rest, but Junior has other plans. Whose interest prevails?

The married couple now has 2 kids, a 6-year-old and a 2-year-old. The 6-year-old, Brother, has all sorts of interests. From playing his Nintendo DS to watching Dinosaur Train. The 2-year-old, Sister, has interests of her own, often conflicting with Junior's. She wants to watch Barney, or wants to play with Brother's Nintendo DS power cord. They can't both watch their preferred program at the same time. Whose interest prevails?

Dad wants to watch his program when he comes home from work. Brother and Sister want to watch their own program, and Mom wants to be taken to the gym. Whose interest prevails? Some would say that Dad's been working hard all day, so his interests should prevail. Another would say that Mom's been working even harder all day, so her interests should prevail. Very few would say that the children's interests should even be considered.

I think everyone's interests can prevail, it just takes a little persuasion, gentleness, and love, to make it happen, from everyone, toward everyone. Why should Mom and Dad's interest prevail over the children? Why are their interests any less worthy of prevailing? I think everyone's interests are just as valid as anyone else's. That's how I've decided to approach my kids. I approached my wife that way, why not our children? It's called respect, and children deserve as much respect from me as anyone.

When everyone's interests are respected and recognized, the family comes together, first as individuals with individual interests, but finally as a family with a family interest. What you have is Mom and Dad showing their children how to respect the interests of others, and how to engage in peaceful persuasion so that everyone wins. This is a crucial lesson

that is lost in today's society, because too often parents run roughshod over their children's interests, and we can easily observe the effects, like when kids bully other kids, or adults bully other adults. Ultimately you have the interests of the few and powerful prevailing over the weak and ignorant.

It starts in the home. The world won't become a better place, a peaceful place, until our homes are. When kids learn respect for others, no matter how big or small, they learn how to help everyone's interests prevail. They learn how to be civilized, and how to stand up to those whose parents failed to teach them how to work with others. But like I said, it's just a thought.

Skyler.