



# The "Oh Yeah!"

## Letter

### The Summer Heat

by Ami Loper

If you are one of the seven families on our "Oh Yeah Letter" mailing list who do not dwell in the heat of Arizona, count your blessings! It is already 110 degrees here and as I write it is only June 5th!

Unfortunately, it seems that just as it gets to the point where it's downright unsafe to turn your kids outside, the school sends them home or the homeschool work runs out! In many homes (those with more than one child) that can mean things start to really heat up inside the home as well. They say that "idleness is the devil's workshop." It may very well be true, but it seems that it also means training time for future WWF Wrestling champions or talk show arguing whiners! All the while you feel like you've been turned into Judge Wapner (or whoever it is nowadays!)

I'm talking about sibling conflict, of course - my personal biggest frustration about parenting! Can anyone relate? If I'm not careful, it seems like my summer could become a time when relationships get worse instead of better!

Now, I know there are no magic fixes (and how I wish there were). Human beings living together will have conflict. However, there are two main questions that I'd like to address: How can we prevent as much of it as possible and how is the conflict resolved?

**Prevention** Now if you have been through GKGW (which all of you have) you know that the answer to most questions start with you! Not much fun, but true nevertheless. So let me ask those uncomfortable personal questions: Are you doing couchtime? and How do you and your spouse handle conflict? By answering these two questions, you may find a lot of answers. Home stability and parental example are so key! If your children feel insecure, they will act out. If you and your spouse are disrespectful to one another and have screaming matches or play manipulation games, how can you expect any different from your children?

Another preventative tool that is pretty basic is to teach your children to be respectful to each other. (Requiring them to be respectful to **you** is a prerequisite.) Make sure they aren't using each other as punching bags, speaking words that tear down or getting away with damaging each other's property. For the verbal issues that come up, a friend of mine queries her children after an unkind statement with these **key questions**, "Was that kind? Was it helpful? Was it necessary?" It is amazing how many snide, arrogant remarks won't pass this test! What an excellent tool to teach control over the tongue!

(cont to right)



\* ARE YOU PRACTICING THE LOVE LANGUAGES OF YOUR SPOUSE AND CHILDREN? ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILDREN TO PRACTICE THE LOVE LANGUAGES OF THEIR SIBLINGS!

\* DON'T FORGET TO GUARD YOUR TONGUE AND YOUR TONE! ASK YOURSELF THOSE THREE KEY QUESTIONS MENTIONED IN THE MAIN ARTICLE!

\* IF YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH PREP FOR ADOLESCENCE, CHECK THOSE SEVEN WARNING FLAGS AGAIN! KEEP CHECKING THE PULSE ON YOUR KIDS! IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN THROUGH THIS AWESOME CLASS AND YOUR CHILDREN ARE AGES 8-12, CONSIDER BUYING THE BOOK AT THE GFI WEBSITE LISTED ON THE BACK, OR EMAIL US AND TELL US YOU WANT US TO TEACH IT! IF WE HEAR FROM ENOUGH OF YOU, WE MAY TEACH IT IN SIX MONTHS OR SO! IT IS SIX SESSIONS AND FOR

ADULTS ONLY!



### Announcement

Amazingly enough, this Fall marks ten years that Tim and I have been teaching Growing Kids God's Way and the other GFI curriculum! Please consider joining us for our Fall class (that actually starts August 10th)! Contact us soon if you are interested in a refresher or know someone who wants a first run!

("Heat" continued) Next, keep them a bit busy! Boredom breeds all kinds of issues! I'm not saying they should always be kept apart, just occupied. Teaching them to play together is an excellent way to **build** relationship. However, especially with younger children, together time should be a limited privilege.

Another tool is positive rewards. Encouragement works far better than punishment! Perhaps there is a special family outing when a goal of showing empathy for each other is met a certain number of times. Be creative!

Also, teach your children to really know each other! Do they know the love languages of their siblings? Do they know their personality types? All these things produce understanding of each other.

**Resolution** So the inevitable has happened. Now what? Of course, if there has been physical aggression or verbal abuse, a strong response is warranted. Follow that Flow Chart! Determine the level of offense and administer the appropriate consequences. However, if this a typical bickering issue, you will either need to isolate or come up with a "logical consequence." Most importantly, nip bickering in the bud! When you hear it start, don't wait for things to escalate wistfully hoping it will just go away. Isolate them until they are ready to resolve their differences peacefully.

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### A Parenting Treasure From The Word

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore." Psalm 133. Unity brings anointing to be faithful, blessed and have abundant life!



### FUN Idea OF the Quarter

Through the years, I have collected a lot of wonderful and exciting ideas for things to do with my kids. I have clipped them from magazines and dog eared books. I even collect my clippings in a huge three-ring binder. Unfortunately, it can become too much of a collection and not enough of something I actually do! So, this summer, I made a note to myself on my calendar to do some of those things! Every Tuesday we do an experiment and every Thursday we learn a new game. This week we did experiments about our vision and had fun blowing ping-pong balls all over the living room. Finally, a vehicle to turn my good intentions into actions!

### Quotes Worth Remembering

"Every word and deed of a parent is a fiber woven into the character of a child that ultimately determines how that child fits into the fabric of society."

~David Whitson

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(continued) If it's "Logical Consequences" you're looking for, it's time to get creative! It can be as simple as having them restate an unpleasant comment or having them write 50 times, "Remember, my sister is my best friend" or as complex as walking them through working things out. Remember that getting in the middle only encourages an adversarial situation where getting Mom or Dad on their side becomes the goal over restoring the relationship with the sibling.

Withdraw a privilege. Try limiting time with other friends until they can treat their best friends (siblings) the way they treat outsiders. Conversely, often the girls would not be allowed to play together or have that tent sleep together they were hoping for if they had been bickering.

Another idea we heard from some good friends which we have tried with laughable success is to have the two arguing siblings hold hands! Of course, if you are dealing with two kids that will hurt one another in the process, you will work on that first. When we've done this, we often don't

(continued) set a time limit which makes it expandable if they don't seem to be getting the message. Usually it turns out to be an opportunity to learn to work together whether they are trying to figure out how to get in the car, fold laundry or play on the computer while connected!

We recently had two of our daughters write essays about this issue. The first half of the page was to be about what they do wrong (themselves, not the other person) and the second half was about what they need to do to improve the relationship. The papers were very insightful and at times humorous!


In all your creativity, however, never forget that your goal is teaching your children to resolve conflict as peacefully as possible. **Never** administer a consequence that doesn't include restoration at the end! Remember that the way your children learn to deal with each other is often the way they will deal with their future spouse. That is why this so vital.

Finally, have fun together! Nothing builds a bond like a shared experience!

~ Praying you'll keep cool this summer!

## Websites we love...

**Growing Families Inter-national** has a new and improved website! Go check it out at [gfi.org](http://gfi.org)! The testimonials are encouraging and don't forget that it is time for the Summer Sale! The timing is perfect!

While you're online, check out Joey and Carla Link's new web page at [momsnotes.com](http://momsnotes.com). This is a wonderful place to find teachings about specific issues you are dealing with in your home! Our personal favorites are the tape series about personality types called, "Working with Your Child's Besetting Sin." They are life changing for you and your child. They are available online under the "Volume 2" section of notes. The three tape series is \$15 and the tapes with notes are \$30.  Check out other issues there too!

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