

Chapter 7

1. When I was around 10 years old my dad bought me a red fiberglass longbow and arrow for Christmas because after watching him, my Uncle Mike, and my Uncle Bill I was really interested in trying to learn archery myself. I think my dad was expecting my older brother to be the one who would join him on archery tournaments but my brother would get angry if he missed and throw the bow so my dad decided he didn't have good sportsmanship and never bought him his own bow. To my surprise and probably everybody else, I was naturally good at archery and it wasn't long before he had a custom Purple Heart longbow made for me. I was better at hitting the moving targets than I was at the stationary ones. There were two pretty important archery tournaments every year, one was in Grenada and one was in Wilsonville, AL. The one in Wilsonville was the Howard Hill World Championship and it was my favorite. Well my first time I won 2nd place in my category and the next two years I won 1st place. I remember how great it felt and I remember those feelings of pride that I have only felt a few times since then. But I think the best feeling was knowing how proud my dad was of me and he bragged to just about everyone. There were even other adults at the tournaments that would watch me when I would shoot that I didn't even know. So I continued archery for about 3 years and I think when I decided to quit it nearly broke my dad's heart. I wish I would have stuck with it but I started to worry that I would disappoint my dad if I didn't do well at every tournament. I know that was probably not the case and he would have been proud of me either way but at the time I didn't realize that. Not until I had my first child did I realize most parents love their children unconditionally and will be proud of them if they come in first place but also if they come in last place too.

2. I would stress how important it is for parents to control their own reactions and handle conflict in a peaceful way. This applies to all matters that arise in their own adult lives as well as the issues they encounter as parents. Physical punishment, more often than not, does not fit in with a non-aggressive overall lifestyle. With this example soundly in place, the same can be reasonably expected from the children. Thus, to further ensure that a child does not become a bully, aggressive adolescent behavior should not be tolerated by the parents. It is clearly an equation that requires balance.

Dealing with a situation where your child is on the receiving end of bullying, or is being treated in ways that are consistent with social rejection, can be very difficult. Parents who are having marital issues or are going through periods of stress associated with things like financial hardship, unemployment, and illness can put their children at risk for being bullied. This occurs from a lack of parental involvement due to the magnitude of issues and level of stress and fatigue that can be felt by the whole family. Overprotection on the part of either parent has a direct and uniquely targeted consequence for the adolescent children. Adolescent exposure to internal family violence and domestic abuse have shown to lead to a greater chance of becoming victims.