

## Leave The Kids Out Of It...

No matter how "good" or "bad" your marriage relationship may be, it's NEVER, EVER okay to use your kids as a weapon. This is true all of the time, in any situation. Many couples catch themselves doing it, without having ever realized that they were. We use our kids as a weapon or pawn any time we do any of the following things:

*Any time you undermine your husband's authority as a punishment to him, or to earn brownie points with your children.*

*When you fail to let your kids know that it's completely unacceptable to try to manipulate one or both of you in any situation. Show them that you're always on the same team, no matter what's going on.*

*Whenever you let yourself use your kids to spy on your spouse, directly or indirectly. This means not grilling the kids any time they're out with their Dad, period.*

*When you bad mouth your spouse in front of you kids. This includes arguments with your spouse, or phone conversations or chats with your friends. And never disrespect your spouse directly to your children.*

*Any time your dump your "dirty laundry" on the kids.*

*Whenever you use your children as an excuse for your own mistakes or shortcomings. If you don't make your deadline, it's not the kids' faults. If the house is a mess when your husband comes home, try not to blame it on the kids.*

There are plenty of other ways we use our kids as weapons. All of them are dangerous. Not only for your marriage, but for your kid's psychological health too.

Even if the "sky is falling", kids need some form of stability and security. This is especially true if your marriage has been on rocky ground. While the rest of the world has gotten used to the word and devastation associated with divorce, kids are still struggling to cope. And even if your marital unrest isn't "serious", you kids may fear divorce will come around any corner.

So, no matter what situation you and your husband are in, make a solid promise to leave the kids out of it. Don't play both sides against the middle, or turn your children against one or both of their parents.

A better alternative would be to simply discuss things honestly with your mate. If you're curious about what he did this evening, ask him, not the kids. If he came home to a messy house and an un-made dinner, tell him that it's been a crazy day. Ask him to sit down, and you and the kids will have everything fixed up in no time at all.

Not only will you feel like you no longer have to walk around on egg shells, your kids will find a new peace and serenity too.

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Kathy Stafford, Relationship Coach

"I show singles how to get married and couples how to STAY married"

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