

BOLD Book Notes:

Strong Mothers, Strong Sons by Meg Meeker

Are you confused re: how to be a good mom to your son? It's Complicated:

Different genders - feel like you can't fully understand the other

"The surest way to help your kids is to help whoever has the greatest influence over him."

Mom Stresses!

- Guilt
- Fear
- Anger
- Pressure to be everything to everyone!

No mother can live up to the expectations that she (and others around her) puts on herself!

Take that perfect picture of what you think being the best mom version of yourself is and BURN IT!

Instead, UNDERSTAND who you are and who you aren't and accept yourself with love and compassion

FREEDOM = ACCEPTANCE OF SELF

We women are pleasers and are willing to sacrifice our own desires to meet our kid's needs – no-Bueno!

Learning and exhibiting virtues can lead to happiness:

- Courage: Do what's right despite others' thinking
- Temperance; will power / self-control and enjoy things in moderation
- Justice: Righting what is wrong / treat others fairly
- Prudence; Practical wisdom – use caution
- Wisdom; Make smart choices
- Chastity: Control over sex desires

Avoid your son feeling like a show piece – boys can feel that the only positive attention they get is when we watch them play, it can put pressure on a boy to perform – to get attention.

We want to have them feel they are loved for being who they are.

Show your love by...

- Spending time centered on just having fun:
 - Playing card games, watching a movie, riding bikes, playing catch

TRUTH: our boys just want to BE with us

BE WITH THEM MORE VS. DO MORE FOR THEM!

Love them as intentionally at 18 as you did at 8 days and provide a road map on how to love others by how you treat others. Be that model

Help boys separate feelings from behaviors. Stop and listen to your son. Say no to multitasking so you can really stop. He wants to believe you think he has something important to say. It's not the stuff / activities / non-essentials that will help shape him most – it's face-to-face focused time with YOU.

When we fail at getting sons to talk about their feelings....

What We Do:

Become impatient

(Ask to questions/ follow them around the house)

Interrupt when trying to talk

(Leads to hurt feelings & talking stops)

Can't put cell phone down or other

Primary distraction. *(Identify it or ask your Son what he thinks it is.)*

What SHOULD we do:

Don't demand attention – be patient

Don't interrupt!

Create habits to break free from its pull

Use the small moments to connect w/ your son

Stay positive and KEEP IT SIMPLE

Put into practice – sons want 3 things when they talk to us:

1. Don't be shocked by what you hear
2. Don't ignore
3. Don't feel sorry for them

Great ideas to help him handle anger:

- Nerf toys
- Regular exercise
- Go for a walk
- Bike ride
- Brainstorm together to avoid letting anger and frustrations get pent up in their muscles
- Give space and let him know you are available
- Don't remind over and over

Boys are wired to separate from their moms

- They want us to love and care for them and they hate that they still want this.
- They want to be men, standing on their own, but yearning for comfort of Mom.
- They feel their independence is challenged.

Understand this. Respect this. Help them make this necessary and natural break from us.

If we want our sons to have a happy and sustaining marriage, we need to do this. This is GOOD.

Boys are less fixated on future and are more able to enjoy the moments of childhood. This is in direct conflict with how we moms think!

Boys mature in spurts, not gradually.

Pre-adolescence = glimpse future as a man, not sure how feelings toward mom fits in to his future. This presents as a conflict.

KEY LEARNING: DON'T TAKE THEIR BEHAVIOR SO PERSONALLY

- Avoid them feeling they aren't capable.
- Avoid these – Remember it isn't about YOU mom!
 - Being too dependent – avoid by having your own jam
 - Expecting boys to act like men and vis a versa
 - Refusing to let go – avoid by being secure in yourself, (again – have your own jam!)
 - Talking to them as if they are our partners – avoid by setting boundaries
 - Being overly critical of males (actors, dad/ coach)
 - Being overly protective – avoid by knowing you can't control almost everything.

Boys run into boundaries head on because that's just what they do.

It hurts to have them slam into us. You want to fight back, second guess yourself

DON'T LET UP! Create a mental play-pen in a way for boys to learn to be safe and learn what's ok.

Be clear, concise and consistent on what's a boundary.

NEVER TAKE HIM PERSONALLY

Use essentialism to develop your boundaries

Our culture doesn't encourage young men to find purpose. ***It teaches them how to compete which is not the best way to teach self-confidence.***

Help them discover:

- what they were born to do
- the purpose for their existence
- that life is bigger than he is
- where he fits into this large life
- to use that purpose to help others

Find his purpose = general principles:

- Teach his life is bigger than he is. Unless he learns how to use his talents to help others, he won't recognize his purpose
- Teach him to orient his life toward MEANING not just HAPPINESS

Teaching kids to excel at many things (resume' building) can teach them to be self-centered, focused only on self-improvement. Pull back from thinking: "Success is making \$\$\$\$, having a great job, big house... this is all well and good by it won't lead to a feeling of satisfaction

INSTEAD

- Teach him how to use their talents and hard work to help others.
- When we help others, we feel deep peace and joy.
- We have to ask sons to sacrifice their time, effort on behalf of someone/something else – this drives satisfaction

BE GOOD SOIL: as mom be: NOURISHING, ACCEPTING and WELL-BALANCED

- Live an emotionally balanced life
- Stop being all things to all people
- Say no to hidden peer parent pressure
- Balance caring for them with caring for ourselves
- What do you believe is best for you and your kids? THE ESSENTIALS
- If you aren't happy – your kids won't be
- Ditch inappropriate and unhealthy expectations.
- Do things in sequence, not all at the same time
- Don't act out of fear. Have the courage to pursue what you want and make trade-offs.

GREAT LESSONS:

COURAGE

Encourage not to be afraid
of failure

Failure is acceptable

Take risks and fail w/o fear

Accept others as equals

ACCEPTANCE

Show they are acceptable to us

*Show it by how we respond
when they go out & get experience*

Love him when he feels unlovable

How you act during failures counts

Let him know failures DON'T define

him

FORGIVENESS

Men who forgive are happier

*Teach them to open up when
they feel hurt or have hurt others*

Learn to ask it from others

Learn to truly apologize