



Rosario Counseling & Associates May 2013 E-News

A Mother's Role: How to navigate conflict

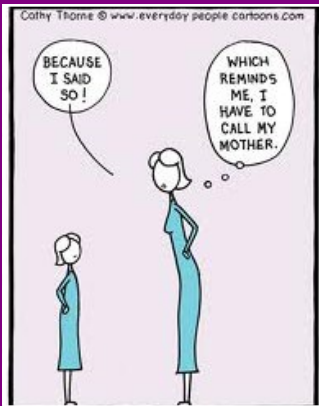
In decades gone by, a mother's role has been to protect, guide, teach, model good decision-making, model kindness, and provide consistency in a child's life so that the child can feel a sense of stability and equipped to handle life's challenges. A mother must carefully balance open communication with setting rules, boundaries, expectations, and accountability.

In today's society, however, parent-child roles have become blurred with no clear boundary lines. Some mother-daughter relationships resemble a best friendship. Some fight regularly. Some don't talk at all so as to avoid conflict. Regardless of how your relationship is defined, you can learn how to improve communication and reduce conflict by following these practical steps (adapted from *PsychCentral*):



Joy Tanner, MA, LPCA

1. **Make the first move** – Instead of waiting, initiate one-on-one time to discuss the issue.
2. **Communicate** – Be clear and calm, in a heartfelt, gentle manner discuss your concerns.
3. **Evaluate expectations** – Do you have idealistic expectations? What would be more realistic?
4. **Put yourself in the other person's shoes** – Find empathy. Attempt to understand by considering your child's position taking the context into account.
5. **Be an active listener** – Reflect back what your son/daughter is saying so that the message is heard and understood. Also listen to the feelings underlying the message.
6. **Repair damage quickly** – Realize that conflict is inevitable and deal with it head-on, but remember to pick your battles.
7. **“Use ‘I’ statements, rather than being accusatory** – Sarcasm is easily misinterpreted, can cause hurt feelings, and takes you further away from reconciliation.
8. **Stick to the present** – Avoid bringing up hurts from the past. Stay focused on the present problem.
9. **Learn to forgive** – Forgiveness doesn't always bring reconciliation, but it is healing for the one who forgives.
10. **Set boundaries** – Boundaries are key for any healthy relationship. They symbolize “where you end and I begin.” In simple terms, boundaries are limits that we can set with others to let them know how far we are willing to go, what we will or will not do for others, and what we will not tolerate from others.



Keep these steps in check by asking yourself if you're okay with your relationship and your actions. **If you continue to struggle relationally, one of our experienced therapists at Rosario Counseling & Associates can help. To schedule an appointment, please call 919-649-5882.**

Resources

[Boundaries: Gaining Control of Your Life](#) – Cloud & Townsend

[The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Solving Conflict](#) – Ken Sande

[Choosing Forgiveness: Your Journey to Freedom](#) – Nancy Leigh DeMoss

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