



How a mom tamed

her

Pre-school

toddlers in two weeks

How a mom
tamed her
preschool toddlers
in
two weeks

Introduction	4
The original plan	5
Our problems	5
The revised plan	7
Problems and objectives identified	7
My motherhood exam	8
The exam questions	9
Week One	10
Week Two	12
Post mortem	16

This happens constantly in our household:

“Boys, breakfast time is for food, not toys! Come back to your table and finish your breakfast. Make sure you have your milk before playing with you toys!!!”

The same thing recurs on weekends during lunches and dinners. Weekends are the time when our kids are back from the grandparents' home. You guessed it right - our kids ignore us - TOTALLY!!!

So, what went wrong? I am the mom, my husband is the father. How come our kids don't listen to us? And we have to scream and threaten all the time. What's wrong?

Introduction

Taming your toddlers is never easy. **In this book, I will detail how I lost control of my motherhood; and how I turned things around in a matter of weeks. It involves a lot of hard work, but is certainly achievable.**

Yes! You can regain control of your toddlers. Yes! You can *tame your toddlers*! In this book, I will show you how.

The original plan

It was supposed to be a foolproof formula: partners get married, dual-income, saved up for the first house, then kids; everything is supposed to be happily thereafter.

To many of us, it was a well thought-out plan: with more money, there comes security; then it would be time to have kids. Now, with a few more years of income saved, we can afford to hire extra help, be it domestic helpers or off-site babysitters. Some of us may even get the bonus of having the assistance from grandparents. Everyone was supposed to be better off. Here is our imagination of how it works: we think all the kids are being well taken care of, and we can go out and make more money. When we come home, they will rush to us and kiss us and the whole bit, simply because we are the parents and bring home the bread. Well, think again!!!

Many of you might have known by now, this is where we start losing our children. Yes, you heard me right. We got money and kids but we lost our precious little ones at the same time. Don't give up! There are hopes! I will show you how to become a *toddler tamer* in two weeks.

Our problems

With you away at work 5 days a week, how many hours do you spend with you kids? How often do you take care of their meals, from beginning to end? When was the last time you bathe them? Getting my point?

I and my husband have always been the envy of our friends - I work at home, have a domestic helper, grandparents live 5 minutes from our place, and are more than happy to take care of the two boys ALL THE TIME! Apparently, I get the best of both worlds as a working mom!



On weekdays, I would be working on my computer while the kids would either be playing by themselves near me; or they would be with the grandparents. When it came to chores, like feeding them, taking them to extra-curricular activities, or even to the park, I would rely on the domestic helper. I simply stayed close by to make sure things are fine and that the kids are safe. If I was busy, I would take care of my own stuff before taking care of them. Moreover, since my parents love to be with my boys so much, I would leave them to sleep over at grandparents' place quite often. It is usually on weekends that we would take them "back in our hands" and did the usual family thing.

These family weekends usually ended up in chaos - we would be screaming at them, threatening them, and they would end up crying, wanting to go back to grandma's place. No matter what we did to them or with them, everything was wrong. They did not like coming home with us - we had to sweet-talk them into coming home to sleep over. They did not like eating with us - we had to shout and threaten to make them take a bite. They would be screaming back at us and crying most of the time!

Our conclusion? They simply did not like us. As parents, we have failed - miserably. We have also realized that we cannot make our boys like us just because we are the parents. We have to earn their love and respect. Moreover, we need to *tame our toddlers*. We are determined to do it!

The revised plan

This dual-income thing is not going to change in the near future. So, are we stuck? Is there anything we can do to make things better?

Yes! There is!

After discussing the problems with my husband, we agreed on a two-week vacation for me and the boys, away from home. But there is a catch - I would have to be on my own with the boys. Yes! I would be totally on my own, 24/7.

I gladly accepted the challenge as *the 'exam'* of my motherhood, though deep down inside I was not sure if I would be okay. Nevertheless, I was determined to turn things around.

Problems and objectives identified

To ensure success, I needed to identify some of the major problems my boys were presenting me. Here is the list of my motherhood exam problems:

- Bad habits - not brushing teeth regularly; glued to the TV and toys all the time, fight over toys
- Don't really 'know' who mom was - there were a few times they called the maid, 'Mom.' You get the picture!
- Eating problem - they did not have a good eating habit - always having the wrong food at the wrong place at the wrong time.
- Time to learn independence - they have been clinging to the maids / caretakers for everything, and I mean, everything.

Determined to *tame my preschool toddlers*, I have set up the following agenda:

- find out root cause(s) of the problems - without such, I can't do any repair
- foster our relationship - they have to know who mom is
- train them
- encourage / build good habits

My motherhood exam

The revised plan was to have me taking care of the two boys, 24/7, with no assistance. This is a real challenge, as I have been used to assistance for over four years, 24/7. Fortunately, I have an aunt who lives in Victoria Canada. As soon as she learnt about my vacation, she invited us to stay at her place. We have also made an agreement that my aunt would be helping out on cooking only, and I would handle the rest of everything.

My 'exam' began as soon as we arrived at the Vancouver airport. I was by myself, with two kids, three carry-on luggages, and a crutch (I was recovering from a foot injury from a couple of months ago). The bonus was I got help at the airport - more than a wheelchair. It was one of those electric carts that run around the airport helping people with limited mobility, like me! The kids were off to a happy ride! They liked the place already!

The exam questions

OMG! This was my reaction when I 'opened' my exam booklet - I had to do everything by myself. And I mean EVERYTHING! The word has suddenly become frightening, terribly frightening. Here is a glance of my daily to-do list, aka *my motherhood exam* questions:

1. Wake up kids
2. Clean them up
3. Get them dressed
4. Breakfast - good grief it was only milk and cereal!
5. Get ready to go out - pack the necessary items for daily outings
6. Outings - library, park, shopping, anything that might be of interests to them
7. Buy some grocery
8. Go home and play with the kids
9. Read them story books
10. Showers
11. My younger one was not toilet trained yet, so daily poop cleaning
12. Feed them
13. Tuck them in bed
14. Other chores - cleaning of our room and the toilet, laundry, etc.

Yep! I was then the maid and the mom. Can I rise to the challenge and pass *my motherhood exam* without help?

Week One

Week one was tough! I started screaming and threatening them as soon as the daily routine started. I yelled at them during breakfast, when I helped them change cloths, when I got them dress...it was non-stop. On the third day, my older boy stopped talking to me. He told me he didn't like me because I barked to them on almost everything.



That was the wake-up call!

I was totally lacking PATIENCE! I considered myself with okay patience. Apparently, I did not have enough.

My aunt told me that I needed more patience when dealing with the boys. I am the adult. I am the one who can understand and control the situation. Reprimanding and shouting just would not work. I should take control of the situation, instead of letting it go out of hand. Back then, I was the one who let things go out of

control as I was the one started the yelling and screaming.

As simple as this piece of advice sounds, it was really enlightening. I started to realize why my boys always wanted the maids and the grandparents - although I was in the same place with them, I was not exactly with them most of the time. I was in and out of their pictures. I would go to them only when I felt like, but not when they needed me. I didn't know them well, and vice-versa.

My problem identified - I did not know my kids!!!

Now that I was alone facing them, I had no idea what they liked or disliked; what their daily routines were like; and what kind of habits they had

actually developed. By screaming and yelling, I thought they might try to listen to me. WRONG!

I needed to be the real mom. To do so, I had to pick things up fast.

The turnaround

Based on my son's feedback on my performance and my aunt's advice, I started to take a different approach. Here are the things that I did:

1. Be calm - I was able to change my attitude overnight. But I had to remind myself constantly to stay calm, because it takes only one second for me to snap.
2. Try to pace myself - kids cannot be rushed. If you rush them, they will view it as a game and will automatically slow things down, just to drive you crazy. If you need them to accomplish something with you on time, add in extra time.
3. Talk to them, listen to them - when they throw a tantrum, yelling at them and shutting them up just will not work. Stay calm, watch them from a distance, just so you are sure they are safe. After a while, they will come to you. Then talk to them, ask them repeatedly what is wrong to find out what happened. Throw in a bit of patience, and eventually they will tell you what it was that ticked them off. They might not be able to articulate the situation very well, but they would at least give you some hints. Listen to them carefully. This is a good way to learn about your kids.
4. Be attentive to their needs - kids have constant needs, and they need your constant attention. If you cannot be with them right away, tell them you are busy and will be with them in a moment (be sure it is only a moment, not, say, two hours). When you are actually with them, put in 200% of your time and effort. Otherwise, they will notice.
5. Pay attention to the little cues - kids give you all sorts of cues as to what they want and what they need. If you can fulfill these cues, they will feel loved and wanted.

6. No bluffing - this is not a poker game. No bluffing and threatening please. If I didn't want them to do something, I would tell them what I mean, tell them why, and follow through. They have to understand motives behind everything. They have to understand why you said what you have said. As long as you keep the words simple, they will understand.
7. No bribing - this is the absolute wrong way to get kids to do anything. You would be conditioning them the wrong way. If you want them to do something, ask nicely (!) and tell them why they have to do something. Trust me, this will work. But again, you need to put in extra time and patience on this.
8. Set aside time everyday for each other to unwind - this is important that each get time for him / herself, with no disturbance, to do his / her favourite things. This little time out can help foster relationship.



Week Two

Things started to work slowly. My boys were slowly opening up to me. I started to get to know them better; their likes and dislike, and their habits. I was no longer yelling at them, not even once! They were smiling more to me.

Now that I have found out the root causes of the problem (that I didn't know them good enough as a mom), I have decided to take it one step further. I needed to sneak in my other objectives - train them up to build better habits and have them learn to become independent.

Routines

To develop better habits, it was simple - routine, routine, and routine!

Kids' minds are very simple. They cannot understand and process complicated rules and regulation. Therefore, I only gave them simple routines, so they knew what to expect when. Here is their routine:

1. Clean up when they get up
2. Breakfast after cleaning up
3. Change of cloths
4. Indoor / outdoor activity time
5. Lunch
6. Nap time or TV time
7. Outdoor activities
8. Shower
9. Toys and / or TV time
10. Dinner
11. Tidy things up
12. Toys time
13. Book reading
14. Brushing teeth
15. Bed time

The routine is the same everyday, seven days a week. I started the routine near the end of the first week. After a few days, my boys were used to the routine, and there was no more refusal on daily 'chores' on that part - brushing teeth, eating, shower, etc. They knew that was part of their lives and accepted it. If I missed something, they would even remind me. If I did not have time to do everything, I would explain to them what happened. And I would promise then to go back to the routine the next day.

Fights

They would still fight over toys on and off. So, I had to be there when they were playing - look for cues that would start the fights. Sometimes I could avoid fights, but there were times I would be a bit too late. When fights happened, I would become the mediator to resolve the conflicts. Usually, the fight would end when I seized the 'originator' - toy, remote control, story book, etc. In addition, I found it extremely helpful to give them immediate feedback, let them know what happened and why they should not fight. Again, lots of patience here! They will not automatically listen to you and understand and follow through. You have to repeat yourself again and again. It will take some time before they will understand the concept. Remember, NO YELLING! It simply would not work.

Independence

The last thing I wanted them to learn is independence, which was not difficult neither. How did I do it? I kept telling them two things REPEATEDLY. First, mommy was now on her own, with no help from maids or grandma. And they had to help mom to help them. There were always things that they could do themselves, so please do them.

Kids love being independent - they love to dress themselves, they love to bathe themselves, they love to show the world that they are capable

and independent. Just keep praising them when they have done the right thing. They will quickly learn.

The second thing I told them was that mom has only one pair of hands, and since I was on my own, I did not have the time of the world to chase them on everything. When I told them to do something, I would not be telling them more than three times. So they better do what I told them quick or else I would take matters in my own hand, and mommy would be upset. My boys totally understood that means mommy would get mad and go crazy. And they would gladly follow my instructions. Now, my boys can do the following:

- Bathe themselves
- Dress themselves
- Brush their teeth and clean their faces
- The older brother can help me change the diaper of his little brother
- Put on sunscreen



They would even remind me of things that I sometimes forget because they are used to certain rule and routines by then. They can now take good care of themselves without much assistance from adults.

Towards the end of the second week, we were having so much fun and enjoyed each other's company. My confidence in taking care and raising the two boys was back. It was certainly a good beginning of a lifelong journey.

Post mortem

I am happy to say that I have accomplished the objectives I have set out at the beginning:

- They now listen to mommy more than ever, and follow mom's instructions
- I don't need to call them a few times before they would do something
- Number of fights between mom and boys are on a decline
- They have learnt to play with, not against, each other
- More patience on my side
- Better eating habits - when it is meal time, they have to eat by themselves, and they have to finish eating what they have started before they can move on
- They will try to be independent whenever possible

Again, I am proud to say the *I have tamed my toddlers* and *I have passed my motherhood exam!*

Nevertheless, there is one very important thing to look out for: things can easily fall back into the original place / state. In order to keep things up, I have told everyone who is in daily contact with the boys what I have gone through, the routines and habits that I have developed, and what I expect of them. Well, of course, I have to remind my boys as well. Kids can be forgetful.

Last, but not least, there are a few things that I have learnt and I am sure will be beneficial to you. In order to reap the most benefits in a two-week vacation, try what I have done:

- I picked Canada first out of convenience. But then I realized there was an important advantage: it was a place the kids not familiar with, and they did not know English very well. So, they had no one but me to rely on. I was able to build trust in a short amount of time - efficiency. With 100% trust, things can become easier for you. When you plan your next vacation, try this.
- PATIENCE - I can't stress the word enough. You need loads of it, when you think you have enough patience, think again. When was the last time you snapped on your child? Why? Was that avoidable? Would you have handled the situation differently?
- Pay attention to you little ones - they always need our attention, please respect their needs and set aside time for the two of you to get close. Trust me on this. The working moms and dads do not do enough. You can see and feel the difference once you put in the effort.
- Talk to them whenever possible. Seize every opportunity to talk them. But keep your words simple - they don't understand long speeches and difficult words. Use simpler language so they will understand you, and less misunderstanding will result. By talking to them, you can communicate with them as well as teach them whatever you want.
- Give them immediate feedback - kids have rather short memory. So, praise them if they have done something right, and let them know right away if they have done something wrong. Remember, DO NOT YELL OR REPRIMAND. They have to understand why you have said what you have said, whether it is something right or something wrong that they have done.
- Bathe them yourself - it is a very good time for the two of you to get intimate with each other. You will get to know them inside and out. It does not have to be long baths or shower. As long as you touch them, they will feel loved. My sons want me to bathe them now more than ever.

I have been ignoring my kids for too long, and consequently, I have lost them. I had to get my kids back. This two-week vacation with lots of hard work from my part really paid off. Follow my steps and you will discover a world of difference too!



Last, but not least, I also find the following readings extremely useful in my pursuit to be a better mom:

- [Four weeks to a Better Behaved Child by Cristine Chandler](#)
- [Parenting from the Inside Out by Daniel Siegel](#)
- [Raise Your Kids Without Raising Your Voice by Sarah Radcliffe](#)