



MY BOYS

When I started using Sheryl's services I was at a point that I felt I had little control over the chaos in my home. Due to their difference in age, I feared my boys (aged 4.5 and 1) would not find common ground or form a strong bond. This led me to begin working with Sheryl. It can be difficult to tell someone else about the personal issues going on in your home. Sheryl does not judge and asked me to also acknowledge myself for something I had done in the past week. She asks questions that take thought and can sometimes lead you to your own solution.

By dedicating an hour a week to voicing and discussing what was happening in the home, it gave me the opportunity to take the time to think about my parenting. It helped me to focus on how I was approaching this important job. (Darlene worked with Sheryl for 12 sessions, and a year later for a few refresher sessions)

The idea of creating a dream for the family helps as a tool to go back to. Also, coming up with a list of life-long traits that we want our children to possess gives more meaning to what we are doing every day. I am currently using many of the techniques Sheryl and I worked on. Not all ideas work, but they may lead to other ideas, a process Sheryl encouraged. Below are some examples of interactions in my home that were made possible through my work with Sheryl.

My younger son had a hard time transitioning. The solution Sheryl and I arrived at was: I would sing twinkle, twinkle little star to him when it was time to change activities. This technique worked and he started to sing with me and know it was time to stop what we were doing.

To strengthen the boy's relationship last year they made Hanukah cards for each other and they included a few words about what they liked about the other. We continued this tradition this year and will do so in the future. I look forward to them making cards for each other without my assistance because it has become their own tradition.

Sheryl suggested looking for the overlap in interests that my boys share. It has become easier as the younger one has gotten older and they share more interests. I still try to focus on common interest when the three of us are together.

The boys used to fight over toys and still do. Sheryl suggested having the boys help come up with a plan to solve this. We implemented the idea of letting one child have it for a period of time and then switching. This worked quite well. They both know they will get a turn and the older one now suggests this before I do when they both want the same thing. He even runs to the microwave to set it for two minutes.

My older son had a lot of extra energy and had trouble sitting at dinner. We implemented a plan that when he felt he could not sit he would go up and down the stairs ten times. He found it helpful and would tell me when he needed to do it.

We discussed the importance of praising the effort. I continually do this with both boys. I want them to know I realize the work they are putting into a project as opposed to the outcome. I am also mindful of praising them when they are making an effort to treat the other nicely or putting the other's needs above their own.

I am more supportive of my husband's parenting. I value that he has a perspective different than mine and that can be beneficial for the children. During my conversations with Sheryl I realized that my husband needed some time to himself. I made this a priority and every weekend he goes to a coffee shop to read for an hour by himself.

One of my other goals was to be more present in the moments I was with my kids. Instead of getting up from the breakfast table when I remember something I need to do, I just write it down and do it later. I also leave the breakfast dishes and do them with the lunch dishes so I can spend more time with them in the morning.

The SWORN and RAC theories were one of the first techniques Sheryl gave me. I still use these today as part of my arsenal in responding to my children.

Learning the theories behind ideas (internal Self-talk and independent/dependent self) helps to see where the child is coming from and understand why they are behaving a certain way.

These examples are only the tip of the iceberg. Having weekly goals was beneficial to me as I knew exactly what I wanted to work on and did not take on more than I thought I could handle. Situations and maturity change as the children grow, but many of the skills I learned I can and will continue to use. My experience with Sheryl was extremely valuable. It helped me to focus on my parenting and gave me skills to make me more confident and successful.

Darlene