

How to Raise Strong Resilient Males Part 2

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:06.7] ANNOUNCER: Next is Dr. Charlene Wrighton to discuss everything early education about your children or students in our new show, Ed. Talks with Dr. Char.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:21.4] CW: Hello, this is Dr. Char. Today, I'm going to speak on the other half of the part one that I shared with you last week. The title of this is raising strong and resilient males. It's something that's very, very dear, near and dear to my heart as a parent, grandparent and educator.

I talked last week about the importance of having children grow up young, having an inner strength. I know that that just sounds a bit crazy and maybe unobtainable, but it has to start while children are young. Raising children have – and again, my focus this week as last week is males, because I reviewed two weeks on females.

Raising males to have self-control, that is not their wheelhouse. We discuss the fact that males don't even have their executive function, which is their control center have fully developed until they're 25. Obviously, having self-control, some males just have it. First of all, they have it inside themselves as their personality. They are born with really strong executive function that allows them to self-regulate. They're also raised this way. They're raised strong and that's the whole point of this is that we need to raise our children to be strong and that is our job as parents, grandparents and preschool and kindergarten teachers, early educators.

We need to help children be able to deal with other children and other people in life and how to deal with it well. They learn very early that children grab, hit and bite and take their toys. Therefore, we need to learn how to cope with them. We need to teach them how to listen carefully to adults in their life that are there for their best interests, and to also mind them, because it often is not only just raising them, but it's also protecting them.

We need to teach them to problem-solve, to deal with frustration, to deal with anger, to bounce back from failure, to cope with hardships, because they are going to come up in life when we

don't want them caught unaware. We want them not to be the John Waynes in the world that may feel, but won't show their emotions. Again, I said I love John Wayne, but I feel it's necessary that little boys are able to acknowledge their feelings, have feelings, acknowledge them and express them. We want to do this in an appropriate manners.

We talked about the fact that there have been so many different studies over the years and decades that state clearly that boys' brains and girls' brains are different. Testosterone is a huge factor in the way that why boys are more aggressive and move faster, or more impulsive. We just have to understand that they are their own grief and we have to love them and appreciate them no matter what.

We have to realize that how moms raise children and how dads raise children are sometimes very different. I feel work as a united front. I think moms and dads, grandma grandpa need to talk together, so that they can provide a united front when it comes to child raising and the way we raise children. We also don't want to lose our own self on that, because females are females, males are going to handle things differently, male and males. It is imperative that it's okay for parents to approach things differently. I think we have to acknowledge and accept that and appreciate that as well.

Our children are basically a product of their environments, and that we have nurture versus nature. We can talk about that all day and debate it and discuss it. The point is that what a child sees when they're very young is who they often become for good or for bad. If a child is raised with a lot of anger and demeaning, the child lacks in self-confidence and self-worth and then begins to treat others that way as well.

Conversely is that if a child is raised with love, affection, support, emotional support is taught how to do things and how to do it well, child gains confidence, etc. That's the point of today's discussion. I have a list that I promised you last week. I've got 18 things on the list. Let's see if I can get through it in this segment. To be talking faster is not a good idea.

Children learn what they see their parents do and they learn how they act. Remember, they are listening in the womb. Believe it or not, they hear in the womb. They hear loud voices, they hear soft voices. They hear. They come out of that womb and from that point on, that's how language is learned, that's also how behavior is learned. From the very beginning, they observe and they

listen. This is critical and this is where I feel families need to talk and share and analyze, especially if they're seeing that perhaps there is a behavior problem that they have to address, because I promise you, the school is going to bring it up to you sooner or later.

One way or the other, school is going to call you in, even preschools and say, "This behavior, this is what we're seeing. Do you see this at home?" You're going to have to either say, "Yes or no." You're going to either have to be honest or not honest. It's a tough one, but the best thing to do is get it on the table, analyze it, own it, let's move forward and let's fix it, because I think it's really, really critical. As I say to children and I also say to adults, if your child has this behavior too and it isn't changed, it's going to be there at three. If it doesn't change at three, it's going to be there at four. If it's not changed at four, it's going to be there at five, and so on. It's why we have difficult junior high kids and high school kids. It has to be handled early.

If we're teaching our children how to behave and they're watching us and they're listening to our interaction with other adults with each other, this is what they're going to learn. Be very, very cognizant of that. I always think rather hammers, when we bring a parent in occasionally and I'm underlining that, because the child uses words that are inappropriate in the school. The parents say, but they never hear it at home. Children do mirror and mimic what they hear and see.

Here's my list. The suggestions are to help boys become strong, even as young little boys, because it's imperative. They've got to know it when they're young, or learn it while they're young so that they can be strong as they're adults. Several weeks ago, it was right at D-day. In fact, I was I was speaking and I think either the day after D-day celebrations for that day and I was thinking about these men, thousands of them who armed and on ships, knowing that if they step off the ship, they might just breathe their last. It is exactly what happened.

I think of who would do that? Who are the people that rush into the buildings to save others, the firefighters, the police officers, everyday people in the office buildings who rush upstairs to save people from 9/11 on 9/11, who faced those dangers daily as police officers and firefighters. It's that something inside that has that inner strength that says, "I can do this." That inner strength that says, "I'm putting someone else before myself." It is those children that we want to grow.

Number one, we teach by example, as well as through discussion. I really cannot separate these two out. I cannot imagine just never discussing how to act, or how to love or have

compassion or kindness with a child by a 100% and believe in showing it by our own behavior. That is number one and it's most important.

You still have to have those discussions, as simple as they are. Chances are, it's going to crop up naturally as children are struggling to behave somewhat, those are your teachable moments that just come above naturally.

Number two, we need to allow males to males. We have to appreciate them and we have to understand them. Several different times on several different radio shows, I have said that boy, the little boys, our boys in general spend 75% to 85% of their time with females, whether it's with mom, even grandma, or the preschool teacher, or the kindergarten teacher. Most preschool and kindergarten teachers are females. You rarely see males in this profession.

Therefore and as I said before, I mean, not little, preschool teachers, females don't always understand with parents, with mothers, grandmothers don't always understand the male mind and the male body and the male executive function that doesn't always function. We are built differently. Therefore, we have to appreciate these. Remember that men are from, what is it? Women are from Venus, men are from Mars. It was so true. It was so true then, it's so true now.

We have to appreciate their Marsness. We have to accept the fact and love them just in spite. We have to teach our boys how to deal with frustration, because they are fast-moving and they are more aggressive, they have a tendency to get frustrated and angry or easier. Remember that testosterone issue? Well, that's a great part of it. Dealing with frustration, how we help them handle it, we certainly don't want to take something out of their hands and say, "Let me do it," and then you do it for them, because that doesn't teach anything.

This is one of those wonderful moments. I always think there were great bonding moments. Because you're spending time, where you're listening and you're talking and you're giving each other eye contact and your hands are in there together doing whatever they're doing, whether it's tying a shoe, or building a track, or putting together Legos, or whatever it is, you're there together. You're helping that child learn how. That's important. You're not doing it for them.

Frustration can lead to tantrums and aggression and neither one is acceptable. It's okay to say, "Well, they're two-years-old. They tantrum." Indeed it is so true. By the time they're three, they

should not be. They should be getting out of the tantrum stages, because they now are speaking, they're talking, they can use their words. This is also they've had an extra year of learning how to cope with frustration and anger and disappointment is a huge one.

Children do not always get their way and they should not always get their way. We need to show voice and it is okay to cry. It's okay to feel, if they're hurt, or if their feelings are hurt, or if they're confused or frightened or angry, we express our emotions in different ways. That it's okay. Again as I've said before, it's the length of the crying, or how the crying transpires that is either appropriate or inappropriate.

I think a child should be able to cry and then one, because they're comforted when they're realizing that life is going to go on and that the disappointment or the hurt, or their hurt feelings are going to go away. We're going to survive another day. It's important. We want to make sure that we're not saying, "Stop crying. Only babies cry. Don't be a sissy. Stop crying like a girl." Those are all demeaning messages.

What we're doing is we're telling them how to act and how not to feel, or how to repress and oppress. That's not what we want at all. We want to be able to show them whether you're the mama, the dad, the grandparent, or the teacher, I know that you're feeling hurt right now, I know that you're sad. I'm here. I'm here to help. You're going to be okay.

Also to know that right for that very moment for that child, the world may be coming to an end. They really may believe that. At that moment, give them their time and then now, it's trying to bring them out and beyond. Children handle emotions differently depending on how they're raised and their natures. That nature part of them, that some children are just more sensitive. Again, we're focusing on boys. I will say some boys are more sensitive than others, and so we have to appreciate and accept that too and not be fearful of it and not worry about it, but just allow a child to be a child. It is really, really fun.

We want to make sure that we're disciplining carefully. When I say discipline, I mean, stopping inappropriate behavior. We need to do it wisely without anger, with great understanding, with memory that we were young once and then probably the same thing or worst. We'd have multiples – I mean, over decades and decades on corporal punishment and whether it's

successful or not. I have a tendency, I've swatted my kids lightly to make my point across when I was raising children, but not often.

As a special ed teacher, since I could not do that, I learned very efficiently on how to change behavior by not having to hit them, or restrain them, or all the other things we could not do as teachers. Therefore, this should work on our own children as well. Yes, there were moments where I handled it differently and perhaps, did not even do my best at it. That's when emotions fly with parents as well. I think parents have to really watch their emotions. If they're tired, if they're already upset about something else, this is not the time to discipline a child.

It is really, really important to take a step back. This is the time just to talk about the behavior, it was not okay, what does the child think, what does a child feel, have we discussed this before? Then later to deal with it, if you're feeling this was not a good time to deal with the issue. Give yourself time, give the child time to be better listeners.

If boundaries, parameters and limitations and consequences are set up before it makes our disciplining so much easier and with a lot less emotion, as a teacher – when I was working with special ed children and I have children with very severe emotional issues and behavior issues, I can't scream on them. It's not going to do any good. I can't yell at them, it's not going to do any good. I can guarantee, because I've seen it over and over. As soon as a parent or a teacher gets a high-pitched voice and it's loud, the child knows immediately they've lost control.

We then are giving them the advantage, rather than us having it. If we set our parameters and limitations and we give the consequences, we give a promise and we keep a promise. If you do this, you will lose whatever it is, playtime, computer time, story time, whatever it is, you have to back it up with a real thing, because your child will then not trust you or believe you, and you have now handed them another advantage. That's not the position that neither one of you are supposed to be in.

You want to be successful. Let children know what happens when certain behaviors rise ahead of time, so that you've got it all set up and established. If you see a child changing and growing. I talked about reward systems and how to discuss things with your children and how to change behavior in prior radio shows, and so you have those to listen to. You want to make sure that

you're not only keeping the negative consequences, like you're going to lose dessert, or you're going to lose computer time, whatever.

That the consequences are that there's something wonderful that they can gain from it, because we always want to tell them that you do something right, you gain something. That to me is a lot of humanity is when you do the right thing. Good comes and we know that we do suffer as human beings, it's without beyond our choices. We also know that raising children to know that when they do the right thing, they gain the right thing, they gain good. Do good, get good is what I used to say to my children, because it's short and it's sweet and it's to the point.

We'll then be able to set up realistic goals for children, because it will eliminate their frustration. Children need to know where they stand with you. What is expected of them, it has got to be clear and concise and understood by the child, because then there's no surprises, but then there's no harsh words, or there's no anger because it's like, "No, this is the way it is. Sorry." Then you meet out the punishment that's equal to the crime, whether it's like I said, no dessert, or no treat, no computer time, no television time, whatever it is. It's just calm. You did this. This is what I promised would happen. This is what's going to happen and my voice is calm. If the child wants to scream, tantrum whatever, they can do it in their room. I walk away calmly. Same way. That is imperative for both parents and kids.

Setting reasonable. You want to make sure that our expectations for a three-year-old is not one we would give a five-year-old, because it's not going to work and you're both going to be very, very frustrated. You also have to match your personalities. We have to know our children in order to know what works. We have children literally that you can promise them anything, you can give them anything, doesn't matter. It does not change. Nothing really affects them. What you have to do is find what does. It's knowing your child really, really, really important.

Praise often. There are so many schools of thought on praise, don't praise, compliment, don't compliment. I'm a huge believer in praise. I also know that praise creates the secretion of dopamine in the brain. Dopamine is a happy drug. It feels good. You give a pat in the back, you smile, actually raises your immunity system better, more awake, alert, ready to conquer the day, that kind word goes far. Now this works for adults, of course it's going to work for children.

Letting children know and I've said this before and again, we're focusing on males, but you know how I feel about this for everybody. When you praise a child and I'm not saying good boy, or bad boy, good girl or bad girl. I'm not saying that. I'm going to discuss that in a minute. When you praise a child, what you're really saying is, "I like the way you did that." You're pointing into your expectations that they've just met in a very positive way.

What you're saying is, "I liked how you helped your friend." Instead of saying, "Oh, you're a good girl, you're a good boy," which it first of all is confusing, because they might not address the behavior that they've just accomplished that was terrific. With morality, good and bad is a moral issue. They have a mixed message there, because they're really not sure what did they just do that was good? Let's make sure that we're praising the act. We're saying, "I liked how you helped your friend." Now that's specific, because now as the dopamine is flooding the brain and the cells they're saying, "Hmm, helping makes me feel terrific. I want to do it again." What you'll see is replication of that wonderful, appropriate behavior that we're working on.

Again, this is what we do every single day at Safari Learning. It's what I did throughout my teaching. It was what I did throughout my child rearing. Then as catching the child in the act of being terrific, I'm going to say it again because I talk fast. Catching the child in the act of being terrific, it is so easy to get bogged down and say, "No. Stop it. Stop it. I've told you that a million times." Then you're angry and then the child's angry and then everyone's ears are shut.

When you say, "I like what I just saw." You're very specific about it, a child is going to remember that and they're going to want to replicate that behavior. I'm telling you, it works. I've had more success with that in changing very negatively, overt behavior, or very overt negative behavior than I ever did with punitive acts or words. I just don't quite frankly, don't believe them. I believe in being very firm and being very specific. Then looking for that moment when that child is just doing the right thing and letting them know, because sometimes too few children hear too few compliments. They need to.

We want to make sure we're addressing the act that's attached to the child, not calling the child good child, bad child. Remember, that if you say to a child, "Oh, you're a good boy," when the child is not being good, the only thing that they can think is, "Well, I'm a bad boy." We also don't want – that's not what we want. Not even slightly. That's a moral issue we're not dealing with.

We need to teach our children that they are responsible for chores in the house. From the time they're little, they need to be responsible for their own dish, for picking up clothes, for putting things in the trashcan, for putting the toilet seat down for the next person to use, for acts of kindness. I feel a lot of times parents don't know that children are old enough and capable enough at two and three, even one, to pick up something and move it and put it in another section. That's just good training. I think that if we don't know that, we have a tendency to just let our children year-after-year not take out the trash, not clear off the table, not bring their dirty laundry in from the bathroom or the bedroom.

Therefore, now who's doing all that work? Mom or dad, or grandparent, or somebody. In preschools, I tell my teachers, "Let the children put things away." Separate the toys out, because separating is a great and educational activity. It's good for them. I say it to all groups, it's that children have to do and they have to do for themselves, and they also have to help out with a family. They can feed the dog. They can give the dog water. You can get it down the safe. You can hand a small picture to a child. That child can pour into the water dish. We don't care if it makes water on the floor, they're learning a skill. Soon, they won't be pouring water on the floor, but you have taught them early. You've taught them to be independent. You've taught them to be a vital part of the family. You've taught them to care for other human beings. You've taught them to be self-sufficient.

I have known way too many men who have been well-love – lovingly, wonderfully taken care of by their mothers, who go to college and don't know how to do laundry. I'm going to say right now, I was one of those females. My mom was so good at everything. She worked all day long, drove a long distance to home, fixed a great dinner, had me go off and do my studying. I did relatively nothing. When I was married, I turned all my husband's white clothes pink.

Therefore, I made sure that my girls and boys were doing things very early, because I didn't want to replicate how I was raised. I ended up being an overachiever somewhere along the line, but it took a bit too long to get there. We want to make sure that we teach children how to do things the right way, because there are right ways and wrong ways of doing things.

I told you that I have the curse of being way too observant. I notice everything. I have a tendency to go into restaurants and notice the bathrooms. It's that ring. I'll even wipe down

bathroom counters. It's okay. I've been doing it so long now. I'm just such a help for the community.

Point being, if you don't teach a child to notice things, like if there is a scrap of paper on the floor, if you don't teach them to notice, or how to put things away properly, or how it is imperative that we teach children how to do things the right way or the wrong way. I am such a strong believer in it. That's also helping children to become very self-sufficient. We need to teach our children that it is okay to make a mistake. If a child makes a mistake and we berate them and demean them, a child is going to be afraid to try, but that's going to cut their success rate when they're teenagers and adults, or any age, it's going to diminish it, because they're literally not going to have any courage to try, because they are so afraid someone yelling at them, or criticizing them.

We want to make sure that making mistakes is okay, it's fixable and we're going to try it again. Again, try to teach them to do it properly and we have fewer and fewer errors and mistakes. However, they really need to learn from their mistakes. Also, parents we need to apologize when we make a mistake. Boy as a parent, I made mistakes. That's all there was to it. As a human being, as a very tired human being, as a very tired human being that was sometimes PMSing, I am telling you that my discipline wasn't always perfect. Absolutely not. I didn't always use my techniques that I learned how to deal with.

Therefore, I had to come back to my children, or my each child, whatever it is and say, "I am so sorry. I did it wrong. I was not appropriate here. I talked to you too harshly," or whatever. I made a judgment call that was incorrect. Now you're teaching your child how to apologize, which is so important in social and emotional relationships that they're going to need now and in the future.

Criticizing a child again is demeaning and it causes them to lose such confidence. We want to make sure that build them up every single day. If you said no and don't and stop and I've told you that a million times, listen to yourself and how you're talking to your child. Then it's a good time to just stop, take a breath and start again. Make sure you start again every single day. Don't get in the habit of just saying it and then moving on, because remember, your child has heard it and felt it. It is injurious and it's long-term injurious.

We want to make sure that we're helping our children face their fears. Again, we're not going to be demeaning with them. I have a lifelong goal that I am going to hold a spider some day and I'm going to do zip lining, because both things frighten me, but I've got to overcome. Okay, but I don't want people laughing at me, or mocking me, or making me feel that I'm stupid, or even pushing me to do it before I'm ready, because we have to make sure our children are helped.

Again, I've got so much to share, so much to say. Hopefully, this is giving you some ideas. We always want you to give us a call. I want to give you my 800 number, which sometimes I forget to give you. 800-622-8104. My e-mail address is char@zoo-phonics.com. Or char@safarilearning.com. Feel free to write, ask me questions, make comments. I'd love to learn from you.

Thank you so much. Bye-bye.

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[0:27:12.1] ANNOUNCER: That was Ed. Talks with Dr. Char. You've been listening on KAAD-LP Radio, live on 103.5 FM, or streaming online at kaad-lp.org. If you would like to have Dr. Char answer any of your questions, please e-mail your question to dr_char@zoophonics.com. Thanks for listening and stay tuned for what's next on KAAD-LP Radio.

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