



# the True Princess

## ELIMINATING CONFLICT AND RULES

Let's start with the concept of "rules." It is critical to be clear before developing a rule. What is the purpose of that rule? Let's look at the common rule of "Keeping Your Room Clean." If we keep in mind that everything we do is for the purpose of molding our children into our vision of happy, productive adults, how then does this rule serve towards that end? Well, cleanliness is important for health. But the most important outcome we hope to accomplish through this rule is being responsible for one's goods and surroundings. We hope that they learn to value the gift of having their own space, their own things and to take care of them with care and respect. If they are only keeping their room clean because of us, then no learning is taking place and it only becomes a source of conflict between us and them. If they are only doing it to please you then it is only happening out of fear of reprisal. This certainly teaches them cause and effect and consequences of actions, but this scenario is a perfect one to teach positive life-long values. It can induce pride, monetary values and gratitude. These are much more important than learning how to please your mother.

So how does valuing things show up in your child's room? Make a list of what you expect your child's room to look like when it's cleaned up item by item. Next to each item, put the value that doing so will provide in your child's journey in growing into a responsible individual. If you can't connect it to a concrete reason that relates directly to character development, leave it blank.



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Next, schedule a meeting with your child. Tell him you want to run something by him and you need his thoughts and input. This is best done away from the room and should be an opportunity for a special time with just you and your child...maybe an outing for an ice cream. Tell him “I’ve been relooking at some of the rules and some of the things that cause conflict at home and I want to see what we could do together to eliminate what we could.” Explain your purpose for making rules...as preparation and learning for them to become successful and productive people. Then bring up one of the “rules” you brainstormed like the one about keeping their room clean as an example. Share that you were trying to understand this more clearly also so you wrote down each item as it would appear in a clean room. Explain each item and explain the learning purpose of it. Discuss it, get your child’s thoughts and ideas...What other things can you do, or do you do, that demonstrate that you value the things that we’ve bought for you. Discuss what it takes for you to earn that money and maybe play with an example of just what \$100 could buy relative to his life (movie, dinner out, a week’s worth of food or water or electricity). The biggest mistake we make is assuming that our children know and understand. This special time together is a magical opportunity to share and for your child to learn and grow. Truly be open to their thoughts, feelings and ideas. Come to an agreement of compliance that both of you will feel good about.