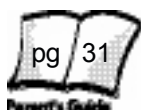




Any ideas about why exploring and adjusting our expectations might be a good idea for making a successful stepfamily?

- When a stepfamily is formed, you’re merging at least two sets of different values, customs, traditions, and rules. Loyalty conflicts are bound to occur.
- Expecting things to be done like you did them in your prior family is unrealistic and likely to cause conflict.
- When you make a stepfamily, you bring many new people into your life. Getting along with others means examining your needs and expectations and finding acceptable compromises without going against your core values, like honesty and kindness.

What you expect, what your partner expects, and what your kids expect may all differ. That means all of you will need to make adjustments to get along.



Let’s take a look at some common stepfamily conflicts and see how expectations need to be adjusted. Turn to page 31 of your *Parent’s Guide*, where you’ll see a chart that will help you with this activity.



Video #5

Video Practice: Adjusting Expectations

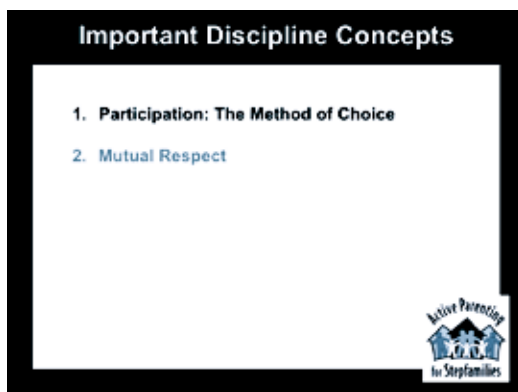
(4:53)

After each scene (where prompted), pause the video and ask the group to write in their guides whether the expectation portrayed was realistic or unrealistic, and why. If the expectation was unrealistic, ask them to think of an expectation that would be realistic for the situation. Discuss as you go:

Unrealistic Expectation	Why?	Realistic Expectation	Why?
1. Carolina wanting Roberto to handle the discipline	Stepparents need to establish positive relationships with new stepkids before taking on a discipline role.	Carolina handling the discipline until Roberto has time to establish a relationship with the children	Carolina is the biological parent.
2. Fran wanting to win relationship points with Erin by contradicting Paul’s discipline in front of her	This undermines his parental authority and will lead to resentment and loyalty conflicts.	Fran meeting privately with Paul to discuss their different opinions about parenting	Paul and Fran should present a united parenting front to Erin.

Chart continued on next page.

SLIDE
#8



Let's see how something we call "the method of choice" can clarify how the dictator and doormat styles of parenting differ from the active style. This method can actually help you solve some discipline problems, too.



Video #7

The Method of Choice, Part 1

(3:55)



Are there any comments or questions about this video segment?
Discuss as needed.

Remember, we talked about the dictator style of parenting as allowing very tight limits with no freedom.



What kind of freedom are we talking about?

- Freedom of choice



In the third part of Patrice's dream, how did her parents use choice to help get her help with household chores?

- Rather than dictate or pamper, they invited her participation and gave her choices.

Let's see another example, this time with a younger child, of how "the method of choice" can help you sidestep power struggles without giving up your authority as leader in the family.



Video #8

The Method of Choice, Part 2

(2:33)



Video #10

Mutual Respect, Part 2

(2:38)

You'll learn more discipline methods that can be used to correct this and other misbehavior later in the program. But notice how simple and powerful it is to be able to say, "I don't treat you this way; please don't treat me this way."

Mutual respect is an essential part of any relationship where cooperation and trust is desired, including adult relationships.

VII. Marriage Enrichment Activity (4 min. _____ to _____)

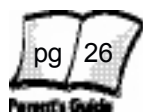
Some of you may already know that you get a bonus with this course. The skills you learn here to help you with your children and stepfamily will also help you strengthen your marriage—the foundation of your family.



Your marriage is the foundation of your stepfamily.

A strong marriage provides security for your entire family. This is essential for you to remember, because if you neglect your marriage, your stepfamily can't succeed.

Each week, we'll present a Marriage Enrichment Activity along with the Stepfamily Enrichment Activity and the Family Meeting, all of which will be based on the skills we covered that week.



This week's Marriage Enrichment Activity is called "Meet Me at the Oasis." This is an opportunity for you and your partner to find a place where you can spend some time every day away from the kids and the distractions of running your home. This is described in detail on page 26 of your *Parent's Guide*.



Is everyone willing to try this during the next week?

I encourage you to be creative with this assignment. Make the space and the time all your own.

Session 2

	Section	Activities	Video
I	REVIEW (5 min.)		
II	SHARE AND TELL (15 min.)		
III	THE ACTIVE STEPPARENT (30 min.) 5 Guidelines for Active Stepparents		1. The Lion's Whisker (2:40) 2. Instant Love, Take 1 (2:19) 3. Instant Love, Take 2 (2:07)
IV	WHO OWNS THE PROBLEM? (12 min.)	Who Owns the Problem?	4. Who Owns the Problem? (4:08)
BREAK	(10 min.)		
V	COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION (4 min.) Cooperation Defined Cooperation & Problem Handling		
VI	COMMUNICATION BLOCKS (15 min.) What Are Communication Blocks?	Communication Blocks	5. Communication Blocks (2:32) 6. Active Communication, Take 1 (1:37)
VII	ACTIVE COMMUNICATION (20 min.) 5 Steps of Active Communication Communication Between Adults Responding to Feelings	Active Communication	7. Active Communication, Take 2 (2:40) 8. Two-Household Transition, Take 1 (1:56) 9. Two-Household Transition, Take 2 (1:41) 10. Video Practice: Responding to Feelings (1:45)
VIII	STEPFAMILY ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY: BEDTIME ROUTINES AND WORDS OF AFFECTION (5 min.)		11. Bedtime Routines and Words of Affection (3:50)
IX	MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY: LISTENING WITH EMPATHY (1 min.)		
X	FAMILY MEETING: TALKING ABOUT CHANGE (1 min.)		
XI	HOME ACTIVITIES (1 min.)		