



Woof.

Submitted by Relsqui on 28 August, 2005 - 12:58

What should I have done, after observing what looked like a scary kind of parenting? I don't have a lot to say about this; I'm just a dabbler in the site at the moment, being a little too old for a child's perspective and a little too, err, childless for a parent's.

However, I'm curious what anyone else might make of this:

I'll skip the details of the circumstance, except to note that it was at the house of an acquaintance (not so well-known as to be a friend). A relation of that acquaintance was there with her children--one girl of about two or three, the other less than a year. More than once I heard the mother correct her kids simply by bellowing, "NO!" It sounded like a snarling dog, and at the same time, like the sort of short commands which are used to get through to dogs. One could hear her from another floor of the house.

We're not even necessarily talking about her reprimanding the children for doing something wrong. The only specific case I recall is when one of them wandered rather near the top of a staircase. It was definitely a command, though, not a word of warning or a cry of alarm.

This was not a person with whom I would feel comfortable having a general discussion on parenting, much less criticising her (even politely). That's partly because I barely know her, and partly because I'm nineteen years old (eighteen then) and don't expect to be treated as if I know the first thing about raising kids. (Which, I suppose, I don't, except in that I was one fairly recently.)

Was there any way to ~~voice my horror~~ raise my concern without creating an uncomfortable situation all around?

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the adult conspiracy

Submitted by [emma \(not verified\)](http://childrenarepeople.blogspot.com) on 29 August, 2005 - 11:21

This is a tightrope.

If you say or do anything so offensive to the mother that she either never sees you again or disregards anything you say about anything, then you have lost an opportunity to help those children improve their lives.

If you say nothing, you tacitly become part of the unified adult conspiracy.

Start interacting with the children. "Shall I help you down the stairs?" "Let's touch that vase with just one finger and see what happens" (at which point the vase squeaks pitifully "noooo... don't touch me...". Just show by your actions that what the children are doing can be safe with help.

I'll keep thinking...

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