



ENCOURAGEMENT FOR STEP PARENTS

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Sir Winston Churchill once said, "Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

In my role as a counselor I am often asked to provide guidance when it comes to step-parenting, this is a guiding principal for me. To courageously listen long, long past what is comfortable until you can see into the heart of a child, until you can see not only their laughter, but are still enough to see their sadness, their hopes, their doubts about the world they live in.

Until you have fallen in love, essentially with the child, you cannot successfully direct, discipline or guide without the umbrella of the biological parent's authority. Not because of ineptitude or incompetence, but simply because the best parenting is born out of falling in love.

The long dreamy looking and watching and knowing that biological children know from their infancy cannot be replaced by a step-parent. But courageous listening, self-sacrificing until the falling in love comes will never fail to bring healthy, happy, mostly willingly, attached children to the step-parent willing to labor for it, not unlike their biological predecessors labored for theirs. Step- parents, be courageous & listen!