

Forget About It!

Submitted by Sarah Fitz-Claridge on 14 September, 2003 - 22:31

Sue Cvach

So your child's room is such a mess there is only a rumor of a floor and the cat has been lost in there for several days, probably dining off bits of leftover forgotten snacks (well, at least they won't go all moldy and attract bugs).

Shut the door and walk away. Take deep breaths and set aside the urge to cling to your child's legs, begging to be let in to clean it up! Rejoice in the fact that it's that person's room, to do with what they will. If they don't like it the way it is, they *will* do something about it – maybe even ask for help in cleaning it up! (dream on...)

When you do break down and end up standing forlorn outside your child's door, armed with feather duster and vacuum cleaner, acknowledge that it is not your business, and that these lapses in your demeanor are due to your own bad theories that you are weeding through and working to change, and ask for their understanding and forgiveness when this happens and thank them for their helping you to realize where your hang-ups are and how much you appreciate their patience and good grace in helping you, yet again, to examine this subject.

Then take a look at your own unfinished projects laying around, that you are so willing to procrastinate upon further that you would rather clean your child's room. Dig into your own stuff! Direct that frenzy of energy there! Or go groom the dog or read a good book in a lovely hot scented bath, or grab your partner and head to the passion pit, or find something else that you really enjoy and want to do in the moment.

Even when grandparents visit, pulling the door closed on a child's room and protecting their privacy is the child's right. Your child and their friends will happily disappear into that room – they don't care about the mess. They don't see it; they only see the cool stuff and the wonderful possibilities.

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Comments

Yeah!

Submitted by Kim (not verified) on 16 November, 2004 - 02:38

Dude, I am so printing this for my dad. I try to tell him the mess doesn't bother me, but he insists that it is a matter of "pride" and "self-respect". I don't know if he'll listen to the idea above, but it's worth a try...

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What if...

Submitted by helenahar (not verified) on 13 December, 2004 - 04:55

you can't shut the door because it's your bedroom, too!?

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finding solutions

Submitted by canyonstar on 24 December, 2004 - 14:08

if the space is shared, looking for common preferences sounds like the key to me. no one person's preference takes precedence over another's-- look for the solutions that everyone is happy with, that they like better than the original preference.

one person wants to be able to drop things and let them lay, loves their arrangement and doesn't want anyone messing with it. the other glories in organization, a place for everything and everything in its place. or just to be able to shut the door.

i've heard of people putting all the space in their house up for re-assignment according to the needs of the people who live in the house, and coming up with some creative solutions to space problems that are unusual and useful.

it could be anything- creating a wall with bookshelves and furniture to carve out another room, stringing up a wall of fabric to delineate a private space, changing the use of rooms, building lofts/upper decks in certain rooms, remodeling a garage or basement or attic. i have a friend who has moved hir living room and kitchen from one end of the house to the other, and now has the flexibility of moving it back at any time.

privacy is necessary for the creation of knowledge. acknowledging every person's need for their own space and helping them to create it to thier liking- in support of their own learning trajectory- will help in finding solutions.

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But what about when there's

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 26 January, 2007 - 08:06

But what about when there's literal mold growing on the walls and the sheets haven't been changed in six months and, your supposedly "amusing" facile dismissive remark about the cat aside, there are dirty plates and food scraps on the floor and furniture and it *is* attracting cockroaches or mice (neither of which will remain docilely confined to the child's room, BTW)?

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Cool Concept!

Submitted by mammal_mama on 13 February, 2007 - 22:43

About the cockroaches and mice -- it's true they won't stay confined to one room, so talk with the child and brainstorm together about ways to respect her privacy while still keeping the little critters away.

Susan

to post comments

what?!

Submitted by canyonstar on 14 February, 2007 - 17:52

are you saying that the cat is so satiated with discarded food bits that it will not want to pounce on the cockroaches and mice?

the kid might want to get rid of the creepy crawlies so that they don't run over hir while s/he is sleeping, and might find it preferable to get the food bits out rather than abandon the room.

then again, in the face of self-righteous indignation in a parent (see! i told you so!) a kid might prefer to create interesting mice tunnels and to pursue the cockroaches with a shoe to hear them crunch, rather than to 'give in' to the grumpy parent even though child would rather not have pests living in hir room. talk about being stuck between a rock and a hard place... and it is up to parent to get a grip and to create the conditions for consensual problem solving and trust in the parent-child relationship.

maybe the kid would be glad to pick stuff up and use a robotic vacuum cleaner to do the floor-- gotta love roomba! another solution to cleaning.

to post comments

yeah

Submitted by kayla (not verified) on 15 May, 2007 - 15:07

i so need to print this for my mom she is getting on me right now about cleaning my room!!!!

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