

Got An Angry Kid? Parenting Spike: A Seriously Difficult Child

Andrew D. Gibson, PhD

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Reviewed by Paige Lovitt for Reader Views (5/09)

The first reaction that I felt after reading “Got An Angry Kid?” was “Wow!” This book teaches parents how to effectively regain control of their family when dealing with a child or teen that is angry and disruptive. Changing how a parent interacts with their child is a key to success. The book is written very concisely and organized in a manner that will make it easy for parents to follow, in spite of there being many steps in the process. There are also appendices that contain charts for parents to track their goals and their children’s goals.

Initially, the book helps parents identify behaviors that their child or children are exhibiting that need to be dealt with. When the author wrote this book, he based much of it on his own personal childhood and parenting experiences. Then throughout the book he uses the story of Spike as his main example of how to apply the principles. He also uses other case examples of families from a variety of backgrounds who are dealing with angry children. This variety of examples and experiences will help parents relate them to what is happening in their own lives.

The program to be followed is referred to as PACT. It stands for Parenting Angry Children and Teens. PACT is a self-help program designed for parents dealing with angry children. It consists of a total of 28 goals that take about eight weeks for changes to begin and a year for the program to be completed. Parents are to apply goals to every aspect of their lives. The first three goals are very basic. The next twenty-five goals are advanced. Parents are not to progress to the next goal until they succeed with the previous one. They can use the charts provided for recording their progress.

I think that every parent who has an angry and disruptive child will benefit from following this program. For some, it won’t be easy because they are going to have to take a close look at how they are currently interacting with their children and recognize their own dysfunctional behavior. For some people, they might see that the pattern of dysfunctional behaviors has been passed down from generation to generation. Perhaps in addition to improving their relationship with their child, they will also be able to improve other relationships in their lives. I highly recommend “Got An Angry Child” by Andrew D. Gibson, PhD, to parents, grandparents and counselors who work with children.