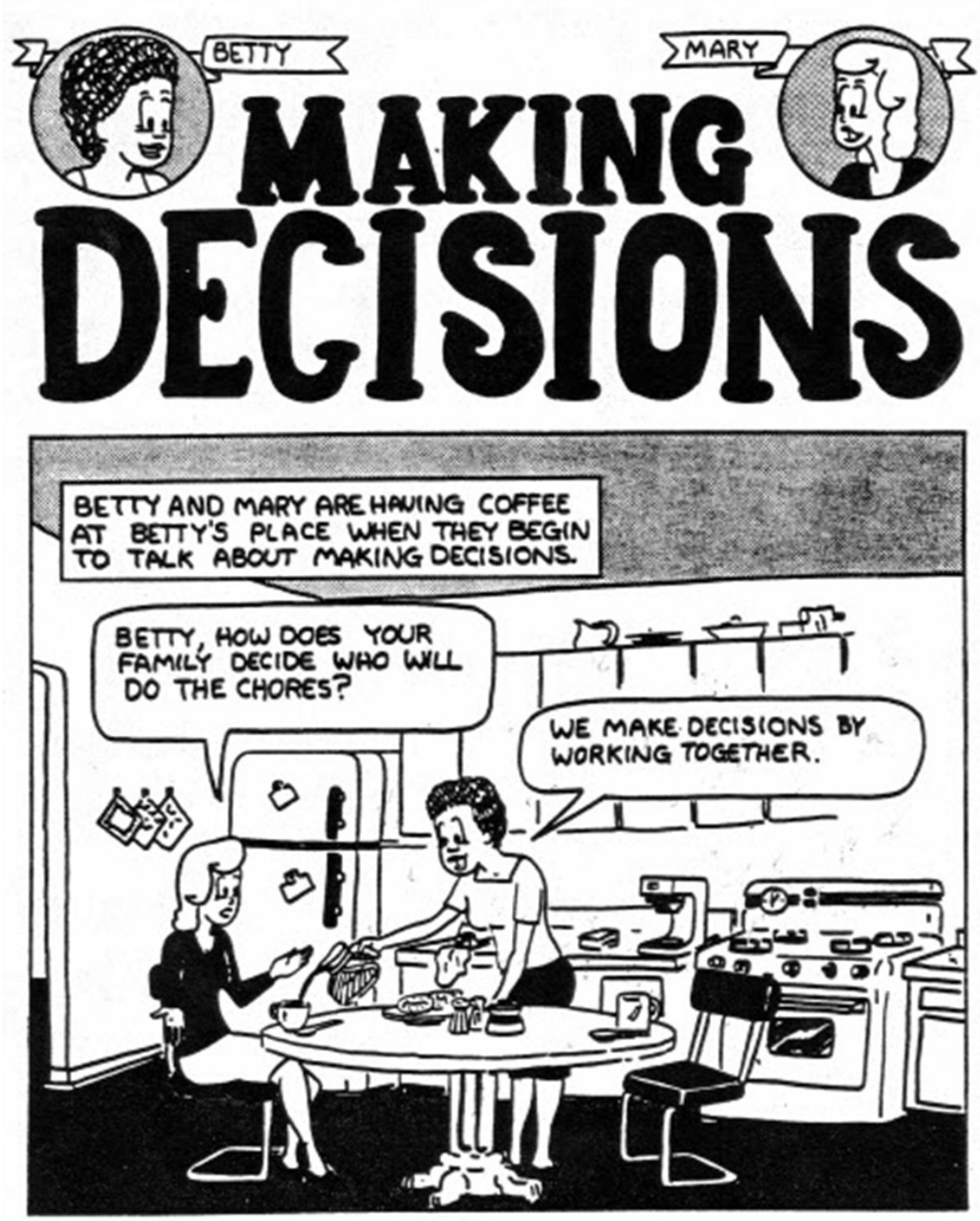
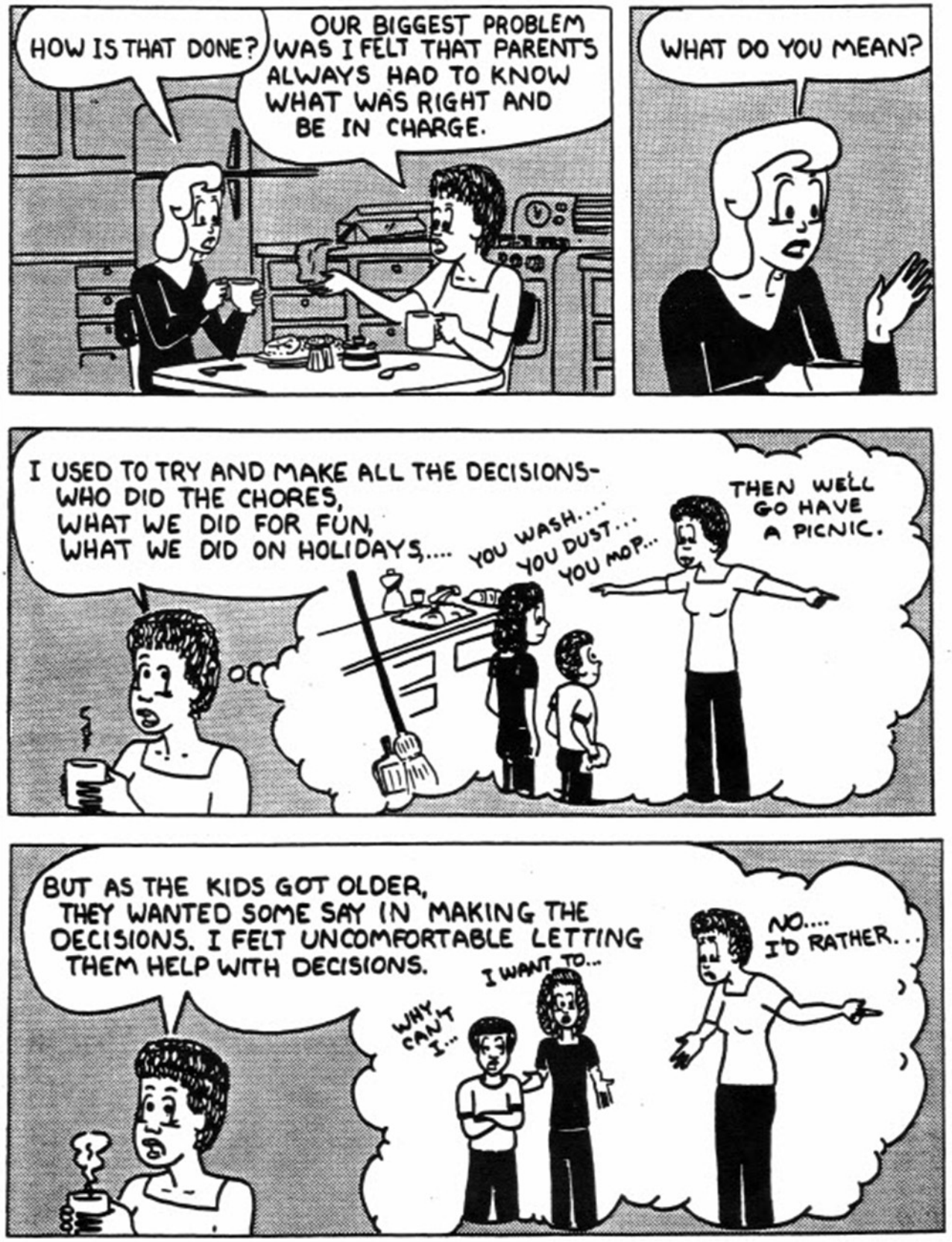
Families Matter!

University of Delaware

AN EXTENSION Just in Time Parenting NEWSLETTER




HOW IS THAT DONE?
OUR BIGGEST PROBLEM WAS I FELT THAT PARENTS ALWAYS HAD TO KNOW WHAT WAS RIGHT AND BE IN CHARGE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I USED TO TRY AND MAKE ALL THE DECISIONS- WHO DID THE CHORES, WHAT WE DID FOR FUN, WHAT WE DID ON HOLIDAYS,....
YOU WASH.... YOU DUST... YOU MOP...
THEN WE'LL GO HAVE A PICNIC.
BUT AS THE KIDS GOT OLDER, THEY WANTED SOME SAY IN MAKING THE DECISIONS. I FELT UNCOMFORTABLE LETTING THEM HELP WITH DECISIONS.
WHY CAN'T I...
I WANT TO...
NO.... I'D RATHER...

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, THEY CAN MAKE SOME PRETTY BAD DECISIONS.
SURE, BUT SO CAN I. THERE WERE SOME THINGS THEY COULD DECIDE, BUT I WAS AFRAID TO LET THEM. I FINALLY FIGURED OUT THEY NEEDED THE PRACTICE. AFTER ALL, SOMEONE HAD TO HELP THEM LEARN HOW TO MAKE DECISIONS.
SO WHERE DID YOU BEGIN?
WELL, I DECIDED THEY COULD BEGIN MAKING SOME DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR CHORES. THEY COULD DECIDE WHO DOES WHAT, WHEN, AND HOW WITH SOME HELP FROM ME.
DO YOU ALL SIT DOWN AND PLAN THIS OUT?
WELL, SOMETIMES IT TAKES ALL OF US AND OTHER TIMES ONLY ONE CHILD, BUT THE SAME IDEAS WORK.
TELL ME MORE!

FIRST WE HAVE TO BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON. WE EACH GET TO SAY WHAT WE THINK THE PROBLEM IS.
SOUNDS CONFUSING. DOESN'T EVERYONE SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY?
YES, BUT THAT'S GOOD. WE EACH GET A CHANCE TO SAY WHAT WE THINK. AND ALSO WE GET TO HEAR EVERYONE ELSE.
SOMETIMES IT'S ALOT OF LITTLE PROBLEMS THAT MUST BE SOLVED.
LIST OF PROBLEMS
LIST OF PROBLEMS
WE START WITH ONE THING.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?
THEN WE TRY TO FIND WAYS, TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. SOMETIMES IT'S EASY, SOMETIMES IT'S HARD. THE POINT IS EVERYONE IS TRYING TO FIND AN ANSWER.
IT SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO HELP FIND A GOOD ANSWER.
YES, AND ONCE WE HAVE ALOT OF IDEAS, WE ALL LOOK AT THOSE IDEAS AND ASK "WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR ME?" AND "HOW WILL THIS AFFECT OTHERS?"
SOUNDS LIKE IT TAKES A LOT OF TIME.
SOMETIMES-- BUT WHEN WE AGREE ON A DECISION TOGETHER IT SEEMS TO STICK. I MEAN EVERYONE WANTS TO MAKE IT WORK.

IT SEEMS WITH MY KIDS I JUST SAY WE'RE GOING TO DO IT MY WAY AND I TRY TO FORCE THEM. IT MEANS ME AGAINST THEM.
THAT'S WHY MAKING THE DECISION TOGETHER WORKS. WE ALL FEEL LIKE WE'RE TREATED FAIRLY.
BUT WHAT HAPPENS IF THE DECISION DOESN'T WORK OUT?
WE CAN ALWAYS BRING IT UP AGAIN AND TALK ABOUT IT SOME MORE. NO DECISION IS EVER FINAL.
I BET MY FAMILY COULD MAKE BETTER DECISIONS IF WE TRIED TO WORK TOGETHER.

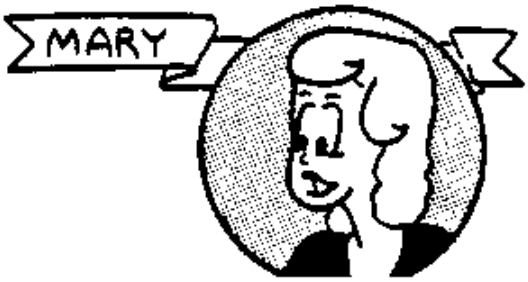
MAKING DECISIONS

- Children can learn to make healthy decisions with support from their parents.

- Parents can help children learn to make decisions by working together with them rather than always being in total control.

- These are the basic steps in decision making:

  - **Define the problem** from each person's point of view.
  - **Establish your goal.** What do you want to happen?
  - **Consider the solutions.** What are all the possible solutions?
  - **Identify the consequences.** What would the effects of each of the solutions be?
  - **Decide.** Choose the best solution and make a commitment to action.
  - **Empower your children.** Help them deal with stress, build self-esteem, handle peer pressure, choose a healthy lifestyle and develop new skills. How? By:
    - **Talking** about how you make decisions.
    - **Teaching** them the decision-making steps.
    - **Reminding** your children to use the decision-making steps.
    - **Suggesting** alternatives and consequences.
    - **Praising and reinforcing** good decisions and good decision-making processes.
    - **Helping** your children evaluate decisions—rather than criticizing them.



Have a good month!

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This issue was adapted from materials prepared by Dr. Robert Hughes, Jr. for Cooperative Extension, University of Illinois.
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Making Decisions

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