

There have been three times in life when people have told me that I am too controlling. This is not something that is pleasant to hear. Each time I have heard this I have become quite defensive and angry, but upon person reflection I realize that the observations were right. This is not the greatest feeling, yet I was happy that I have people that care enough about me to point out my mistakes to me. The only way we are able to grow and change is if we realize what we are doing wrong.

My latest episode of being too controlling involved my eighteen year old son. He was in the market for motorcycles for sale. He had been saving his money from a part time job for two years. He had talked about owning a motorcycle since he was ten years old. I have always been concerned about this because I know that there are many people that get seriously hurt and killed in accidents every year. A few weeks prior to his birthday he was looking at newspaper ads for motorcycles for sale. I went into my full litany about why this was not a good idea. We ended up having an argument and both of us said things that we regretted. I told him that he would not own a motorcycle while still living at home so he threatened to move out and things just escalated. I was feeling awful and was losing sleep. I did not want to back down from my decision. One of my co-workers who is also a very good friend told me that I was trying to protect and control my son and in the process was losing him. She pointed out that he was very responsible. He had held the same job for two years and maintained good grades in school. He was responsible in driving the family car and he was not a risk taker. She pointed out that when he was eighteen he would be an adult and I needed to give up trying to control his life.

She was right. It was difficult to hear and admit, but what she was saying was true. I called my husband and asked him if he knew which of the motorcycles for sale our son was interested in. I suggested we help him buy it as a gesture that I would support his decision to have a bike and trusted that he would be safe with it. We told our son that night that we would help him buy the motorcycle as his birthday gift. I apologized to him. This is one thing that I have found has helped in my relationship with our children, the ability to admit being wrong and apologizing when I am.