Then I realized: That's exactly what he wants me to do!

"You'll see," I said quietly.

For many weeks I didn't get angry no matter how insolent he was. I gently let him know that I didn't approve of his "moods" and his insolence and that I expected him to change when he had time to get hold of himself. I used no force and I didn't lecture. The vision of some institutional "worker" trying to make up to my son my own past deficiencies steadied me in my new purpose.

The last big trial came during another camping trip. We'd had a long hard drive and everyone was edgy. My son flatly refused to do his share in setting up camp. "I don't want to gather kindling," he said.

"I won't have you shirking your responsibilities," I answered angrily.

Members of my family looked at me in surprise, but I was in no mood to heed them. "Now get to work with the rest of us before I become really angry," I said.

"See!" my son shouted as though he had won a great victory. "I knew you wouldn't keep your promise!"

He was right. I had lectured him in front of the family. I admitted my backsliding.

In the months that followed I didn't allow myself to become angry no matter how hard he tried me. When he had assured himself that my new attitude was permanent, he settled down to respectful behavior.

Today, as long as I remember to keep our discussions on a friendly basis, and in private, everything goes fine. When I forget and become even slightly indignant, backsliding occurs.

I don't know what would have happened if I hadn't found it necessary to learn about juvenile rebelliousness. I might have found a solution in some other way. My son might have matured to the point where he could accept the fact that his angry father really loved and respected him. But I doubt that.

Probably the best that could have happened is that I would have given in to advice to consult a good psychologist.

I was thinking these things over the other day as I prepared to write this article. My son came into the den to ask me to play ping-pong with him.

"Son," I said, walking out to the game room with him, "I want to ask you a question so I can put your answer in the article. How do you think parents should behave?"

"Firm but quiet."

"You know how I like children to behave?"

"No."

"Just like you."

"Thanks," he said warmly. "But," he added with a thoughtful smile, "I must admit you've had your problems with me."

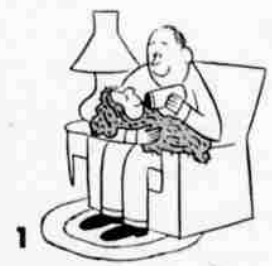
"Whatever problems I've had with you were very small," I said.

After all, the basic problem was with me.

HOW TO RAISE A BOY

(A GUIDE TO NEW FATHERS)

HERB GREEN



1 *Give Him Lots of Care....*

2 *Teach Him to Think for Himself*

3 *And to be Confident....*

4 *Give Lots of Advice....*

5 *Financial Assistance....*

6 *Stand by Him When Necessary...*

7 *Help Spoil Any New Arrivals...*

8 *And, If You're Lucky, You'll Have it All to do Over Again!!*

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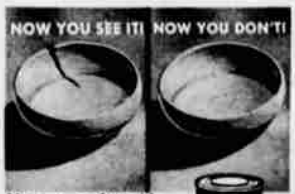

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