

I've Tried Everything!: A Look At Parental Estrangement

Today's podcast is called, "I've Tried Everything!: A Look At Parental Estrangement"

Parental estrangement is one of the most painful experiences a mother or father can face. When an adult child chooses to cut off communication, many parents are often left in shock, bewildered by the silence. Many insist, "I've tried everything," yet still find themselves shut out.

But have they truly tried everything? Or is it possible that there are things they have not yet considered?

It is natural for a hurting parent to view themselves as the innocent victim of an ungrateful or selfish child. They may say, "I don't even know what happened. Everything was fine, & then one day, they were just gone." But relationships, especially those between parents & children, typically do not fall apart overnight. There are cracks in the foundation long before the final break.

Proverbs 18:17 in the Amplified Bible reminds us, "***The one who states his case first seems right, until his rival comes & cross-examines him***" A parent's version of the story may feel absolutely true from their perspective, but have they truly examined the other side? Have they really listened to what their child has been trying to tell them for years?

Many estranged parents claim they were given no warning, but in reality, their children often tried to express their feelings repeatedly. When an adult child says, "This hurt me," was it met with defensiveness? When they set a boundary, was it seen as an attack? Was their pain dismissed as overreaction?

James 1:19 advises, "***Everyone must be quick to hear [be a careful, thoughtful listener], slow to speak [a speaker of carefully chosen words], slow to anger [patient, reflective, forgiving]***" If a parent did not listen to their child in this way, if they instead minimized their child's feelings, turned the conversation back on themselves, or justified hurtful actions, then their child eventually gave up on being heard.

Parents who claim to have "tried everything" often overlook one of the most powerful steps they could take: genuine self examination & accountability. It is easy to say, "I did my best" or "I was a good parent." But real healing begins with asking hard questions:

- Did I ever truly apologize for ways I have hurt my child?
- Did I take responsibility, or did I excuse my actions?
- Did I listen to their needs, or did I only focus on my own?

Jesus himself said, "***Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but fail to notice the log that is in your own eye?***" in Matthew 7:3. A parent who has never seriously examined their own actions is missing a major part of why the estrangement occurred.

Some parents, rather than seeking real reconciliation, fall into self pity: "Look what my child has done to me. I'm the real victim here." They may talk about how much they miss

their child while disregarding the fact that their child likely left for a valid reason. Instead of addressing past wounds, they focus on their own pain, making it harder for their child to return.

But love is not self seeking. True love asks, “How can I repair what was broken?” rather than “How could they do this to me?”

Reconciliation is not just about waiting for an estranged child to come back. It requires humility, self reflection, & the willingness to make real changes. Parents who have “tried everything” but have not truly listened, taken responsibility, apologized, or prioritized their child’s well being over their own comfort, have *not* actually tried everything.

For those who are willing to do the hard work, there is hope. Healing does not happen overnight, & there is no guarantee of reconciliation, but taking responsibility for past mistakes can open a door that was once closed.

If you are an estranged parent, ask yourself: Have I truly tried everything? If the answer is no, are you willing to start now?

Thank you for listening to my podcast!