



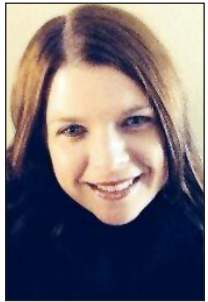
# FAITH: A *FRESH TAKE*



April 20, 2017

## Learning How to Fight Fair

It is inevitable that as parents we will face confrontations with our children. Whether it has been a full-fledged tantrum from a 2-year-old who refuses to go to bed or a disagreement about curfew with a teenager, I have experienced my fair share of “fights” or “struggles” with my son and daughter.



However, I haven't always fought fair — and neither have my children. When upset, stressed or angry, it is tempting to lash out at others, take out our bad day on those around us or even create an argument over something as silly as juice or pancakes. When a disagreement ensues and tension gets high, no one wins.

I found myself reflecting on how I handle fights this weekend while reading a book about ways to successfully navigate marriage. The author detailed helpful strategies for remaining calm and working through common problems couples face, but I kept finding myself relating these strategies to how I have communicated with my children and continue to communicate with my now teenagers.

These simple tips, though, make sense for any type of relationship. The author suggested creating rules or guidelines for how you plan to settle

disagreements. One of the primary suggestions was to avoid getting historical. In other words, resist the temptation to bring up actions, behaviors or words from the past.

For example, when my son and I have a disagreement about setting a time for him to return home in the evening, I need to resist bringing up the times I let him stay out later or when he arrived a few minutes late. Bringing up the past is never helpful when it only spotlights negative thoughts or behaviors.

Another strategy revolved around thinking consciously about what you are about to say. In anger, we often spout off exactly what we are thinking, which as I know firsthand, is not always the most appropriate response. I must strive to ask myself “should this be said?” and “should it be said right now?”

Although it is easy to think about how you want a disagreement to be resolved, in the heat of the moment it is difficult to remain calm. However, if I pray about what is bothering me, ask God for guidance when navigating issues with my children and put my worries in his hands, I can then find the strength to fight fair and with grace.

— Shannon Philpott

*Shannon Philpott is a freelance writer and college journalism instructor, but most of all a mother of two teens. You can see her work at [www.shannonphilpott.com](http://www.shannonphilpott.com).*



CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano, handout

Pope Francis meets Nadia Murad Basee Taha, who escaped from Islamic State slavery in Iraq, during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican May 3. She is now a human rights activist and is a U.N. goodwill ambassador for its office that fights human trafficking.

## Technology and Social Media Empower Youth

Social media platforms encourage young people to create and share content with their peers around the globe, which has amplified their voices and their potential to make a difference.



According to the International Telecommunication Union, an agency of the United Nations, information and communication technology has played a central role

in young people's rise to prominence on a global scale.

“It has helped them to mobilize behind a common cause and to collaborate, and it has given them a voice where before they had none,” the agency said in a 2013 report.

Worldwide, young people use technology to become engaged in issues such as illegal child labor, poverty, student rights, free speech and censorship, homelessness, rural and urban issues, community development, racism and the environment.

And while access to the internet and digital services is not yet universal, online activism has helped to let go of the idea that certain issues are “just too big” and nothing can be done as individuals.

Technology helps us to become more knowledgeable and engage in an issue through education. Often, people learn about an issue, get motivated to help, sign a petition and even donate to a cause after reading an article a friend shared on social media. This passion leads us to find ways to help people as much as we can.

(It is important to keep in mind that there are risks of misinformation if something is shared without being properly researched and risks being exposed to hateful comments. Extreme caution and responsibility is advised, especially when safeguarding people's privacy and well-being online and offline.)

Some online campaigns have been criticized as self-serving fads, empty gestures or “slacktivism,” but even then, these campaigns have the poten-

tial to bring forth change. An example of this is the ALS Association's ice bucket challenge, which raised online awareness about amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. It also raised more than \$115 million in donations for medical research in 2014.

When facing injustice or wanting to help others, turning to the internet is a way to garner support via social media or websites like change.org.

Because of technology, many young activists today can share their powerful stories.

An example of this is Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, a teenager who was shot by the Taliban for defending women's right to education.

Before receiving the Nobel Prize at 17, this iconic education advocate started speaking out through a blog, *Diary of a Pakistani Schoolgirl*, under a pseudonym, describing her life under the Taliban. She now has a foundation that works to secure girls' rights to a minimum of 12 years of education, especially in developing countries.

When asked by students how can they bring change to their communities, Malala, who was recently named the youngest United Nations Messenger of Peace, tells them to come forward and participate. “Often, we think we are too young, or our ideas may not work, and we need to grow up to bring change. I just say no,” she said in a recent interview with a teen magazine. “Whatever you want to do now, you can do it.”

Whether you're on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Tumblr or Twitter, social media has the potential to support others — with prayers and messages of encouragement — and to advocate solutions for underlying problems.

Online advocacy can be a catalyst for other actions offline, like calling your legislator, going to a rally or dedicating hours to volunteering. After all, being engaged online is one more tool in the toolbox to become involved in our communities and take action.

— Maria-Pia Negro Chin

(This column is part of the CNS columns package.)



CNS/PAUL JEFFREY

Ajok Uogu feeds her 2-year old daughter, Awok, a nutritional supplement April 26 in St. Daniel Comboni Catholic Hospital in Wau, South Sudan. Drought and armed conflict have pushed tens of thousands of Wau-area residents out of their homes, away from their farms and unable to adequately feed themselves.

### Fresh Take: a way to look at faith from a different perspective

This is an online-only page dedicated to young adult Catholics, their interests, their needs, their challenges and their faith.

We want to give young adults something to “chew on,” to think about when they're looking for something more than an on-line horoscope or the

latest star news.

This page offers columns we believe will interest our young adults. Let us know.

*Email us at [cathnews@bellevillemessenger.org](mailto:cathnews@bellevillemessenger.org) with questions, suggestions or for more information.*

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