

Trading Values

An overview of the hit new reality television show *Wife Swap* and its ethic and moral values.

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Introduction

It is 2:57 pm; your child is anxiously waiting for the school bell to ring. He or she sits impatiently watching the hands on the clock. The teacher is conveying final thoughts to her class, but your child is intolerantly waiting to get home. The school bell has finally rung. Without wasting, he or she runs out of the classroom door and runs down the routine path home. Habitually, he sprints into the house and without a second thought turns on the television. They will spend hours in front of the television until his mom calls him or her to dinner. The reason he or she does this is because most of the children in his neighborhood have been captivated with the same habits. This type of scenario is common to countless American families in the present day. Many adults fail to comprehend that problems in children are developed from watching a great deal of TV. There are numerous problems that are similar to this concern. As a young child with a maturing brain sits in front of the TV for several hours every day, it can create loss of creativity, short attention span, and bad behavior further down the road. Some would argue that the programs on television are not a positive influence on families in general. Well this statement could have been a well-argued issue last year in 2003. In 2004, there are shows such as “Wife Swap” on ABC; “Trading Spouses” on Fox; among other shows pertaining to swapping families. Reality TV is at its best for families to reiterate values being taught at home. Families, not just children, can enjoy these types of shows. Prime-time television has helped families spend more quality time together. With shows like “Wife Swap” it eliminates the sex and violence that American’s are use to seeing on prime-time television. Parents now have control how much and the types programs their child is watching. Children are very used to images flashing before their eyes to provide them understanding of the information being conveyed to them. The end result can help manage the development of the young child’s mind and increase capabilities. In the

long run it will help families stay focus and demonstrate family values.

Family Values

While the argument can be made that reality shows like “Trading Spouses” and “Wife Swap” reinforce family values, the negative effects of reality shows that challenge the current family structure actually does more to erode traditional values. At first glance, shows like “Trading Spouses” and “Wife Swap” appear to support the role of spouses since they have the opportunity to enter a new family household with the expectation of establishing clear rules and guidelines. However, what really occurs is that the children challenge established rules, roles of mother and father are portrayed to extreme stereotypes, i.e. stay at home mothers versus negligent career-minded moms. In some family structures, the role of the responsible father is absent from the decision-making.

The greater threat to family values by the “Trading Spouses” families is in the perception that we all get a second chance at getting it right. Television producers have succeeded in making American viewers believe that the grass is greener on the other side of the marital fence. The show lives out the fantasy of many married couples who dream of having the perfect spouse, hence the perfect family. Viewers are left to consider that a new spouse can make up for the shortcomings of their current partner. Little thought is given to the value of hard work, commitment, fidelity and trust. Furthermore, children in these shows learn that it is okay to challenge the authority of their mothers and fathers. Even more misleading is that children are left to believe that they can actually change parents to replace them with people who will spare the rod.

Wife Swap: The Beginning



(The Spolansky family meets Lynn Bradley pictures courtesy of ABC)

Have you ever experienced a time in your life when you go into an argument with your mother and just wished she disappeared? Well that wish has been granted in a different way. On ABC a show was created by the name of “Wife Swap” in which mothers with different family values and beliefs switch with another woman with values that are completely different from them. The show “Wife Swap” originated from The United Kingdom which premiered in 2003 and became an instant hit overseas to a point to where the show received numerous awards (ABC.com). When ABC saw this they immediately jumped on the bandwagon producing their own Americanized version of the UK hit. This show is a reality show that follows two mothers of different backgrounds for two weeks. For the first week the mothers have to follow the each others rules that they made up for one another. The rules will consist of things they do on a daily basis ranging from sleeping in, housework, taking care of the kids, etc. For the second week the mother gets to break all of these rules and come up with their own for their host family. When the two weeks are over the mothers will be reunited to their families again shedding tears and

telling them their experience teaching us that we will not know how much something so little can be so important until it is gone.

Meet the Wives from the First Three Episodes

Click the wives names to see their manuals.

Episode 1



[Bambi Pitt](#)



[Caprice Policchio](#)

Episode 2



[Jodi Spolansky](#)



[Lynn Bradley](#)

Episode 3



[Aletha Smoak](#)



[Amy Beaver](#)

To see more episodes you can view the wife swap website by clicking [here](#).

Conclusion and Reviews

So is this reality show taking things too far? Perhaps this show really does make families start to appreciate what they really have. What would you do without your mother? This show has become a hit in the United States and we believe it will go far just as it has in the United Kingdom where it is in its third season. It is true that this show is unlike any other show on television right now. This reality show had received many reviews even after its first debut in early September. Tom Shales, a style columnist for the Washington Post calls Wife Swap “a welcome change”. To see more reviews click on the links below.

[The Latest Reality Show Twist: Take My Wife, Please](#)

[A Change for the Better](#)

[‘Wife Swap’: A Welcome Change](#)

[TV Review: ‘Wife Swap’](#)

[More Mrs. Than Hits](#)

[All the ‘Trading’ Partners Profited](#)

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