DAD–DASH

MAKE THE DASH COUNT

FREE PRINTABLE · FAMILY GUIDE

THINK IT THROUGH

A dad's guide to 8 common thinking traps, so you can teach your kids to weigh ideas with truth, grace and a clear head.

> *"...let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger"*
>
> JAMES 1:19 · ESV

SPOT IT
8 traps, plain words

TALK IT
Questions for the table

PRACTICE IT
A family game night

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SPOT THE TRAP • 1–4

A bad argument can still land on a true conclusion, and a good cause can be defended badly. Our kids will hear all of these: on the playground, online, even at church. Each trap below has a real-life example, a better way to think and one question to ask.

01 Genetic Fallacy

Judging an idea only by where it came from.

SOUNDS LIKE *"That started with pagans, so it's wrong."*

THINK IT THROUGH Where something came from doesn't settle what it means today. Ask: what is it now, and what does it lead my heart toward?

ASK **Is this bad because of what it is, or only because of where it started?**

02 Straw Man

Twisting someone's view into a weaker one, then knocking that down.

SOUNDS LIKE *"So you're saying you don't care about God at all?"*

THINK IT THROUGH Restate their view so well they'd say, "Yes, that's what I mean." Then respond.

ASK **Did I argue with what they actually said?**

03 False Dilemma

Offering only two choices when more exist.

SOUNDS LIKE *"Either you love Jesus or you do this. Pick one."*

THINK IT THROUGH Look for the third (and fourth) option. Real life is rarely just A or B.

ASK **Are these really the only two options?**

04 Slippery Slope

Claiming one small step will surely lead to disaster.

SOUNDS LIKE *"If you let him wear a costume, next he'll be into witchcraft."*

THINK IT THROUGH Ask what actually connects step one to the worst case. Possible isn't the same as likely.

ASK **What evidence shows step A leads to step Z?**

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SPOT THE TRAP • 5–8

Catch these in your own words first. Kids learn more from a dad who says, “Wait, that wasn’t fair of me” than from a lecture.

05 Guilt by Association

Rejecting something because “bad people” also like it.

SOUNDS LIKE *“People who reject God do that too, so it must be evil.”*

THINK IT THROUGH Bad people also eat pizza and drive trucks. Judge the thing itself.

ASK **Is the thing wrong, or just shared with people I disagree with?**

06 Ad Hominem

Attacking the person instead of their argument.

SOUNDS LIKE *“You only think that because you’re a lukewarm Christian.”*

THINK IT THROUGH Answer the reason, not the reasoner. Even someone you dislike can be right.

ASK **Did I deal with their point, or with them?**

07 Appeal to Fear

Using scary outcomes to skip the actual reasons.

SOUNDS LIKE *“Do you really want to risk your kids for that?”*

THINK IT THROUGH Fear is a feeling, not an argument. Name it, then ask for the reasons.

ASK **Take the fear away. Is there still a good reason?**

08 Hasty Generalization

Drawing a big conclusion from one or two cases.

SOUNDS LIKE *“I knew a guy who did that and walked away from his faith.”*

THINK IT THROUGH One story is a story, not a rule. Ask how many cases, and what else was going on.

ASK **Is this one example, or a real pattern?**

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PRACTICE IT AS A FAMILY

Ten minutes at dinner beats an hour-long lecture. Pick one game a week and keep it fun.

Trap Hunt
Read a cereal box, ad or headline together. Who can spot a trap first?

Fix It
Dad says a bad argument on purpose. Kids rebuild it into a fair one.

Steel Man
Before disagreeing, each person restates the other's view until they say, "That's it."

Third Option
Any time someone says "either/or," the family names one more choice.

Our trap log

Write down traps you catch this month, in ads, shows, conversations or your own words.

WHAT WE HEARD	WHICH TRAP?	A FAIRER WAY TO SAY IT

Dad's commitment
This month I'll model fair thinking by: ☐ listening before answering ☐ owning it when I use a trap ☐ asking "why do you think that?"

"*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.*"
PROVERBS 27:17 · ESV

Trap list inspired by a reel from Tim Barnett (@original_mrb).

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