

## ALL YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PARENTING, BUT DIDN'T KNOW TO ASK!

"All I Want is PEACE, It's Easier to Let Them Have Their Own Way!  
**Discipline** and It's Many Challenges Made Easy!

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**"All I Want is PEACE,  
It's Easier to Let Them Have Their Own Way!  
Discipline and It's Many Challenges Made Easy!**

# TEACHING CHILDREN TO OBEY

By [HELP For The Family/Parenting](#)

## THE CHALLENGE

You and your four-year-old keep getting locked in a battle of wills, and your child always seems to win.

When you tell him to do something he does not want to do, he ignores you. When you tell him *not* to do something he *wants* to do, he throws a tantrum.

'Is this only a phase?' you wonder. 'Should I just hope that he grows out of it?'

You *can* teach your child to obey. But before we discuss how, consider one possible reason for his misbehavior.

## WHY IT HAPPENS

When your child was a newborn, your primary role was that of caregiver. You were at your child's beckon call. All he had to do was whimper, and you came running, anxious to cater to his every need. Of course, such a response was proper and necessary. A newborn or infant needs a parent's constant attention.

After many months of that treatment, however, it is only natural that a child will act as if he were the master of the house and his parents the servants who are there to do his bidding. Then, usually by two years of age, the child becomes aware of a harsh reality: His little "autocracy" has crumbled. His parents no longer follow *his* orders; they expect *him* to follow *theirs*. This is a rude awakening for children! Some respond by throwing tantrums. Others test their parents' authority by refusing to obey.

At that critical time, a parent needs to assume a new role—that of an authority figure who gives clear direction as to what is expected of the child. But what if the child ignores or rejects that direction, as depicted in the opening scenario?

This also holds true for older children and teenagers whose parents did not use these principles and were not consistent in the child's discipline. But it is not too late to instill these principles into any aged child.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Take the Lead

Your child will not accept your role as a leader unless he sees you taking the lead. So, in a balanced way, you need to assert your authority. In recent decades, some so-called experts have made the word "authority" sound harsh. One even calls parental authority "unethical" and "immoral." But the alternative—permissiveness—can leave children feeling confused, indulged, and entitled. It does little to prepare them for responsible adulthood.

*Bible principle: Proverbs 29:15*

### Employ Discipline

One dictionary defines discipline as "training which produces obedience or self-control, often in the form of rules and punishments if these are broken." Of course, discipline should never be unreasonable or abusive. On the other hand, it should not be vague or inconsequential, leaving the child with no incentive to change.

*Bible principle: Proverbs 23:13*

## **Be Clear**

Some parents merely *ask* for their child's obedience. ("I would like you to clean up your room—OK?") Perhaps they feel that this shows good manners. That tactic, however, can put the parent in a submissive role and leave the child free to weigh the pros and cons of the request and then decide whether to comply. Rather than abdicate your authority, give clear direction in the form of statements.

*Bible principle: 1 Corinthians 14:9*

## **Be Decisive**

If you say no, stick to that, and present a united front with your spouse. If you have decided on a consequence for disobedience, follow through. Do not get embroiled in negotiations or endlessly discuss *why* you made a decision. It will be much easier for your child—and for you—if you just "let your 'Yes' mean yes and your 'No,' no." James 5:12.

## **Be Loving**

The family is neither a democracy nor a dictatorship. Rather, it is a God-given arrangement in which children can be lovingly guided toward responsible adulthood. As part of that process, discipline will teach your child to obey and help him feel secure in your love.

## **Bible Principles**

"A child left unrestrained brings shame on his mother."—Proverbs 29:15"

"Do not hold back discipline."—Proverbs 23:13"

"Unless you . . . use speech that is easily understood, how will anyone know what is being said?"—1 Corinthians 14:9

# HOW TO DISCIPLINE YOUR TEENAGER

By HELP For The Family/Parenting

## THE CHALLENGE

The family rule is cell phones off by 9:00 p.m., but twice this week you caught your daughter texting past midnight. Your son's curfew is 10:00 p.m., but last night—once again—he came home after 11:00.

Your teenager *can* do better. But first you *need to know why he or she seems to be flouting your rules*. The good news? What appears to be outright defiance may be something far less serious.

## WHY IT HAPPENS

### Unclear Boundaries

Some teenagers ignore rules in order to see what they can get away with. For example, if a parent has said that a certain misdeed would result in a particular consequence, a teenager might test the boundaries to see if the parent will follow through. Are such teenagers becoming hardened rebels? Not necessarily. The fact is, **teens are more likely to be lax about obeying rules when parents have not been consistent in enforcing consequences or when the boundaries have not been clearly defined.**

### Rigidity

Some parents try to control their teenager with an endless list of rules. When the teen disobeys, the parent gets angry and imposes *even more* rules. Often, however, that only makes matters worse. "The more you try to gain control, the more your teenager resists," explains the book *Parent/Teen Breakthrough*, adding: "The control approach feels like trying to spread cold butter on soft bread: it just tears the bread apart, and the solution isn't to spread harder."

### Proper Discipline Can Help

Different from "punishment"—which means to make someone suffer—"discipline" basically means to teach. So how can you teach your teenager to comply with your rules?

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Be Clear

Teenagers need to know precisely what is expected of them and what the consequences of disobedience will be.—*Bible principle: Galatians 6:7.*

Suggestion: **Write a list of your house rules.** Then ask yourself: 'Have I set too many? Have I set too few? Are some no longer needed? Should I make adjustments in accord with the level of responsibility that my teenager has demonstrated?'

### Be Consistent

Teenagers might become confused if they were let off the hook last week but then face consequences this week for a similar infraction.—*Bible principle: Matthew 5:37.*

**Suggestion: Try to make the consequence more relevant to the “crime.”** For example, if your teenager breaks a curfew, imposing an *earlier* curfew would be a related consequence.

## **Be Reasonable.**

Show yourself to be a flexible parent by according your teenager more freedom as it is earned.—*Bible principle: Philippians 4:5.*

**Suggestion: Sit down and discuss rules with your teenager.** You might even have him or her weigh in on what consequences should be meted out for certain infractions. **Teenagers are far more likely to comply with rules that they have had a hand in formulating.**

## **Build Character**

Your goal is not just to get your teenager to obey orders but to help him develop a healthy conscience—an internal sense of right and wrong. (See below “Build Positive Traits.”)—*Bible principle: 1 Peter 3:16.*

**Suggestion: Look to the Bible for help.** It is the best source of “discipline that gives insight,” and its wisdom can “give to the inexperienced ones shrewdness, to a young man [or woman] knowledge and thinking ability.”—*Proverbs 1:1-4.*

## **Build Positive Traits**

Help your child think about the character traits for which he or she would like to be known. When faced with a challenge, young people can learn to make good decisions by asking themselves the following questions:

**What kind of person do I want to be?**—*Colossians 3:10.*

**What would a person with a Christ-like personality do when faced with this challenge?**—*Proverbs 10:1.*

The Bible contains many true-life examples of men and women whose actions defined them as being either good or bad. (1 Corinthians 10:11; James 5:10, 11) **Use these examples to help your son or daughter build positive character traits.**

# HOW TO SAY NO

By HELP For The Family/Parenting

## THE CHALLENGE

Your child simply will not take no for an answer. Whenever you say the word, his unruly response tests your patience to the limit. Nothing you do or say calms him, and eventually you feel that you have no choice but to give in. Once again, **your resolute NO** turns into an exasperated, reluctant yes.

You *can* stop that tiresome pattern. First, though, consider some factors about **saying no**.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

### Saying NO Is Not Cruel

Some parents would disagree, perhaps saying that you should reason with your child, explain yourself, or even negotiate. But avoid saying no, they urge, **for fear that it will make your child feel resentful**.

True, the word “no” might initially disappoint your child. Nevertheless, it teaches him a vital lesson—that in the real world, there are limits by which people must abide. By giving in, on the other hand, you weaken your authority and teach your child to manipulate you by whining every time he wants something. Over time, your response could make him resentful. After all, how much can a child respect an easily manipulated parent?

### Your Saying NO Prepares A Child For Adolescence And Adulthood

It teaches him the benefits of self-denial. A child who learns that valuable lesson is less likely to give in during adolescence when he faces pressure to take drugs or to have premarital sex.

Your saying no also trains a child for adulthood. “The truth is, we [adults] don’t always get what we want,” writes Dr. David Walsh. “We’re not doing our kids any favors when we teach them that the world will always serve up whatever they want on a silver platter.”

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Focus on Your Goal

You want your child to become a competent, emotionally mature, successful adult. But you work against that objective if you give him everything he asks for. The Bible says that if someone “is pampered from his youth, he will become thankless later on.” (Proverbs 29:21) Saying no, therefore, is part of effective discipline. Such training will help your child, not hurt him. —Bible principle: Proverbs 19:18.

### When You Say NO, Be Decisive

Your child is not your equal. So there is no need to debate your no as if you need him to approve it. Of course, as children grow, they need to have their “powers of discernment trained to distinguish both right and wrong.” (Hebrews 5:14) So it is not wrong to reason with a child. Nevertheless, do not get entangled in endless disputes with younger children

about *why* you said no. The more you dispute with your child, the more your no will sound like a question rather than a decision.

*Bible principle: Ephesians 6:1.*

## **Stick to your decision**

Your child might test your resolve with whining or pleading. If that happens at home, what can you do? "Separate yourself from the child," recommends the book *Loving Without Spoiling*. "Say, 'If you're in a whiny mood, that's OK, but I don't want to hear it. You need to go to your room. You can whine there until you are ready to stop.'" At first, such a firm stance might be difficult for you to take—and for your child to accept. But his resistance is likely to lessen as he realizes that you mean what you say.—*Bible principle: James 5:12.*

**Do not say no just to flex your parental muscle!**

## **Be Reasonable**

Do not say no just to flex your parental muscle. Instead, "let your reasonableness become known." (Philippians 4:5) **There are times when you can say yes to your child—as long as you are not giving in to mere whining and your child's request is legitimate.**—*Bible principle: Colossians 3:21*

### **KEY SCRIPTURES**

"Discipline your son while there is hope."—Proverbs 19:18.

"Children, be obedient to your parents."—Ephesians 6:1.

"Let your 'Yes' mean yes and your 'No,' no."—James 5:12.

"Do not be exasperating your children, so that they do not become downhearted."—Colossians 3:21

## **THE VALUE OF SAYING NO**

"It's human nature for us to want to keep our kids smiling and cheerful. But you know what? If our kids never get mad at us, or get frustrated or become disappointed, that might be a warning sign that we aren't doing our job as parents. How will your kids learn to deal with frustration and disappointment if they never have any practice? How will your kids learn self-discipline if you don't teach them? It is your job to teach these important life lessons by saying no."—Dr. David Walsh.

# HOW TO DEAL WITH TEMPER TANTRUMS

## HELP For The Family/Parenting

When he is upset, your two-year-old launches into a fit of screaming, stomping, and thrashing about. You wonder: 'Is my child normal? Does he throw tantrums because of something I am doing wrong? Will he ever grow out of this?'

You *can* help your two-year-old to change his behavior. First, though, consider what could be contributing to it.

## WHY IT HAPPENS

Small children have limited experience in handling their emotions. That factor alone can lead to an occasional tantrum. But there is more.

Think about the change that a child experiences at about age two. From the time that he was born, his parents catered to his every need. If he cried, for example, they came running. *'Is the baby sick? Does he need to be fed? soothed? changed?'* The parents did whatever was needed to make things better. And that was proper because a baby is fully dependent upon his parents.

**At about age two**, however, a child begins to realize that **his parents are catering to him less and less**. In fact, **instead of their serving his needs**, they **expect him to comply with their wishes**. The tables have turned, and a two-year-old may not take well to the change without protest—perhaps in the form of a tantrum.

In time, a child usually adjusts to the fact that his parents are his instructors, not just his caretakers. Hopefully, he also comes to see that his role is to "be obedient to [his] parents." (Colossians 3:20) In the meantime, a child may test every fiber of his parents' patience with one tantrum after another.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Be Understanding

Your child is **not a miniature adult**. Having little experience in dealing with his emotions, he **may overreact when he is upset**. Try to **see the situation through his eyes**.

*Bible principle: 1 Corinthians 13:11.*

### Stay Calm

When your child is having a tantrum, **losing your temper will not help**.

**To the extent possible, ignore the tantrum and react matter-of-factly.**

**Remembering why tantrums occur will help you to stay calm.**

*Bible principle: Proverbs 19:11.*

### Hold Your Ground

If you **give in to whatever it is your child is demanding**, he will likely throw another tantrum the next time he wants something. Calmly show your child that you mean what you

*say.*—*Bible principle: Matthew 5:37.*

**Remembering why tantrums occur will help you to stay calm**

## **Be Patient**

Do not expect tantrums to disappear overnight, especially if you have given your child reason to believe that his behavior will sway you. If you react properly and consistently, however, the tantrums will likely diminish. Eventually, they will stop altogether. The Bible says: "Love is long-suffering."—1 Corinthians 13:4.

### **Also, try the following:**

When the tantrum begins, hold your child in your arms (if possible) and, without hurting him, restrict him from thrashing about. **Do not shout at your child.** Just wait for the storm to pass. Eventually, the child will realize that the tantrum has got him nowhere.

**Designate an area where you can put your child when he has a tantrum. Tell him that he may come out when he has calmed down, and then leave him there.**

If your child has a tantrum in public, remove him from the view of others. Do not give in just because he is making a spectacle. That will only leave your child with the message that by throwing a tantrum, he can get whatever he wants.

### **KEY SCRIPTURES**

"When we were children, we thought and reasoned as children do."—1 Corinthians 13:11, *Contemporary English Version*.

"The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger."—Proverbs 19:11. "Let your word *Yes* mean *Yes*, your *No*, *No*."—Matthew 5:37.

## **BE CONSISTENT!**

# GETTING KIDS TO COOPERATE

By Wendy L. Hunter, M.D. - Parents Magazine

## GET THEIR ATTENTION

If your child doesn't brush their teeth after you've told them to five times, it's possible he didn't even realize you were talking to them. **In fact, research shows that the likelihood of a child's cooperating depends on what he's doing when his parent makes a request.** The parent must first get the child's attention and then speak directly to him, no matter how old they are.

You can use the same strategy at bedtime. **Look your child in the eye and give him a warm-up direction:** "It's getting close to bedtime." **Once they make eye contact, quickly follow up with instructions:** "It's time to brush your teeth. Let's head to the bathroom."

## DON'T ASK - TELL.

Unlike adults, children simply don't understand that a polite question actually means "You need to do this." Instead **give clear directives**—"It is time to go for a walk, please put your coat on"

Studies of three to seven -year-olds showed that **suggestions like "Can you put your shoes on?" fail to elicit the same results as clear directives like "Put your shoes on."** **Research also shows that kids don't fully understand sarcasm or irony until they are around age ten, so using those to get cooperation isn't likely to work either.**

## OBSERVE HOW YOUR CHILD COMMUNICATES

You can learn from the way your child communicates as well. **Pay attention to the words they use to ask a friend to do something, and compare them to how you might have expressed the same request.**

**Then try using her exact words the next time you tell them to do a task or fulfill a request.** If that doesn't work, consider whether you need to dial down your own vocabulary. **Speak in simple phrases or say the same thing two different ways; your child will understand you better and might even learn a new word!**

## BE PATIENT

**Kids are most likely to cooperate if they don't feel rushed, yet studies show that parents often don't give kids enough time to respond to directions.** **Children don't switch tasks easily or quickly.** If you're tired of repeating yourself, you may just need to give your child more time to respond.

**Just like any of us, kids want to know what to expect,** so if your child is dodging the hairbrush, you could start by using it gently on their arm or her belly. Or make a game of the task.

## OFFER YOUR CHILD A CHOICE

Choices work great as long as **both options end in what you want your child to do,** "You might ask, 'Do you want to walk to the car, or do you want me to carry you?'. And if they refuse to pick, that's your cue to say, **"Then Mommy or Daddy will pick for you."**

**When you can't give your child an option, it helps to explain your thinking.** For example, if your toddler doesn't understand why she can't touch the stove, tell her, **"Don't touch! Ouchy!"** rather than simply, **"No."** **Your reasoning is most important for older kids to hear because they need to understand why you are needing them to cooperate.**

Encourage your child to share their own thoughts, it will help them learn to processes and work through a situation, as well as help them learn to negotiate; which is a critical social skill.

Let's say your child wants to skip their piano practicing tonight. Instead of refusing their request outright, let them tell you their rationale. It's okay to give them a pass if they provide a good argument, like wanting to spend time with the family or have a special activity and are promising to practice extra later in the week. **Just don't relent if they beg and collapses to the floor in tears to get their way—that's not a negotiation tactic you want to reward.**

## FIND SOMETHING TO PRAISE THEM FOR

Pointing out success or something positive about them, or what they have done gives your child a sense of confidence and pride, especially when they have had a hard time cooperating. When kids feel good about themselves and about things they have done and have it recognized by others, they tend want to cooperate in all areas.

**The key is to keep your praise specific to a task, character trait, or an act of kindness they have done.** After dinner you might say, "I noticed you put your dish in the sink right after we finished. I'm proud of you for helping without being asked," rather than, "You're such a great helper." "Or I love that you are always honest and tell me the truth. That takes a lot of courage! It makes me so happy!" Also be sure to comment on acts of kindness that they do, "I was so proud of you when you shared your favorite toy with you friend when they came to play. I know that toy is very special to you, it was so kind of you to share it."

There's no doubt that kids enjoy meeting their parents' and other adults expectations. As they are praised for doing so, a foundation for cooperation is being built into their life that soon will come naturally. The ability to cooperate with others will follow them into adulthood and allow them to be successful in interactions that require give and take and cooperation with others; whether it be on the job, in social situations or within their own family dynamics.

# DISCIPLINE MISTAKES MOST PARENTS MAKE

*This article was adapted from Ginger Hubbard's book, Don't Make Me Count to Three!*  
Ginger Hubbard - Author

Do you find yourself threatening, repeating your instructions, or raising your voice in an attempt to get your children to obey? Are you frustrated because nothing seems to work? It could be that faulty child-training methods have snared your line of thinking.

A quick bribe or mild threat looks appealing to a parent's appetite for gaining control of a child, especially in a hurried situation. So, we take the bait -- hook, line, and sinker. It's not until later that we realize we're caught in a tangled net of ineffective parenting.

We must remember that our goal is not merely to get children to outwardly obey, but to reach their hearts with the gospel of Christ. When we adopt faulty child-training methods that aim for behavior modification only, we miss the issues of the heart and the point of biblical discipline.

Here are a few pitfalls that we must guard against:

## Bribing

To bribe a child into obeying is to motivate him wrongly. Bribing encourages children in selfishness, as their motive for obeying is personal gain. Bribing sounds like, "If you clean your room you can rent a movie tonight" or "If you don't misbehave in the grocery store, you can pick out candy at the check-out counter." **Children should be taught to obey because it is right and because it pleases God, not to get a reward.** The Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord" (Colossians 3:20). We should simply state the standard and follow through with consequences when that standard is violated.

## Counting to Three

As we train our children to obey us, we are ultimately training them to obey Jesus. **Do we want our children to obey God the first time, the second time, or the third time?** When we count to three, we cause our children to get into the habit of delayed obedience. **Delayed obedience is disobedience.** Counting to three encourages them to put off obeying until absolutely necessary. We want our children to view obedience as their best option, not a choice that is put off until the last minute.

## Threatening

This is one of my **biggest struggles in parenting.** I'm so tempted to say, "If you don't do this, then these will be the consequences." Moms, this is how we get ourselves in a pickle. **If we tell them there will be a consequence then by golly there better be one. Otherwise, we might cause them to question our word.** A woman of integrity says what she means and means what she says. If we cry wolf too many times, we will eventually lose our effectiveness as well as the respect of our children.

**Our children need to have confidence that our word is our word.**

## **Appealing to Their Emotions**

Parents often try to appeal to the emotions of the child by making them feel guilty. "After all I do for you, this is how you repay me," moans the parent with a sad face. It's easy for us to feel sorry for ourselves and think that our children "owe us" obedience. However, **we want our children's motives for obeying to come from a heart to please God not from a parent inflicted guilt trip.**

## **Reasoning With Small Children**

Parents should avoid trying to talk their children into obedience. Reasoning with small children erases the line of authority between the parent and the child, and places the parent in a position of being outsmarted!

We should avoid statements like, "Are you ready to go to bed?" and "Don't you think you should brush your teeth?" and "Why don't we pick up the toys before lunch?"

**Asking the child if he would like to do something places him on a peer level with the parent.** The parent who tries to reason with her child usually ends up frustrated, and the child usually ends up disrespecting her authority by arguing rather than obeying. Sometimes I wonder if it might be beneficial for us to play a recording of "I am the parent, I am the parent, I am the parent" over and over in order to brainwash us into acting like it!

## **Repeating or Going Back on Instructions**

In studying some of the most admirable and successful generals of our country, I have found that they all had one thing in common: **they were certain of their commands before they issued them.** Soldiers do not respect or respond well to an uncertain and inconsistent leader. Paul said it best in 1 Corinthians 14:8, "For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?" (NKJ) **Likewise, when Mom issues half-hearted commands to her children and doesn't require her children to follow through immediately, she sends them mixed signals.** Not only will this sort of leadership earn Mom the "most wishy-washy in command" medal, but it will also cause her children to question their own positions in the family. They will become uncertain of when and how to respond to Mom's instructions. This can lead to insecure children who are unsure of their own actions. However, when we lead our "troops" with confidence, they find security and stability in their call to obedience.

**We should never issue a warning or command without following it through.** This rule of thumb requires that we think before we speak. In Matthew we are told, "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37)

We should try not to say "yes" or "no" to something until we are sure that it is our definite answer. According to Proverbs 15:28 it is biblical that we think before speaking: "The heart of

the righteous *weighs* its answers." Let us weigh our answers, give confident commands, and raise up a mighty army for the Lord!

## **Effective Parenting**

### **The First Step Toward Effective Parenting**

Is to realize that **biblical obedience is complete, immediate, and infused with joy.** You might teach this concept to younger children by explaining **that obedience is all the way, right away, and with a joyful heart.**

### **The Second Step Toward Effective Parenting**

Is to **expect nothing less than biblical obedience.** Don't be wishy-washy or you'll raise wishy-washy children who have a hard time determining when to and when not to submit to authority. **Determine the "family rules" and establish a strong family identity in Christ by expecting your children to obey authority.**

### **The Third Step Toward Effective Parenting**

Is to **faithfully administer consequences when children disobey.** When **disobedience is met with consequences children learn the law of the harvest.** They learn that **God has built the principle of sowing and reaping into their worlds.** While administering consequences is not pleasant, it's a prerequisite for peace: **"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it"** (Hebrews 12:11).

**By avoiding the snares of ineffective parenting and adhering to God's design for discipline, we move past the frustrations of not knowing how to handle issues of disobedience and into a confident, well-balanced approach to raising our children.**

# SECRETS of CONFIDENT KIDS

By Alina Tugend - Parent's Magazine

**Here are the most effective ways to help your child become happy, self-assured, and successful**

## **Consider Your Compliments**

Of course, young kids need plenty of encouragement, whether they're learning to crawl, throw a ball, or draw a circle. But your child can get so accustomed to hearing "Good job!" that they may have a hard time realizing when his accomplishments are really worth celebrating. They will also sense when you're exaggerating ("That's the best block tower I have ever seen!") and may start ignoring your compliments.

**Don't praise your child if he does something that he's supposed to do.** When he brushes his teeth or throws his shirt into the hamper, for example, a simple "thank you" is sufficient. Try to offer specific feedback: Instead of saying that your child's drawing is gorgeous, you might point out his nice use of purple.

## **Don't Rescue Your Child**

**It's natural to want to prevent your child from getting hurt, feeling discouraged, or making mistakes, but when you intervene** (trying to get them invited to a birthday party she wasn't included in, or pressuring the soccer coach to give them more game time) **you're not doing them any favors.**

**Kids need to know that it's okay to fail, and that it's normal to feel sad, anxious, or angry,** says Robert Brooks, PhD, coauthor of *Raising Resilient Children*. **They learn to succeed by overcoming obstacles, not by having you remove them.**

**"It's particularly important for young children to have the chance to play and take risks without feeling that their parents will criticize or correct them for doing something wrong,"** says Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, PhD, professor of psychology at Temple University, in Philadelphia. She even encourages parents to make their own little mistakes on purpose. **"Seeing you mess up and not make a big deal about it will make little kids feel so much better."**

## **Let Them Make Decisions**

When your child gets the chance to make choices from a young age, he'll gain confidence in his own good judgment. Of course, kids love to run the show, but having too much control can be overwhelming; it's best to give your child two or three options to choose from. For example, don't ask your 3-year-old what he wants for lunch, but offer pasta or peanut butter and jelly. At the same time, let your child know certain choices are up to you. Gloria Kushel's 8-year-old daughter, Caroline, likes to dress like a boy and wear her hair cropped short. "I decided that I would let her make those choices, but other things, like whether she practices piano, aren't up for a vote," says Kushel, of Mamaroneck, New York.

## **Focus on the Glass Half Full**

If your child tends to feel defeated by disappointments, help them be more optimistic. **Instead of offering glib reassurances to "look on the bright side," encourage her to think about specific ways to improve a situation and bring her closer to her goals,** says Karen Reivich, PhD, coauthor of *The Optimistic Child*. If they are behind her classmates in reading, explain

that everyone learns at their own pace, and offer to spend extra time reading with them. If they are crushed because they didn't get the lead in the second-grade play, don't say, "Well, I think you're a star." Instead, say, "I can see how disappointed you are. Let's come up with a plan for how you can increase the chances of getting the part you want next time."

## **Nurture His Special Interests**

Try to expose your child to a wide variety of activities, and encourage them when they find something they really love. Kids who have a passion -- whether it's dinosaurs or cooking -- feel proud of their expertise and are more likely to be successful in other areas of their life. Quirky hobbies may be particularly helpful for children who have a hard time fitting in at school -- and you can also help your child take advantage of their interest to connect with other kids. For example, if your son likes to draw but most of the boys in his class are into sports, encourage him to do sports drawings. Or he could put together a book of his artwork and show it to the class.

## **Promote Problem Solving**

"Kids are confident when they're able to negotiate getting what they want," says Myrna Shure, PhD, author of *Raising a Thinking Child*. Her research has found that you can teach a young child how to solve problems herself. The key is to bite your tongue. If your child comes to you and complains that a kid took her truck at the playground, ask what she thinks would be a good way to get it back. Even if her first idea is to grab the truck, ask her what she thinks might happen if she did. Then ask, "Can you think of other ways to get it back so that doesn't happen?" In one of Dr. Shure's studies of this situation, 4-year-olds came up with surprisingly mature ideas, like telling the truck-grabber, "You'll have more fun if you play with me than if you play by yourself."

## **Look for Ways to Help Others**

When children feel like they're making a difference -- whether it's passing out cups at preschool or taking cookies to a nursing home -- they feel more confident, says Dr. Brooks.

It's good for kids to have their own household responsibilities, but it may be even more empowering for a young child to assist you with a project ("I could really use your help!"). He'll see firsthand that grown-up tasks require effort, and he'll be easier on himself when he has to work at things in the future, says Dr. Hirsh-Pasek.

## **Find Opportunities for Them to Spend More Time with Adults**

Kids like to hang out with their friends, but it's also important for them to be around a variety of grown-ups. Spending time with older people expands your child's world, forces her to talk to adults besides you, and gives her different ways of thinking. Research has also shown that having a close relationship with a particular grown-up -- a teacher, an uncle, a babysitter, or a friend's parent -- makes children more resilient.

## **Fantasize About the Future**

If kids can envision themselves doing something important or fulfilling when they grow up, they're bound to feel more confident now. Talk to your child about how you, your spouse, and other adults he knows chose careers. Your child may dream of being a pop singer or

an astronaut, but don't try to lower his expectations. Even if he changes his mind, the important thing is that he's thinking about his goals.

## RAISING CONSIDERATE CHILDREN IN A ME-FIRST WORLD

HELP For The Family/Parenting

EACH day presents people with numerous opportunities to do kind things for others. **It may appear, though, that many think only of themselves.** You see evidence of that nearly everywhere—from the shameless way people defraud others to the aggressive way they drive, from their crude language to their explosive tempers.

**A Me-First mentality also exists in many homes.** For example, some spouses divorce simply because one partner feels that he or she “deserves better.” Even some parents may unwittingly sow the seeds of a Me-First Spirit. How? By indulging their child's every whim, while hesitating to administer any kind of discipline.

By contrast, many other parents *are* training their children to put others before self, and with great benefits. Children who are considerate are more likely to make friends and to enjoy stable relationships. They are also more likely to be content. Why? Because, as the Bible says, “there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.”—Acts 20:35.

If you are a parent, how can you help your children to reap the benefits of being kind and to avoid being contaminated by the self-absorbed culture that surrounds them? Consider three traps that could foster a Me-First Spirit in your children, and see how you can avoid those traps.

### Overpraising

#### The Problem

Researchers have noted a disturbing trend: Many young adults are entering the workforce with a marked sense of entitlement—an attitude in which they expect success, even if they have done little or nothing to earn it. Some just assume that they will be promoted quickly, even without mastering their trade. Others are convinced that they are special and deserve to be treated that way—and then they become dejected when they realize that the world does not share their view.

## What Is Behind It

Sometimes a sense of entitlement can be traced back to how a person was raised. For example, some parents have been unduly influenced by the **self-esteem** movement that has become popular in recent decades. Its tenets seemed plausible: **If a little praise is good for kids, a lot of praise is better.** On the other hand, **the thinking was that showing any type of disapproval will only discourage a child.** And in a world on a mission to build self-esteem, *that* was considered the epitome of irresponsible parenting. **Children must never be made to feel bad about themselves—or so parents were told.**

Many fathers and mothers thus began lavishing a constant flow of praise upon their children, even when those children did nothing particularly praiseworthy. Each accomplishment, no matter how small, was celebrated; each indiscretion, no matter how large, was overlooked. Those parents believed that the secret to building self-esteem was to ignore the bad and praise everything else. Making children feel good about themselves became more important than teaching them to accomplish things that they could actually feel good about.

## What The Bible Says

The Bible acknowledges that praise is appropriate *when it is deserved.* (Matthew 25:19-21) But praising children simply to make them feel good may cause them to develop a distorted view of themselves. The Bible aptly states: "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deceiving his own mind." (Galatians 6:3) For good reason, the Bible tells parents: "Don't fail to correct your children. You won't kill them by being firm.—Proverbs 23:13, *Contemporary English Version.*

## What You Can Do

Make it your goal to give correction when it is needed and discipline when it is genuinely deserved. Do not dole out praise just to make your children feel good about themselves. Likely, it will not work. "True self-confidence comes from honing your talents and learning things," says the book *Generation Me*, "not from being told you're great just because you exist." "Do not think of yourself more highly than you should. Instead, be modest."  
*—Romans 12:3, Good News Translation*

## Overprotecting

### The Problem

Many young adults entering the workforce **seem ill-prepared to cope with adversity.** Some are devastated by the slightest criticism. Others are finicky and will accept only work that meets their highest expectations. For example, in the book *Escaping the Endless Adolescence*, Dr. Joseph Allen tells of a young man who said to him during a job interview: "I get the sense that sometimes parts of the work can be a little boring, and I don't want to be bored." Dr. Allen writes: "He didn't seem to understand that *all* jobs have some boring elements. How did one make it to age twenty-three without knowing that?"

## What Is Behind It

In recent decades, many parents have felt compelled to protect their children from any type of adversity. Your daughter failed a test? Intervene and demand that the teacher raise the

grade. Your son received a traffic ticket? Pay the fine for him. A failed romance? Lay all the blame on the other person.

While it is natural to want to protect your children, *overprotecting* them can send the wrong message—that they do not need to take responsibility for their actions. “Instead of learning that they can survive pain and disappointment, and even learn from it,” says the book *Positive Discipline for Teenagers*, “[such] children grow up extremely self-centered, convinced that the world and their parents owe them something.”

## What The Bible Says

Adversity is a part of life. In fact, the Bible says: “Bad things happen to everyone!” (*Ecclesiastes 9:11, Easy-to-Read Version*) That includes *good* people. The Christian apostle Paul, for example, endured all manner of hardship during the course of his ministry. Yet, facing up to adversity benefited him! He wrote: “I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be self-sufficient. . . . I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to suffer want.”—Philippians 4:11, 12.

## What You Can Do

Taking into account the maturity level of your children, strive to follow the Bible principle: “We each must carry our own load.” (*Galatians 6:5, CEV*) If your son receives a traffic ticket, it might be best to let him pay the fine out of his allowance or salary. If your daughter fails a test, perhaps that should be a wake-up call to her so that next time she will be better prepared. If your son experiences the breakup of a romance, comfort him—but at the appropriate time help him to reflect on questions such as, ‘In hindsight, has this experience revealed any ways in which I need to grow?’ Children who work through their problems build resilience and self-confidence—assets they might lack if someone was constantly rescuing them.

“Let each one prove what his own work is, and then he will have cause for exultation.”—*Galatians 6:4*

## Overproviding

### The problem

In a survey of young adults, 81 percent said that the most important goal of their generation is ‘to become rich’—rating it far above helping others. But striving for wealth does not bring contentment. In fact, research indicates that people who focus on material things are less happy and more depressed. They also have a higher rate of physical and mental problems.

### What Is Behind It

In some cases, children are being raised in materialistic families. “Parents want to make their children happy, and children want stuff,” says the book *The Narcissism Epidemic*. “Thus parents buy them stuff. And children are happy, but only for a short period of time. Then they want even more stuff.”

Of course, the advertising industry has been all too eager to exploit this hungry consumer market. It promotes such ideas as ‘You deserve the best’ and ‘Because you’re worth it.’

Many young adults have devoured the message and are now in debt, unable to pay for the things they "deserve."

## **What The Bible Says**

The Bible **acknowledges the need for money.** (Ecclesiastes 7:12) At the same time, it warns that **"the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things."** It adds: **"By reaching out for this love some . . . have stabbed themselves all over with many pains."** (1 Timothy 6:10) The Bible encourages us, **not to pursue material riches, but to be content with the basic necessities of life.**—1 Timothy 6:7, 8.

**"Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires."**—1 Timothy 6:9

## **What You Can Do**

As a parent, **examine your own attitude toward money and the things it can buy. Keep your priorities straight, and help your children to do the same.** *The Narcissism Epidemic*, quoted earlier, suggests: **"Parents and children can start discussions on such topics as 'When is buying things on sale a good idea? When is it a bad idea?' 'What's an interest rate?' 'When have you bought something because someone else thought you should?'"**

**Be careful not to use "stuff" as a drug to cover over family issues that need to be addressed.** "Throwing material goods at problems is a notoriously unsuccessful solution," says the book *The Price of Privilege*. **"Problems need to be addressed with thought, insight, and empathy, not shoes and purses."**

# DO MANNERS REALLY MATTER

## HELP For The Family/Parenting

'People don't open the door for *me*; why should I do it for *them*?'

'Aren't there more important things to worry about than saying "please," "thank you," and "excuse me"?'

'I don't *need* to show manners to my siblings. We're family.'

Do any of those statements sound like something *you* would say? If so, you could be missing out on the benefits of showing good manners!

## What You Should Know About Manners

### Your Reputation

How you treat people makes an impression, for good or for bad. If you are **mannerly**, people will likely view you as **mature and responsible**—and they'll treat you accordingly! If you are **rude**, however, people will conclude that you are interested only in yourself, and you could end up being bypassed for employment and other opportunities. As the Bible says, "the cruel person brings disgrace on himself."—Proverbs 11:17.

### Your Social Life

The Bible says: "Clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union." (Colossians 3:14) That is certainly true when it comes to friendship. **People are drawn to those who are mannerly and who treat them well.** After all, who would want to be in the company of someone who is rude or obnoxious?

### The Way People Treat You

"If you are always polite," says a young woman named Jennifer, "over time, you may see improvement in the way even the most consistently rude people respond to you." Of course, if you are rude, you may get the opposite response.

The Bible says: "With the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you."—Matthew 7:2.

### The Bottom Line

Social interaction is a part of daily life. How you handle it can affect how people view you and treat you. Put simply, *your manners really matter!*

## How To Improve

### Take A 'Manners Inventory

Ask yourself such questions as: 'Do I address adults respectfully? How often do I say "please," "thank you," or "excuse me"? Am I distracted when talking with others—perhaps even reading and responding to text messages? Do I treat my parents and siblings with respect, or do I take liberties just because "they're family"?'

The Bible says: "In showing honor to one another, take the lead."—Romans 12:10.

## Set Goals

Write down three areas in which you **could improve**. For example, 15-year-old Allison says that she needs "to be a good listener rather than a good talker." David, 19, says he needs to work on not texting while with family or friends. "It's disrespectful," he says. "I'm basically telling them that I would rather talk to someone else than talk to them." Edward, 17, says that he needs to stop interrupting others as they speak. And Jennifer, quoted earlier, has resolved to work on her manners with elderly ones. "I used to say a quick 'hello' and then find a reason to move on to my young friends," she says. "But now I've really made an effort to get to know them. It has helped me to improve my manners a lot!"

The Bible says: "Look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others."—Philippians 2:4.

## Monitor Your Progress

For a month, track your speech or conduct in the areas in which you want to improve. At the end of the month, ask yourself: 'How has my being mannerly made me a better person? In what areas do I still need to improve?' Set new goals accordingly.

The Bible says: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them."—Luke 6:31.

## Did You Know

What is considered mannerly in one land could be considered rude in another. For example, in Japan it is customary for people to remove their shoes before entering a home. In other lands, that gesture might be considered impolite. **What manners are expected where you live?**

# TEACHING YOUR CHILD TO TELL THE TRUTH

HELP For The Family/Parenting

## THE CHALLENGE

Your five-year-old son is playing in the next room. Suddenly, you hear a crash. You run to your son, and you find him standing next to a shattered porcelain vase. The guilty look on his face tells you everything.

"Did you break that vase?" you ask your son sternly.

"No, Mommy, I didn't!" he quickly replies.

This is not the first time you have caught your five-year-old in an obvious lie. Should you be worried?

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

### All Lying is Bad

The Bible says that God disapproves of "a lying tongue." (Proverbs 6:16, 17) The Law given to Israel imposed strict sanctions on anyone who deceived another person. Leviticus 19:11, 12.

### Not All Lying is Equal

Some lies are malicious; they are told to harm another person. Other lies are uttered under the pressure of the moment, perhaps to avoid embarrassment or punishment. (Genesis 18:12-15) While all lying is wrong, some lies are more serious than others. If your child told a lie, consider his age and his reason for hiding the truth.

### You Should Address the Problem While Your Child is Still Young

"Telling the truth, especially when it's hard, is an important lesson for children," writes Dr. David Walsh. "Relationships are based on trust, and lying will break that trust."

### Do Not Panic

The fact that your child has lied does not mean that he is on a fast track to moral corruption. Remember, the Bible says: "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child." (Proverbs 22:15)

Some children manifest such foolishness by lying, perhaps thinking that it is an easy way to avoid punishment. How you respond, then, is important.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Try to Discern *Why* Your Child is Lying

Does he fear punishment? Does he not want to disappoint you? If your child spins stories to impress his friends, is it because he is not old enough to understand the difference between reality and fantasy? If you know why your child is lying, you will be better able to correct him.

*Bible principle: 1 Corinthians 13:11*

## At Times, Use Statements Instead of Questions

In the scenario described at the outset, the mother, who already knew the facts, sternly asked her son: "Did you break that vase?" The child lied, perhaps fearing Mom's wrath. But **instead of asking an accusatory question**, suppose that the mother had **simply stated**: "Oh, no, you broke the vase!" By using a statement rather than a question, she does not tempt the child to lie—and she helps him build a pattern of honesty.

*Bible principle: Colossians 3:9*

## Praise Honesty

Children naturally desire to please their parents, so use that inclination to your advantage. **Let your child know that honesty is an important family value and that you therefore expect him to be truthful.**

**Make clear to your child that lying destroys trust and that it can take a long time to rebuild trust once it is broken. Reinforce good behavior by praising him when he tells the truth.** For example, you could say, "It makes me happy that you are honest."

*Bible principle: Hebrews 13:18*

## Set the Example

Obviously, you cannot expect your child to be truthful if he hears *you* say such things as "Tell him I'm not home" when you do not want to speak to someone on the phone or "I'm staying home sick today" when you really just want to relax.

*Bible principle: James 3:17*

## Use the Bible

Its principles and true-life accounts promote honesty..

### Bible Principles

- "When I was a child, I used to . . . reason as a child."—1 Corinthians 13:11.
- "Do not lie to one another."—Colossians 3:9.
- "We wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things."—Hebrews 13:18.
- "The wisdom from above is . . . not hypocritical."—James 3:17.

# TEACHING YOUR CHILD TO TELL THE TRUTH -WITH CONSIDERATION TO AGE AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Teach Kids How

Being honest is a characteristic quality that everyone hopes will be displayed by those in their lives, we especially hope this will be a quality our children will portray. Even those little white lies are lies, especially in situations where it can harm someone or something. Lies can only lead to bigger trouble, in many cases, and even though we want to think our children would never lie to us they will, at least once in a while.

If you know your child well enough you'll know when they are lying to you. Call it a parent's intuition or just knowing the way your children act in a variety of situations. Parents are gifted with a sixth sense.

## Preschool

What is a lie?

Can your child answer that question?

If not, or if they have lied to you but really don't know what it is, talk to your child about what the meaning of a lie is. Although understanding the difference between miscommunication and a lie can be difficult at this age, like if you said you would bring chicken home for dinner, but bring steak home because the store ran out of chicken at the store, this would not be considered a lie, just miscommunication. Therefore it is best to explain this as simply as possible.

The little boy who cried wolf would have never done so had he known the outcome. Starting a lie about something can only cause problems for those the lie was started about and the person who started in the *Boy Who Cried Wolf* story. Tell your child the story of the little boy who cried wolf and how this situation should have been handled. Read other books to your youngsters that teach lessons about lying.

## Main Points To Address

What is a lie? Talk about this question with your child and explain to them what a lie is. Read books or tell stories that demonstrate being honest.

## Grades K-3rd

When your child gets a little older you can get into the details of the difference between a lie, an accident, or miscommunication. But don't wait for your child to tell a lie or get into trouble, talk to them about lying first. It's important to talk over these things before the situation surfaces. You can do this at any time, while you're driving in the car, grocery shopping, or baking together, anytime that you and your child have together one-on-one is a great time to talk about important issues.

While you are talking to your child use "what if - situations. Such as the chicken situation above, or "what if your friend did something wrong and your teacher asks you about it, would you lie or tell the truth? Emphasize the danger in telling a lie, "if you did lie about your friend to your

teacher, what could happen to your friend that could become dangerous? Talk to them about how sometimes when children get away with certain things it only makes them feel they can continue a destructive behavior.

When they do something wrong and tell the truth reward them for that, without getting in the way of making sure whatever it was they did should be avoided. Perhaps you can discipline them for doing what they did wrong, but give them a break on the discipline because they told you the truth.

## **Main Points To Address**

Use "what if examples to talk about telling the truth.  
Emphasize the danger in starting a lie.

### **Grades 4th-6<sup>th</sup>**

Continue the talk (as stated in the K-3rd grade section of this article) to demonstrate the importance of situations where it is extremely imperative to tell the truth, as if their friend is doing something that can be harmful to themselves or other people.

Explain to your child how the truth always comes to the surface, one way or another, and a lie only makes the situation worse than it originally would have been.

Just like the boy who cried wolf, many movies and books that are centered on lying can begin a great conversation on the topic. Once the movie is over start a conversation and ask questions to your child about how lying affected the main or minor characters.

How did the end result make your child feel?

Would they have done the same thing, if not how would they have acted in that situation?

## **Main Points To Address**

Give examples of situations where it is extremely important to tell the truth. Express how telling a lie only gets them into more trouble. Watch movies or read books that are centered on lying.

# Chasing Away The Boogie Man Conquering Fear

## TOOLS TO HELP KIDS MANAGE FEAR AND TO BE LESS ANXIOUS

Dr. Michele Borba, Parenting Expert

Bombings, tornadoes, terrorist alerts, hurricanes, school shootings, super storms have boosted all our jitters lately, but don't forget our children. I've received dozens of parent emails and media calls these past few days asking for advice on how to help calm kids.

Many parents tell me what is often typical **following a tragedy or trauma whether at home or across the seas- their children's fears increase.**

"My Little Miss Sunshine was fine at home, but at soon as she went back to school she's become a clinger."

"My son has become so moody and irritable. He says nothing's wrong, but he's not the same kid."

"I'm having a hard time helping my kids get to sleep. They won't let me turn the lights off and keep getting out of bed all hours of the night."

"Mine kids are having horrible nightmares."

"My child who always loved school suddenly doesn't want to go."

And each parent then asks me, "What can I do to help my child?"

While we all dream that our children will have carefree days, but the **truth is our world is unpredictable.** Scary things do happen. **We can't protect our kids from uncertain events.** And we can't try to "talk them out of their worry." **The fear is real to the child. What does help are giving "tools" to empower the child so he can manage his fears and worries.**

Studies show that children's worries can be reduced if they learn habits that help them reduce anxieties - **such as sharing worries, normalizing expectations, practice relaxation, and others** — that he can use the rest of his life. **It's up to us to teach our kids coping strategies so they can use them to help them deal with whatever troubling event they encounter.**

Best yet, if **we help our kids practice those strategies enough so they become habits our kids will be able to use them the rest of their lives.**

What follows are proven ways you can parent for change— like modeling **courage, monitoring media input, and teaching step by step acclimation** — that will boost kids' resilience, help them cope with everyday fears in healthier

ways and prevent anxiety from shortchanging their lives. Each child is different as each anxiety-producing experience. It's up to us as parents, counselors and educators to help our kids find the technique that works best for them.

## **How to Help Kids Manage Fear**

### **Teach Kids to Monitor Scary Media Consumption**

Images from movies, video games, music videos, Internet websites, and even television news stories can trigger fears or make them even worse. So monitor your child's media exposure and be especially particular about what your child watches closer to bedtime.

Best yet, teach your child to use the remote to turn off what he knows is affecting him. "This is scary. I don't need to watch it" is a great line for kids to learn to say.

Also help your kid learn what to watch that is more relaxing and fear-reducing: comedies! Have a couple of DVDs that are "giggle-producers" ready for kids to pop in when anxieties increase. Doing so will help our kids learn how to monitor their own media diets.

### **Share Worries as a Family**

Encourage your child to talk about his fears. Putting a worry into words makes the more manageable. Your goal is to "catch" their worries early before they blow out of proportion and become full-fledge fears so be sure they know you will listen. You can then not only reassure your child but also clarify any misconceptions and answer questions.

**Beware:** studies find moms talk more about feelings with daughters than sons. Let's talk feelings more with our sons!

Also talk about your feelings as a family—it will be more natural and kids will know it's "ok" to open up because you are discussing your concern.

### **Provide Calm Support**

Help your child feel safe. And don't undermine the power of your words. When your child does confront a fear and hears your comforting, "It will be okay," (or gets the same message from daddy holding their hand) they will feel more secure that they can cope in other trying times. Your words of support will become a model your child can use himself. Our kids copy how we cope with our fears. So be the example of how to handle your own worries that you want your child to copy.

Also, keep yourself strong. Fears are caught by children or passed down. Keep your worries or pessimism in check especially during a tragedy or after a trauma.

### **Help Your Child Know What to Expect**

There are some fears that we can't protect our kids from and just must be endured. And educating your child about the event can clear up misperceptions as well as boost security.

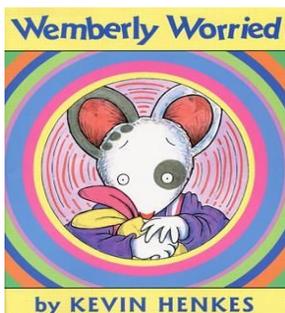
For instance, if your child worries about school safety, share the school safety plan. Let him know that the principal and teachers are trained in an emergency. Show the locks on the school doors that can be used in "lock down." Describe how the whole community—mayor, police, fire department, doctors—know what to do in an emergency.

Be calm and matter of fact in your delivery. You may want to first ask: "Would you like to talk about what your school is doing to keep you safe?" Visit your child's website to assure him that there is a plan in place (after you've checked to ensure one is posted).

But what about an upcoming event that could be anxiety-producing? Here is how you might ease your child's anxieties about an upcoming hospital stay by helping her know what to expect: You might arrange a hospital tour, read a book such as *Franklin Goes to the Hospital* to help her talk about her worries, buy a toy doctor's kit to play with, and suggest she tuck her teddy bear and blanket in her backpack before she leaves.

Knowing what to expect - or realizing there is a safety plan in place that the child practices and rehearses can reduce that fear. Rehearse!

## Read Books That Deal With The Fear



Telling stories, acting out situations or reading books about a particular scary situation can help kids overcome fears. The strategy is called "Bibliotherapy" or healing with books. It's helpful because kids often identify with the character who shares the same anxiety: "Oh good! Somebody else feels the same way!" Kids are more likely to open up about their worries to you. And putting the fear into words can help reduce the child's concern.

A few kid favorites include:

*Wemberly Worried*, by Kevin Henkes

*Fears, Doubts, Blues and Pouts*, by Norman Wright, Gary J. Olver, and Sharon Dahl

*What To Do When You Worry Too Much*, by Dawn Huebner

*What To Do When You're Scared and Worried*, by James J. Christ

*Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak

*There's a Nightmare in My Closet* by Mercer Mayer

*Go Away, Big Green Monster!* by Ed Emberley

## Say Fear-Reducing Self-Statements

Teach your child to face the fear by helping her learn to say a positive phrase. It's best to help your child choose only one phrase and help her practice saying the same one several times a day until she can say to herself when feeling anxious. A few fear-reducers include: "JESUS HELP ME." "I can do this." "I can handle this." "I will be OK." "It's not a big deal."

## Practice Relaxation Strategies

If the fear makes your child tense, learning relaxation strategies could help. Practice the one tip over and over until it becomes almost "automatic." You might need to put a picture reminder on the fridge or next to your child's bed. The trick is for your child to use that strategy the moment the worry comes before it builds.

- ~ Tell them to pray and tell Jesus what they are afraid of and to help them.
- ~ Tell him the moment he starts to feel tense to imagine he is floating peacefully on a cloud or lying quietly on a beach.
- ~ Taking slow deep breaths also reduces anxiety. (Breathe through your nose like you are smelling a flower, and Breathe out through your mouth like you are blowing out a candle.)
- ~ Help your teen fill his MP3 player with more soothing relaxing music that works for him.

## **Ask For Hugs!**

When our kids are troubled one of our natural parenting instincts kick in and we hug them to try to comfort them. Research finds that our instincts are right! Hugs actually help reduce our kids' worries and calm them. University of Miami studies found **massage, back rubs, and hugs are especially soothing and emotionally benefitting for children in trauma.**

Teach your kid to say, "I need a hug!" Better yet, do family back rubs - or shoulder rubs for those teens who feel they're "too grown up."

## **Use their imagination!**

Capitalize on your child's vivid imagination if she has one (and some kids do!) Instead of fearing the bad man or the monster help her conjure up an image of a knight in shining armor, an angel, or a super hero who comes to the rescue and chasing off the bad guys.

The technique — **imagining the dream you want to have** — is now used to help our soldiers suffering from PTSD. It's a great skill to also teach a child.

Kids' imaginations can work to help reduce fears!

## **Put Your Kid In The Driver Seat**

Research shows that feeling as if you have some control over a situation helps reduce the worry. So **empower your child by helping him develop his own fear-reducing plan.**

Start by identifying one fear.

**Problem:** "The weird shadows on my wall make me scared to sleep in the dark."

"What might help need you feel safer?" Then **brainstorm** reasonable options until your child can find at least one thing that might help him feel more in control and then carry it out.

**Kid-generated Solutions:** "Tuck a flashlight under my pillow and move my bed away from the bookcase so I don't see the shadows on the wall."

The truth is our world is unpredictable and uncertain. As much as we'd hope, we can't protect our children from what life offers. But we can help our children learn ways to manage their fears and reduce their anxieties. We can teach our kids coping strategies so they can use them to help them deal with whatever troubling event they encounter as well as boosting their resilience for life.

# TOOLS TO HELP KIDS MANAGE FEAR AND TO BE LESS ANXIOUS

BY Kurt Bubna

**Fear is real, but often your child's fears are unwarranted and not very realistic.** The Boogeyman isn't hiding in the closet, and bullfrogs might be slimy and gross, but they're not truly scary (okay, maybe a little).

**Everyone—from the youngest child to the oldest adult—experiences fear at one time or another.** In fact, most kids face some type of phobia on a regular basis. Some fears are okay (e.g. fear of touching a hot stove), but a lot of anxiety is irrational and unwarranted.

**Typical childhood fears change with age, but when anxieties persist, they can take a toll on a child's sense of worth and well-being.** Tragically, worry that stems from scary childhood experiences torments too many adults.

As the parent, you tend to know when your child is feeling afraid. The signs are often **evident:**

nervous looks and movements  
clinginess or withdrawal  
unusual problems getting to sleep or waking up  
accelerated heart and breathing rates  
sweaty hands, headaches, stomachaches, etc.

My six-year-old grandson, Caleb, is terrified of dogs. He won't go near them. **His facial expression and body language make it clear**—he's not going anywhere near any dog no matter how little or happy the animal seems.

No dog has ever attacked Caleb or bitten him. If you ask him why he's afraid, he'll just shrug his shoulders and say, "I don't know." And if you happen to say to him **that all dogs go to heaven, he'll tell you he's decided not to go there if that's the case.**

## **So What Can A Parent Or Grandparent Do?**

When you notice your child is afraid, you should **encourage them to share their feelings with you. Get down at your child's eye level and say with sincerity, "Tell me how you're feeling; I want to know how I can help you."**

**You don't want to shame the child by saying, "You shouldn't be afraid, how silly."** I'm almost sixty, but I remember a time when my grandfather embarrassed me in front of my siblings for being afraid to climb to the top of a tree with my younger brother. I **forgave him over fifty years ago, but I've never forgotten the pain of that shameful moment.**

**Instead of shame or irritation, lend a kind, listening, and caring ear.** As James writes, **"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry"** James 1:19 (NIV). You might be able to force a child to do somethings, but you cannot force a child to overcome fear. On the other hand, just talking about a fear can help your child move past it.

That being said, don't negatively reinforce fears either. You can open the closet doors, but don't permanently remove doors in an attempt to eliminate a fear of monsters. If your child doesn't like dogs, don't deliberately cross the street to avoid one. Avoidance will just reinforce the notion that dogs should be feared or that monsters live in dark places.

Do provide gentle support and encouragement as you approach the feared object or situation with your child. Be consistent and uncomplaining as you give them time to grow. Take the time to listen, and make sure your child feels heard.

If you don't patiently help your son or daughter walk through the fear barriers of life, the phobia is likely to continue to affect your child, possibly even into adulthood.

Most important, always encourage your son or daughter to tell God how they feel. Teach them to remember that they are never alone because their good and faithful Father is always near. Pray with them about their fear and help them learn how to take any concern to Jesus.

Facing fear isn't easy, but helping your child overcome terror is worth the time and effort.

# WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD TO OVERCOME THE FEAR OF FAILURE

By Ashley Cullins

*"Only those who dare to fail can ever achieve greatly."*

*Robert F. Kennedy*

As a teacher, I've noticed one factor that **consistently** holds students back in the classroom: **fear of failure**. When my students are afraid to fail, they typically **respond to challenges in one of two ways**:

- They give up before they even begin, preferring to avoid the possibility of failure.
- They get upset and down on themselves when they don't get something right the first time, resulting in anxiety and poor performance.

I've started to notice that my two-year-old daughter, too, gets frustrated when something is difficult for her, sadly saying, "I'm not good at [insert challenge here]."

For my students, my daughter, and countless other children, the fear of failure can be crippling. **But there has to be a way to change this, right?**

Determined to find the answer, I sat down to research proven ways to help children overcome the fear of failure. I'm trying these **six research-based strategies** with my students and my daughter, and I invite you to try them with your kids too!

# 6

# WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD *overcome the* FEAR OF FAILURE

by Big Life Journal

## 1 CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE ABOUT FAILING

- Be mindful of **your own** responses to mistakes and failure. Talk about what you've learned, and be willing to pick yourself up and try again.
- **Encourage** and **celebrate** your child's mistakes as learning experiences.



## 2 EMPHASIZE EFFORT, NOT ABILITY



- Emphasize **effort** (and the process) over ability (and the outcome).
- When they struggle, discuss **specific strategies** that might work next time.

## 3 DEMONSTRATE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Make it clear that you **love** your child unconditionally, even when they make mistakes or use poor judgment.



## 4 CONDUCT THE "WORST-CASE SCENARIO" EXERCISE



- Start by grabbing a piece of paper so you can **brainstorm** together with your child.
- Ask them questions like: "If it all goes wrong, what's the **worst** thing that could happen?"

## 5 HELP THEM FOCUS ON THE SOLUTION

- Discuss what **actions** they took, the **consequences** of these actions, and how these consequences can be **avoided** in the future.
- Ask questions like: "What went wrong?", "How can you fix or prevent this next time?"



## 6 HAVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SUCCESS AND FAILURE



- Talk about success using the "**iceberg analogy**."
- Explain that when you see successful people, you only see the tip of the iceberg. You don't see what's "under the water,": failures, rejection, grit, effort, discipline, persistence, etc.

# They May Not Be A Knight In Shining Armor YET! But They Are Becoming **Courageous**

## BUILDING COURAGE IN KIDS -HOW TO TEACH KIDS TO BE BRAVE

by [Karen Young](#)

Kids and teens are growing up in a world that is becoming increasingly competitive and comparative. It is easy for them - for any of us - to believe that the ones who have found success or happiness are better than, stronger than, smarter than, or privy to something magical - certain strengths or qualities that are reserved for the lucky few. The truth is that none of us are born with the 'success' gene or the 'happiness gene'. There are many things that lead to success and happiness, but one of the most powerful of these is courage.

Behind so many brilliant successes are failures, rejections, and unexpected turns. Often many. Without exception, there is also courage. Mountains of courage. Courage to keep going, to find a different way, and of course the courage to try in the first place.

### Teaching Kids to Be Brave: Explaining What Courage Is

For kids and teens, one of the most important things for them to know is that courage doesn't always feel like courage. From the outside, courage often looks impressive and powerful and self-assured. Sometimes it might look reckless or thrilling. From the inside though, it can feel frightening and unpredictable. It can feel like anxiety, or fear, or rolling self-doubt. Courage can be a trickster like that - it often looks different from the outside to the way you would expect it to feel on the inside. This is because courage and fear always exist together. It can't be any other way. If there is no fear, there is no need for courage.

Courage isn't about something magical that happens inside us to make us 'not scared' .It's about something magical that happens inside us to make us push through fear, self-doubt, anxiety, and do the things that feel hard or risky or frightening. Sometimes, courage only has to happen for seconds at a time - just long enough to be brave enough.

There's something else that **kids need to know about courage - you don't always see the effects of it straight away.** Courage might mean being kind to the new kid in class, trying something new, speaking up for something they believe in. Often, these things don't come with fireworks or applause. In fact, they rarely do. **The differences they make can take time to reveal, but when actions are driven by courage, the differences those actions make will always be there, gently taking shape and changing their very important corners of the world in some way.**

### How to Build Courage in Kids

We all want to feel safe. It's so smooth and un-splintered and unlikely to scrape you or embarrass you or leave you with bruises. Sometimes, 'safe and certain' might be the perfect place for our kids to be, but so much growth and the things that will enrich them will happen

when they let go of the handrail, even if just for seconds at a time. Here are some ways to nurture their brave:

### **Speak of Their Brave As Though They Are Already There**

Kids and teens step up to expectations or down to them.

Speak to the courage that is coming to life inside them, as though they are already there. 'I know how brave you are.' 'I love that you make hard decisions sometimes, even when it would be easier to do the other thing.' 'You might not feel brave, but I know what it means to you to be doing this. Trust me - you are one of the bravest people I know.'

### **Give Permission For Imperfection..**

Failure and rejection are often a sign that you've done something brave. Every experience gives new information and new wisdom that wouldn't have been there before. It's why only the brave ones get there in the end - they have the knowledge, wisdom, and experience that can often only be found when you land badly - sometimes more than once. Give them space for imperfection - it's a growth staple.

### **You Won't Always Feel Ready. That's Why It's Brave.**

Let them know that it's okay to hang on while they're getting comfortable - while they're working on a plan, fanning the brave spark inside them (and it's always inside them), but then there will be a time to let go. When this time comes, it won't always feel like readiness or certainty. That's what makes it brave.

### **Try Something New**

Encourage them to do activities that push them to the edges of their physical or emotional selves - drama, sport, music. Anything that will help to nurture the truth to life that they are strong, powerful, that they can cope, and that they are not as fragile as they might feel sometimes will help to nurture their brave hearts.

### **Be The Example**

Everything you do is gold in their eyes. Talk to them about the times you feel nervous, or the times you've said 'no' or 'yes', when everyone else was moving in the opposite direction. Talk to them about the times you've pushed through fear, exhaustion, sadness, anger, to do the thing that was right for you. Talk about your risky ideas, the times you thought differently, did differently, and the times you felt small but did something big. Let them feel that the brave in you, is in them too.

### **Give Them Space For Courage Of Thought**

Courage isn't only about pushing against their own edges. Sometimes it's about pushing against the friends who might steer them off track, the limiting expectations of others, the media, the majority, the world. Too many times, creative, change-making, beautifully open minds have been shut down in the name of compliance. There is nothing wrong with questioning - it opens hearts, minds, and mouths - what's important is that the questioning is done respectfully. One of the reasons the world is capable of great things is because young minds who are brave enough to challenge the way things are and to want something better grow into adults minds who make it happen. Ask for their opinions and let them know they can disagree with yours. Some of the world's very ideas have often started with small ideas that made no sense at all at the time.

## **When The Motive Is Brave But The Behavior Is, Let's Say, 'Unadorable'**

Sometimes brave behavior gets shadowed by behavior that is a little scuffed. When this happens, support the brave voice or intent, but redirect the behavior. 'I love that you speak up for what you feel is right. It takes guts to do that. We won't get anywhere though if you keep shouting.'

## **Give Space For Their Intuition To Flourish - And Teach Them How To Use It**

Intuition is not magic and it's not hocus pocus. It's the lifetime of memories, experiences, and learnings that sit somewhere in all of us, just outside of our awareness. Gut feelings and heart whispers all come from tapping into this pool of hidden wisdom. Scientists in Switzerland have found the physical basis of 'gut feelings'. The innate fear response, or the feeling that something isn't right, is heavily influenced by messages sent along the vagus nerve from the stomach to the brain. The vagus nerve is the longest of twelve pairs of nerves that leave the brain. It sends messages from the belly to the brain, touching the heart along the way. When the vagus nerve is cut, the loss of signals from the belly changes the production of certain neurotransmitters in the brain. (Neurotransmitters help to transmit messages between brain cells. Everything we do depends on these messages flowing properly.) The hard part - and the part that can take a lot of courage - is acting on gut feelings or intuition and doing what feels right, regardless of the noise that tells us to do otherwise. Encourage them to take notice of when something feels right or wrong for them. Sometimes this means giving them permission to let go of needing to justify or explain the reason they feel the way they do. 'When you are still and quiet, what does your heart tell you?' 'Do you have a feeling about what you should do? Sometimes those feelings come from the part of you that knows what's best. Taking notice of them can be really valuable.'

## **And Then There's Self-Talk. Sneaky, Sidelining Self-Talk**

Self-talk is one of the biggest ways we stop ourselves from venturing outside of our limits. Self-talk can be automatic and barely noticeable, but so limiting. They are the 'can'ts', 'shoulds', 'shouldn'ts', and 'what-ifs'. They can be persuasive little ponies that put courage in a box for a while. Let your kiddos know that however scared they might feel, or whatever they might be telling themselves about how much they 'can't', they will always be braver than they think they are. Brave can be a thought, a feeling, or an action. They can do brave even if you don't think it or feel it. If they don't feel brave enough or believe they are brave enough, they just have to act as though they are. Their bodies and their brains won't know the difference. Brave is brave, however much fear and self-doubt is behind it.

## **It's Never Too Late to change ... Anything**

Let them know that it's never too late to change direction, change friends, or change their mind. It's so easy for courage to turn cold when a decision or choice feels final. All experiences bring new wisdom, and if that new wisdom means the decision stops feeling right, that's okay. There will be a plan B, a back door, a way out or a way back up. But first comes the brave decision to start.

## **The Outcome Doesn't Matter As Much As The Process**

When they feel the need to play it safe, they are focusing on the ending, or the need to avoid failure.

**Whenever you can, encourage them to shift their focus to the process - the decisions they make, the actions they take, and the courage that drives all of it.** Many kids (and adults) are held back from brave behavior because of the fear of failure, but what if the goal is courage. It's always important to be considered when being brave - sometimes brave decisions and silly ones can look the same - but if the process has been thought about and the consequences considered, let the courage to have a go be more important than any outcome. They will always get over a disappointment, but any time they take the opportunity to be brave, they are strengthening a quality that will strengthen and lift them from the inside out.

### **Encourage Their Sense Of Adventure**

**And let them see yours.** It is in the adventure that we learn new ways of being, thinking and doing. Whether it's taking a different turn, trying a different food, going something they've never been before, it's all part of discovering their own capacity to cope with.

### **Let Them Celebrate Their Courage Regularly**

**Introduce a weekly family ritual** - maybe around the dinner table - where everyone shares something brave they did this week. This is an opportunity to show them that courage comes in many different shapes and sizes and that even adults struggle with being brave sometimes. It's a way to prime them for taking risks and doing things that they might not otherwise do - even if it's just to be able to tell you about it.

### **Brave Is about Doing What's Right for Them**

**Sometimes courage is about doing the scary thing, and sometimes it's about doing the right thing.** Let's say a bunch of friends is going to watch a scary movie. It's easy for kids to think the brave thing is watching the movie, but if it doesn't feel right to be watching it, the brave thing is actually saying 'no'. Saying 'no' to something that doesn't feel right is one of the bravest things we humans can do. **There are three clues that can help them wade through the noise and find the right thing to do:**

- Will it break an important rule or is it against the law?
- Will it hurt someone?
- Does it feel right for you?

Deciding whether something is right or wrong is the first step. The next part - which is the tricky part - is finding a safe out. It's not always easy saying 'no', which is why this is where courage happens.

### **Give Them Some Options To Try**

These might involve leaving, suggesting something else to do instead, blame a parent (my mum/dad said I couldn't. There's no way I'm getting myself into trouble today.").

And finally ...

They might also believe that courage comes in the way of grand, big gestures, super-heroic feats, or actions of dragon slayers. The truth is, our children are slaying their own dragons, every day. They're heroes, every one of them. The key is helping them realize it so they can use it to push through their edges when they feel small, scared, confused, or unseen. Because one of the most important parts of being brave is knowing that somewhere inside of you, 'brave' will be there when you need it, whether you feel it or not.

Teaching kids about courage equips them to live lives that are more confident and teaches them to take healthy risks. It also leads to greater success and a willingness to stand up for what they know to be right. Courage is a biblical characteristic, and it can be found in every great leader in history. Sometimes it means standing up alone for what you know is right.

## WAYS TO CULTIVATE COURAGE IN KIDS TO FIND THEIR HERO WITHIN

Michele Borba

### How To Cultivate Courage For Our Bubble-Wrapped Kids So They Find Strength To Face Adversity And Do The Right Thing.

Empathy is the miraculous quality that allows us to feel with others, but in order to act on those feelings kids need **Moral Courage**. Courage emboldens kids to speak out, step in and help others. It is the eighth of the Nine Crucial Empathy Building Habits in UnSelfie.

We can cultivate courage. So let's roll up our sleeves and get started.

This is a **Brave New World** and children will need the skills and know-how to find that inner bravery to do the right thing. To read more about how this habit gives children the **Empathy Advantage** and how to cultivate it in children, refer to **Chapter Eight: Moral Courage in UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About Me World**.

My favorite movie about courage is, **"We Bought a Zoo."** One scene is especially powerful: The teen son admits to his dad that he's crazy about a girl, but unless he musters the courage to tell her that their relationship is over. His dad's advice is priceless: **"You know, sometimes all you need is 20 seconds of insane courage - just literally 20 seconds of just embarrassing bravery - and I promise you that something great will come of it."**

The truth is that sometimes kids need gentle nudges to step out of their comfort zone and discover their inner strength. Our job is to help our children find their **20 seconds of safe courage**, so they can do the right thing when their conscience or heart urge them to step in and help.

Why is it important for kids to be courageous? A bold child is more likely to withstand negative peer pressure, say no to temptations that run counter to your family's values and fight the good fight.

### Courage Also Has Surprise Benefits

It boosts kids' resilience, confidence and willpower as well as their learning, performance and school engagement.

The good news is that **courage can be taught**. We often make the mistake of thinking of courage as an elusive quality that is locked into our DNA. But my research shows that bravery is made up of teachable skills.

Teaching those skills to our kids - regardless of GPA, gender or temperament (introverts or extroverts) - is how we can help our children learn the skills of courage. That's how we raise a generation of caring, courageous children who think **WE**, not **ME**.

## **Ways to Cultivate Courage and Stretch Kids' Risk-Taking Muscles**

Here are ways to stretch kids' risk-taking muscles in our bubble-wrapped world, so they can face adversity and do the right thing:

### **Model Courage**

Kids who watch their parents stick their necks out to do the right thing are more likely to do the same. **Let your child see you step out of your comfort zone**, whether it's tackling your fear of heights or speaking up to your boss. Then **express how good it feels when you conquer your fear instead of taking a shortcut**. Kids learn how to take on the tough challenges they face from witnessing how you tackle your own fears.

### **Talk About Values And Courage**

Research finds that kids are more likely be courageous if they believe that their parents expect them to support those in need. Discuss bravery with your kids: Tell them, **"Courage is making the choice to do what you know is right even if you are afraid."**

Some parents develop a family courage mantra like "We find courage to do what's right, even if it's hard." Or you might tell your child, "Our family speaks up and helps others."

**Stop Bubble-Wrapping And Rescuing Your Kids**. Always "fixing" children's problems only makes them more dependent and reduces their ability to bravely seek their own solutions. It also sends a disturbing message: "I'll help because you can't do it alone." If you're "over-helping," start building your child's courage muscles by putting him in the driver's seat. He - not you - tells his coach he can't make practice. She apologizes to her pal without your assistance.

## **Encourage Your Kids To Share Their Acts Of Bravery**

Learning to be brave takes practice, so encourage your children to do something courageous every day, like introducing themselves to someone new, inviting a new classmate to play or standing up for a peer. **Then take time to focus on their courageous breakthroughs**. One dad I spoke with had his kids list their "brave successes" on paper strips, then stapled the strips together to make "courage chains." A mom I talked to had her kids to share their brave deeds at dinner time.

## **Dispel The "Superman Myth."**

Many kids assume they need to look like a superhero to be courageous. **Share stories of those who changed the world with their quiet, nonphysical brave acts**. Jackie Robinson, the first Major League baseball black player, was heckled because of his skin color, and showed great bravery by preserving and conducting himself in a professional manner on the field (where he excelled) as well as off it. Mahatma Gandhi - who would go on to be the leader of nonviolent civil disobedience - ran home after school every day, as a child, because he was too shy to talk to anyone. Rosa Parks, the African American Civil Rights activist who refused to give up her seat to white passengers, was described as "soft-spoken ... timid and shy."

## **Read About Courageous Kids**

**Share inspiring news and stories about children who stick their necks out for others**. A couple of my favorite books for younger kids are "Courage" by Bernard Waber and "Brave Irene" by William Steig. Check out these titles for older kids: "Wringer," by Jerry Spinelli and "Stand Up for Yourself and Your Friends" by Patti Kelley Criswell and Angela Martini.

## **Encourage Young Kids To Take Brave Baby Steps**

Instead of picking her daughter up, a friend of mine helped her 3-year old find courage to cross a small bridge by empowering her. "Be brave, Clara," she told her daughter. "You can do it." Clara continued, repeating to herself, "Be brave, Clara!" And she learned something when she crossed the bridge: "I'm brave, Mommy! I'm brave!"

## **Teach Kids To Prioritize Safety**

Even as we teach our children to be brave, it's still important to temper risk-taking. Certainly, we want our children to be safe. So tell your child that safety is always the first priority. If someone could get hurt and the risk is too great, teach your kids to always get adult help or call 911 if needed. Encourage children to trust their instincts, when they have concerns that something is unsafe.

## **Teach Your Kids How To Reduce Their Fears**

If not kept in check, fear can be overwhelming. Teach your child simple strategies to be brave. You might encourage positive self-talk, such as saying, "I can handle this" or "I have courage to do this." Or teach your child to take slow, deep breaths to find courage. Research finds younger children are more likely to share their fears with another child. Though you want them to be open with you, let them know it's also OK to share their worries with a friend. Choose a fear reducer that works best for your child and then help her practice that until it becomes a habit.

## **Teach Your Kids To Tell God How They Are Feeling When They Are Afraid And Ask Him To Help Them To Be Brave.**

It is so important for us as parents to teach our children that they can trust God and when they are afraid they can call out to Him in prayer. The issue that is making them afraid may not go away, but they can be courageous in the midst of it because God is with them and will help them!

**For kids to thrive in today's uncertain world, they will need courage and confidence. Let's help them find their hero within and learn to be brave!**

# SURE-FIRE WAYS TO INCREASE COURAGE IN KIDS

by Sheena White

There's no doubt that we would all like to see courage in kids.

With the ever-escalating fear in our society, today, courage is going to be an important skill for kids to have, not just as a kid, but as an adult as well.

According to the Kathleen K. Reardon's article **Courage as a Skill**, "In business, courageous action is really a special kind of calculated risk-taking. People who become good leaders have a greater than average willingness to make bold moves, but they strengthen their chances of success—and avoid career suicide—through careful deliberation and preparation."

So how do we raise kids with courage?

How do we teach them to take calculated risks?

Here are some great suggestions from Dr. Michele Borba, a globally-recognized educational psychologist on parenting, author of 24 books and speaker whose talks have been viewed by over 1,000,000 people.

## Let Them Know It's Okay to Be Afraid

Many kids think that being courageous means that they can't be afraid. Quite the contrary, though.

Dr. Vanessa LaPointe reminds us that **being courageous** has nothing to do with **an absence of fear**.

"It's to say hello to your fear, and step in front of your fear and do it anyway. When kids find themselves capable because we've found them capable, when they find their confidence because we found our confidence, when we've created that kind of a reality around them, they will be able to step into their fear and conquer it.

## Give Kids The Tools to Face Fears

Dr. Michele Borba describes four different techniques that the military uses to help Navy Seals face their fears during missions. (Remind your kids that if they challenge you about the techniques below.)

### Techniques

#### Deep Breathing

Teach your kids to take a slow deep breath, hold it for two seconds and then slowly let it out ie: **Smell the flower** (breathe in) **Blow out the candle** (breathe out) This type of breathing can have a big impact on anxiety that may be building.

#### Mental Rehearsal

If there's something that they're particularly afraid of, have them go through the scenario in their heads, step by step. This will help alleviate anxiety since they'll know how to handle the situation when it arises.

#### "Chunking It"

This is a technique commonly used in business, so this may be familiar to you, already. It simply means that instead of looking at the entire "thing," break it into chunks. So if your child is nervous about a new day at school, encourage them to just think of one small part. Once they

get through that part, then focus on the next part and the next... until, before they know it, the day is over.

### **Positive Affirmations**

You may automatically think of *The Little Engine that Could* with the Positive Affirmation of, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can..." But there's a lot of wisdom in that old cartoon. Help your child come up with an affirmation for themselves. Then have them repeat it over and over again before beginning the task (or dreaded event) that he or she is facing.

### **Model Courage In Your Own Behavior**

Your kids are watching you, whether you realize it or not. What fears are you passing on to them? Dr. LaPointe asks, "What's the story that we're telling ourselves and then, out of those stories, what are the stories that we are narrating for our children and the reality that they are being marinated in?" She points out that the fear-based stories we tell ourselves are often passed down to our children, which then infuse the way they understand the world.

"If, as human beings, we are amassing this longer and longer list of fears the older that we get... then we need to ask ourselves,

What's our story?

What's our programming?

What's happening behind the scenes that we've come into all of this?

Because we're making it all up. The mind sees what the mind wants to see."

That's why it's so important to model courage and not live a fear-based life. Your kids need to watch you taking calculated risks and stepping out of your comfort zone.

And talk to your kids about how it feels when you do that! Through your own example, kids will be more likely to step in front of their own fears and face them.

### **Talk About Values**

According to Borba, "Research finds that kids are more likely be courageous if they believe that their parents expect them to support those in need."

**Talk about what your family values. Things like standing up for people who can't stand up for themselves, doing the right thing, even when it's hard, and speaking up. Speaking up does not mean, for example, standing on the sidelines watching while people need help.**

Help kids understand that doing the right thing won't always be easy, but that you always expect that of everyone in your family.

I think that these lines from the Robert Frost poem, *The Road Not Taken*, articulates this well:

**"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference."**

# DEVELOPING TRUSTWORTHINESS: THE DO'S AND THE DON'TS

## A Mother Far From Home

Here are some **do's and don'ts** to watch out for so you can **teach trustworthiness** to your children.

**Trustworthiness** is an important **quality** we need to **invest time** in building in the lives of our children. Think about it, do you like to spend time with people you don't trust? If you were an employer, would you want to hire people you can't trust? When thinking about people who have made the biggest positive impact in your lives, were they often very trustworthy?

A **trustworthy person** is **someone who can be relied upon to be honest, truthful, reliable, dependable, credible and safe**. God calls His children to be trustworthy, and lucky for all of us, it isn't rocket science.

**"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities"** (Luke 16:10). For mothers, this is very good news! It means that **from a young age we can encourage trustworthiness in our children** in even the smallest of tasks and matters.

## DO'S

**What you should do to encourage and promote trustworthiness in your children.**

### **Do Give Responsibilities**

A clear and easy way to develop trustworthiness and responsibility in your children is to give them age appropriate responsibilities or tasks that you keep them accountable for. It might be a chore or two, or making their bed, picking up their toys, etc. By giving your children something that they can "own" they will learn to **follow through with their projects** and carry out what is expected of them.

This will take time, patience and training on the part of the parent, of course, because kids are not naturally going to want to do things they don't consider fun. After a while, however, when they know there are consequences to their choices, they will get the idea.

### **There Are Consequences When Responsibilities Are Not Met**

If your workplace had a 3-tardies-and-you're-fired rule that you have seen enforced firsthand, through hell or high water you'd get to work on time. If your co-worker has shown up 20 minutes late every day for a year, you aren't terribly worried about it. Our children learn, **not in a manipulative way**, to follow our lead. If we expect them to clean their room and - **when they do not** - we do nothing about it, **they will quickly learn that they don't have to do it if they don't want to since nothing negative happens anyway**.

A **good way to help train responsibility** is by **giving a task and then a consequences for failing to do the tasks, or conversely, rewards for completing it**. No park on Friday afternoon if the [insert chore here] wasn't completed during the week. After a Friday or two of sitting it out they would quickly get the picture.

**Do Explain Beforehand Clearly What You Expect, And why Trustworthiness Is So Important.**

**Children are born with immature minds. They need their parents to train and explain things. When giving a responsibility it is important to fully explain to your child what you expect of them, what will happen when they do/don't follow through, and why responsibility is so important.**

**Trustworthiness is not about promising something to make others happy, but about following through on promises made.**

## **DON'TS**

**Here are some things to avoid so you don't inadvertently teach your children that image is more important than truth.**

### **Don't Treat Children As Though They Are Trustworthy With A Task/Matter When In Fact They Are Not**

**If you have told your child not to read under their covers at night and they repeatedly disobey you, then don't treat them with the trust they have not earned. Don't allow them to close their door and "give you their word." Their word is not trustworthy. A parent would do well to insist the door be left open and periodically check that the child is in fact not reading. When your child knows that you aren't just taking their word for it, but that you are taking their deed for it, then they will be more concerned with following your instructions than with telling you their intentions**

**If they are not to play the PlayStation before they've finished their homework and yet repeatedly disobey, don't give them the chance to continue disobeying. Hide the PlayStation to a place of your choosing only to be brought out after the homework has been completed and checked for completion by the parent. Trusting people when they have not proven themselves trustworthy never gives them impetus to become a trustworthy person. On the contrary, it encourages their thinking that it is what we say that matters, not what we do.**

### **Don't Have Unrealistic Expectations That Leave Children Feeling Disappointed And Unable To Perform**

**Training and teaching responsibility will take years and years and they'll still be learning it when they leave your house. It is something to be prioritized, but not something that should overburden your child. This is why age appropriate tasks are so important. Starting off very small and then increasing responsibility as they get older will help prevent "burnout."**

**Now, responsibility is not necessarily just having your child do a chore. Perhaps it is an activity or task that, after completion, results in a reward. If they visit their elderly neighbor for a chat or help another in their yard, an appropriately exciting reward or privilege can be given. It isn't bribing because they still choose to do this of their own volition or not since there's no punishment if it isn't completed. It is simply a way to get your child to think about how their actions affect their circumstances.**

### **Failing To Follow-Up To Be Sure The Task Is Complete**

**If your child is expected to do certain things or say certain things yet knows they are never checked, they will soon stop worrying about their obligations. "Make your bed, wash the dishes, do your homework" all become background noise to be ignored when they know that nothing will happen to them if they don't. It isn't a sign you don't love or trust them to check up on their duties, but simply a way to reinforce that you are the parent in authority and you are aware of what happens under your roof. If they come to you with a "I've cleaned my room" then a simple**

**"Great, let's go check it out" each and every time will prevent them from moving a few piles around on the floor and calling it a day.**

## **In Short**

**One of the qualities I value most in a person is their trustworthiness. I believe that God wants to use all of His children, but many callings and ministries require people of high character and dependability. If I am not faithful with small things (i.e., my own finances, gossip, being a starter finisher) then God would not trust me with handling finances for a ministry, confidential information, or to manage a project near to His heart. He doesn't expect us to be perfect or we wouldn't need Jesus, but we can seek to be as good as our word and faithful with the things God has put before us.**

**Raising our children to understand the importance of integrity and honesty (NOT what the surface looks like, but what's really underneath) will help many other areas of life come more easily to them. They will be naturally placed to be both naturally and supernaturally blessed in their personal, professional and spiritual lives. It isn't something we beat our children over the head with, but simply something we can start developing from a very young age in small steps. Having patience, never withholding love and displaying trustworthiness yourself will go a long way in helping bring up trustworthy little Rescuers.**

# WAYS TO BUILD AND KEEP TRUST WITH YOUR KIDS

TRUSTING ADULTS WERE TRUSTING CHILDREN:

HOW TO START BUILDING THEIR BRIDGE NOW

*By Andrea Nair*

The concept of *trust* is a complicated one. It can take years to build, moments to shatter, and the presence or absence of it strongly affects a person's happiness in life. To trust more is to worry less, and to worry less usually means to be less anxious and less coiled into a knot.

Parents have a significant role in how their children develop trust. We have the opportunity to really start our children off with a full trust tank. (We don't need to feel pressure about doing this "wrong," as long as there is a continual uphill growth, the odd blip in trust development can be tolerated.)

## HOW TO START BUILDING THEIR BRIDGE NOW

Trust is generally defined as a positive belief in the good within people and the world. When we think of trust, words like "integrity" or "character" come to mind—we expect a person or thing to be reliable, truthful, and have the ability to do what it claims to do.

How trust develops as a child grows is based on a concept called

### *Positive Core Beliefs*

Positive Core Beliefs are the set of phrases we tell ourselves based on how we interpret other people's actions and how the world works. Those interpretations are influenced the most by how adults interact with us early in life.

In order to foster the development of the Positive Core Beliefs that grow trust, keep these actions in mind:

### LISTEN

Listening is different than hearing—listening is an action. To listen to a child means to recognize their words, but more importantly to **seek to really understand their underlying message**. For example, when a child says "I hate you, Mommy!" she isn't saying "I hate you," she is more likely saying something like, "I am mad that you are making me go to daycare instead of spending the day with you."

We can show children we are listening by paraphrasing their words back to them, staying **focused on feeling words**. "Are you telling me that you are angry we have to be apart? You know what, I'm feeling sad to be away with you. You, too?" (pause) "When I see you after circle time, let's figure out a way to miss each other less during the day." (This is an Attachment Bridge)

### The Positive Core Belief Growing Here Is

*PCB: My parent hears me. Speaking up is important.*

### ATTUNE

Attuning is taking listening even deeper; it is anticipating your child's needs based on verbal and nonverbal cues. It is knowing that a **melting-down child**, for example, really needs to sleep so instead of unleashing punishments for lashing out, your focus is on calming your child, and figuring out a way to get him or her horizontal.

*PCB: My needs are important. My parent gets me.*

## USE EYE CONTACT

People learn a lot about a person's intention by focusing on their eyes. When speaking to a child, get down and gently look into his or her eyes. Let your child see what sincerity looks like.

*PCB: Connecting is important and safe.*

## RESPOND

Children will automatically verbally or nonverbally ask for help, as long as they believe (trust) those pleas will be answered. In order to grow trust and continue your child's openness, requests for help need to be answered to the best of your ability.

Also respond to emotional statements with validation and support. When a child says, "I'm scared," use words to show your child you will help keep her safe—"I can see why you'd be afraid of the dark. Let's figure out a way to help you with that."

Avoid using invalidation like this, "Oh, monsters aren't real. You're being afraid for no reason." That might inadvertently grow a negative core belief like: *My feelings are wrong* (which they aren't).

*PCB: Speaking up works—people will help me. Feelings are normal and not too scary. When I am overwhelmed, I can ask for help.*

## KEEP PROMISES

Follow through with what you tell your child you will be doing. Part of keeping promises is to not use them to reduce your guilt or instead of saying "no." Promise what is reasonable and within your ability to (restfully) complete. Be reliable.

*PCB: Keeping your word is important. My parents will do what they say.*

## TELL THE TRUTH

Get in the habit of not using white lies with your children. This helps children match verbal and nonverbal communication, reducing confusion. It also helps little ones understand what positive moral ethics are.

*PCB: Being truthful is important. People need to believe us.*

## ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES, CONSISTENCY AND ROUTINE

You might be wondering how this affects trust—it actually does quite a bit. When a child can trust things happen in a certain order, **the brain can relax**, staying out of fight-or-flight mode.

Routines and consistency also help reduce conflict, as the child will get to futility quicker. For example, when pushing for "ten more minutes" a child is likely to give up whining if they know you are going to calmly say, "It would be fun to have ten more minutes but that will put us in the late zone. When this song is over, it is time for us to put our boots on." (I used a *schedule cue, when/ then* and *transition signal* in this instruction.)

Consistency also reduces "crazy making:" when a person expects a certain response, they can grow a sense of fairness in it. When we feel we are being treated fairly, we can let our guard down.

The setting and holding of boundaries grows a slightly different type of trust: a strong belief that a parent will uphold safety and integrity. Children might get upset when you set

a boundary like *No hitting*, but as that child grows, realizing you are also stopping him from being hit by others, **THEY** will appreciate this firm line.

*PCB: I can relax: I know what is coming. My parent is keeping me safe.*

## **BE OPEN**

All Parents will make mistakes. Being open about our shortcomings, fears, and struggles helps our children trust that doing so is safe to do. Volunteering information to your child teaches them to do the same. As you do this, talk about how to volunteer information to people beyond your family in a way that is safe: how to not over share, increasing your risk for predatory behavior of others.

# **HOW TO TEACH YOUR KIDS THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST IN A RELATIONSHIP**

**By WAHM**

If you want to teach your children about trust in a *relationship*, you have to teach them about what it's like to be able to trust someone and what a trusting relationship looks like. You need to both provide a way for your kids to see a relationship that is built on trust and to let them know that they can trust you. This shows them acts that they can emulate as well as allows them to engage in a trusting relationship that future relationships can be built on.

## **Give Your Kids a Good Role Model**

The relationships that you demonstrate to your kids should be ones that put trust on the forefront. If you are involved in any difficult relationships that reveal a lack of trust, end them. Though it may be difficult to get rid of a relationship, it is important to do so if that relationship is not a good model of trust for the kids to see.

## **Openly Talk about Trust**

If trust is important to you, talk about it to your children regularly. When they are acting in a responsible manner, reward them with extra privileges that are extended to them because that trust has been forged. When kids do something to erode that trust, it should be made clear to them that trust has been damaged and that the same privileges extended during times of trust will not be extended.

## **Communicate and Be Honest to Instill Trust**

The ultimate lesson of trust in a relationship is instilling trust in the mother-child relationship. Keep communication open between you and your kids and allow them to ask questions and get honest answers. Be honest with your kids whenever possible in order to build trust in your kids. As you and your kids continue to be honest with each other, trust will continue to grow. This is an important aspect of your relationship that will serve as a model for later relationships.

## ENCOURAGE RELATIONSHIPS THAT INVOLVE TRUST

As a parent, you have a lot of input into your kids' friendships. To teach them about trust in a relationship, talk to your kids about the trust factor in their friendships. Encourage them to be trustworthy friends and to stop being friends with those who have proven themselves not to be trustworthy. By emphasizing trust and being an honest person, you will show your kids how important it is to be honest to friends and to expect honesty in return.

When discussing your relationships and the relationships that your kids have, keep up the discussions about honesty and trust. To continue the emphasis on these aspects of relationships, the conversations must continue indefinitely. It is never time to stop talking about honesty and trust. These are topics that you can continue to place in the forefront all the way through your kids' childhoods, through adolescence and into adulthood.

## TEACHING YOUR CHILD TO BE TRUSTWORTHY

By Teach Kids How

### What Does Being Trustworthy Mean To You?

As a parent we want to trust our children to make the right choices when we are not around, to do the right thing when presented with a childhood dilemma, and to come to us with their problems. There will certainly be some decisions they make that we will not approve of or be happy with, with all the obstacles they face and a large amount of peer pressure from other children.

### How Can We Develop Trustworthiness In Our Children?

Trust is an issue that should be established between both parent and child. This, as every other issue parents teach their children, always starts with the parent teaching by example. Children automatically trust parents as their caregivers, nurturers, teachers, and providers, but that trust can be broken when parents do not live up to those standards of care. Trust is defined, as having a firm reliance on the integrity or ability of a person or thing, whereas a person who is trustworthy is one who is worthy of being trusted.

Therefore, being trustworthy to our children starts by making sure we keep our word to our children, although life throws us curve balls and there are many times we make a promise and are unable (by no fault of our own) to keep that promise. Talk to your children about these circumstances, before these issues present themselves and how they affect the things we hope to be able to do or the promises we make.

### Pre-School

For preschoolers, a great way to start out talking about trustworthiness is to read books or tell your preschooler stories about trustworthiness; such as *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* or read the book, *The Berenstain Bears and the Truth* by Stan Berestain or *Tommy the Trustworthy Turtle* by the Oklahoma State Extension Character Critter Series.

Talk about the characters from these stories and books and explain to your preschooler what trustworthy means; especially emphasize the following qualities that are displayed in a trustworthy person

## **Qualities That Are Displayed In A Trustworthy Person**

**Being honest**

**Following rules**

**Always keeping a promise**

**Never being mean**

**Never taking things that don't belong to us**

Talk to them about how they feel if someone is mean to them, or is not honest with them. Ask them how they feel when someone does this to them or how they feel about that person.

## **Main Points To Address**

**Explain to preschoolers what it means to be trustworthy.**

**Read books or tell stories that emphasize the characteristics of trustworthiness.**

## **K-3rd Grades**

**Emphasize to your children that when we give our trust to someone we are confident in their ability to not hurt us, to be honest with us and we ultimately rely on them to be trustworthy. Trust is an essential aspect of any good relationship. When we receive trust we are giving others the confidence that we are trustworthy, that we will be reliable, be honest, be a good friend and be caring to that person.**

**Sit down with them and talk about situations in which having someone who is trustworthy is important and how being trustworthy to friends and family is important. You can also watch movies that have *characters* in them who find themselves in situations of losing or gaining trustworthiness.**

**What could the characters have done different?**

**What did the characters do right?**

## **Main Points To Address**

**Watch movies that have characters in situations of losing or gaining trustworthy qualities.**

**Talk to them about situations where being trustworthy is important.**

## **grades 4th-6<sup>th</sup>**

**Children in these grade levels depend greatly on their friends for support and to give support.**

**This is a perfect subject to talk to your children about trustworthy qualities.**

**"What is their best quality that makes you friends?"**

**Do you think that is a trustworthy quality?"**

**Use examples of things that you have done in your childhood that demonstrate trustworthy qualities or things your children have done that demonstrated trustworthy qualities. "Even though you broke the lamp, telling the truth is a very trustworthy quality."**

## **Main Points To Address**

**Talk with your child about their friends and trustworthiness.**

Use examples when you were a child, or things your children have done that have shown examples of being trustworthy.

## **INTENTIONAL PARENTING AND ITS INFLUENCE IN BUILDING TRUST WITH A CHILD**

**By Karen Carreo**

Raising a child doesn't come with an instruction booklet and no child is the same. And we all make mistakes and big ones at that, but knowing how to build trust with your child will help you both carry on after a mistake was made without too much damage. Overall building trust with your child just comes down to taking a moment to think about what helps *you* build trust with the important people around you.

And a few extra steps of intentional parenting can make all the difference in building and maintaining a strong parent-child relationship. As parents, establishing confidence and assurance that our kids can rely on us in every way is vitally important. It's how we can meaningfully connect, build relationships, and even cope during those teenage years (or any time parenting gets tough).

The key to building trust with your child is to start as young as possible with the following tactics:

### **Set The Example As Their Guardian**

If you say that you will do something, then that something must get done. The most important step to build trust with your child is to follow through at all times. Sure life happens, so in the case that you can't follow through be certain to address why to your child

### **Don't Break Promises**

As a parent you should only make promises that are reasonable to be kept. Life happens, so think about that before uttering the words, "I promise" to your child. With just one small broken promise, your child's trust diminishes tremendously.

**Show Mutual Respect between child and parent.**

While your job is to teach respect, it's also to show respect. This means you need to show your child respect that is due to them at all times, while still being the parent in charge. When a child grows up respected, they are more apt to confide in and trust their parents. In the instance of rock climbing with our daughter, my husband was able to show respect by exuding pride over Jenn's accomplishments both big and small. He was still able to be in charge of the situation, but show respect. And while it was a fun outing, it's no different in more real-life situations with kids.

We can still be the parent in charge while respecting our children, their accomplishments, and their individual needs. When a child grows up respected, they are more apt to confide in and trust their parents.

**Always Be Honest with your kids .**

Of course you need to maintain age appropriate levels of honesty, but if you are always honest with your child they will begin to trust you naturally without much effort. It's best to answer 100 questions from your child when being honest, than it is to risk breaking that trust.

## **Really Listen To Your Child**

One of the largest ways to build trust with your child is to listen to them when they have something to say. Doesn't matter what you are doing, make eye contact and show a genuine interest in what your child has to say to you. **Always!**

## **Help Break Down Their Difficulties Into Manageable Steps**

Whether climbing a rock or facing a challenge of another capacity, it's important to help our kids know that we are there for them and **that we can help them conquer** those monstrous emotions one bit at a time.

## **Remain Consistent In Your Parenting**

Our job as a parent is to be consistent, set boundaries and follow through on consequences that you set up in the household if someone didn't follow a rule. When you raise your child in this manner, by being consistent, they are apt to have higher trust levels in you.

Ultimately, good parent-child relationships are built on a foundation on assurance and reliance. Your children take after you, after all they are one half you and the other parent, so remember what it was that would help you trust an adult when you were a child and implement that into your day to day life as a parent.

# **WHEN YOUR TEEN BREAKS YOUR TRUST**

**Diane Wagenhals of Lakeside Educational Network**

## **The Importance of Trust**

Trust is a concept that we absolutely must teach our children and teens. It is so important that it should be treated as a separate issue from other misbehaviors.

Let's say your teen took your car without permission. There are now two problems: one is the taking of the car and the **second bigger issue is the breaking of your trust**, which is the most important aspect of a healthy relationship.

**Remember as you deal with issues of trust with your teen that becoming trustworthy:**

Happens gradually over many years.

Is not an all or nothing proposition.

You will probably have to teach the concept of trust many times as opportunities arise. **Your teen may slip quite a few times before he is able to integrate trustworthiness into his character and behavior on a reliable basis.**

**Knowing that teens will most likely break trust with their parents, at least once in a while, helps parents to be more accepting and less upset. Believing that they will eventually become trustworthy can give you hope and encouragement so that you will persevere in teaching this critical character component to your teens.**

## **General Principles Of Trust**

**These principles can be helpful to you in deciding how to deal with issues of trust as they arise. They help you to maintain perspective and decide how to react to broken trust.**

You can also teach your teen that **Principles of Trust** are relevant as the circumstances which occur in their everyday life; and for parents raising your adolescent as you respond to the frequent battle cry of teens, **"Don't you trust me?"**

## **Understanding Trust**

### **Trust Exists On A Continuum**

**There is a whole range between the two end points, full trust and no trust.**

### **Trust Is Not Always Fair**

**Parents can trust their teens too much by not providing the guidance and limits that they still need. Parents can also under-trust by being suspicious and overly intrusive. Either extreme can set your teen up for failure and cause damage to the relationship.**

## **Earning Trust**

### **Trust Is Earned**

**It is not static: it can be damaged and can be repaired and re-built.**

**When you see more trustworthy behavior, give more freedom.**

**As you see improved judgment and better impulse control, you can give a little more freedom and privileges. See how your child does. Often being given more privileges inspires a teen to be more responsible and trustworthy. Determine how much to trust each child in each situation. This is not always clear-cut and obvious. You may trust them in certain situations and not others. Or you may trust your teen but worry about other people they are with who might not be reliable.**

## **Trust Is Not Blind; It Is Based On Knowledge**

**"I need to know where you are and what you're doing. You're on your way to being an adult, but you're not there yet and you can make some mistakes along the way that can hurt you very much. It is my job to help see that that doesn't happen."**

### **When Trust is Broken**

**Broken trust damages the relationship.**

**If trust is broken repeatedly. . .**

**You may need to get help as it could be a signal that something else is going on.**

# HOW TO TEACH THE CONCEPT OF TRUST

Teach Kids How

## Modeling

The best way to teach trust to teens is by modeling, not lecturing. Modeling is a powerful and effective way to influence your teen and it builds respect between the two of you. Part of modeling involves keeping your promises, with your child and with others - you are being watched.

## Having Discussions

Discussions around the issue of trust can build a good relationship with your teen and increase your teen's awareness of what it takes to be trustworthy. This can ultimately improve his self-image as he begins to see himself becoming reliable and responsible.

Here are some tips for these discussions,

Interweave information about trust into discussions.

Since the concept of trust is abstract, you may need to interweave information about what trust is and why it is so important:

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**"When you are trustworthy, others can rely on you.** They know that if at all possible, you will do what you said you would do."

**"People who are trustworthy are known for their determination, reliability and truthfulness.** They can be trusted to tell the truth, do their part and try their best to keep promises even if it becomes difficult."

**"Being trustworthy means that you keep your word.** When people are trustworthy with each other, they can relax, knowing that promises will be kept."

**"Without trustworthiness, agreements and promises don't mean anything.** You never know what you can expect from someone who is not trustworthy. Other people don't know if they can believe you."

# Discuss What Your Teen Can Do To Become Trustworthy

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## He Can

**Stop and think** before making a promise to be sure he really wants to and can do it.

**Remember** what he promises to do and to do the things he promises.

**Finish** the job to completion.

**Keep** doing what was promised even when he feels like doing something else.

**Be aware** of things that could prevent him from keeping his agreement. There are obstacles, such as promising more than he can deliver, being pressured by friends, being distracted, procrastinating, wanting to do something more fun, or being tired

## Reacting To Broken Trust

### Your Reaction

**Don't get personally insulted** by your teen's betrayal of trust.

**Remember he is just learning about trust**, and it will take a lot of practice to get it right. He probably **does not fully understand why trust is so important**. You can set high public goals that you communicate to your teen, but **keep your real expectations for trustworthiness low**.

**Don't despair** if your teen breaks your trust. You can look at such betrayals as an opportunity to have a discussion about trust and being trustworthy.

### What To Do

**Separate a trust violation from other rule infractions.**

Let your teen know that a betrayal of trust is a unique and serious situation - simply having a consequence imposed does not adequately address the problem.

A calm conversation is most effective. **Getting angry about broken trust does no good, and makes it less likely that you will be able to engage your teen in a meaningful conversation.**

**Ask your teen what he thinks should occur after breaking trust.**

Keep repeating that trust betrayal has to do with character, values and respect for oneself and the other person.

## Focus On The Issue Of Trust And Not On Punishment.

**It usually impacts a teen greatly when a parent tells him that he cannot trust the teen.**

That statement alone can sometimes be consequence enough for a betrayal - even more powerful than a punishment because the child has to then deal with the results his behavior has had on the relationship with his parent.

**Make him think about it.** This could be the worst thing you can do to him from his perspective. He would much rather have a consequence imposed and be done with it.

**Ask him what he thinks happened when he betrayed your trust; don't tell him.** You want him to understand how critical trust and honesty is to your relationship and that the more he betrays your trust, the harder it will be and the longer it will take to re-establish it.

**Let your teen know** that everything else gets put on hold until you resolve this current crisis in trust.

## **Help Teens To Rebuild Trust**

When your teenager betrays your trust, one of your jobs is to help him find ways to rebuild that trust.

Parents need to determine when and how much to re-trust. Often this occurs in stages.

"I will never trust you again" is not a healthy response. It takes hope away from the teen that he can make amends and re-gain your trust.

Initiate discussions about the whole subject of trust in general and specific things you have seen with him in particular, especially times in the past when he has been trustworthy.

## **Making Amends**

Allow your teen to make amends to you and accept his apology. You can help your teen find ways to make amends, which involves:

Restitution to the harmed party for damage done (for example, paying for something that he damaged, apologizing)

Resolve issues and make definite plan to avoid making the same mistake again.

Reconciliation with the person who was harmed (to re-establish trust and mend the relationship).

Once he speaks honestly and from his heart about trust and has made amends, you have accomplished your goal of helping him to understand the importance of being trustworthy. The fact that he has demonstrated that he has learned about trust can restore your trust in him. Affirm and congratulate your teen when he is being more trustworthy.

## **Imposing Consequences**

If your child has not shown remorse or made amends, then you need to impose reasonable consequences, such as limiting all privileges, until they have learned to take the breaking of trust seriously.

Remember, however, that if your consequence is too harsh, he will focus on his anger and resentment toward you and you will be letting him off the hook simply by accepting his punishment. In this case, he will not have learned the real lessons about trust.

Be sure that consequences teach rather than punish. Try to include your teen in determining a fair and appropriate consequence.

## **Encouraging the Truth**

Sometimes teens don't tell the truth because they are afraid their parents will become angry. Let your teens know that telling the truth is so important that you won't get angry if they tell you.

But this doesn't mean you have to let them off the hook for their misbehavior when they fess up. Sometimes a fair consequence needs to be imposed; other times, an apology is enough.

The most important thing for you to do is to deal calmly with whatever your child owns up to, maintain a positive relationship with him, and to congratulate him for having the courage to tell the truth.

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## Saying "SORRY" Does Not Equate Forgiveness **Forgiveness** With NO Strings Attached!

### HOW TO TEACH A CHILD FORGIVENESS

By Jamie Perillo, LPC

Children are often asked to forgive: forgive his sibling for taking their toy; forgive Johnny for pulling her hair at recess; forgive Mom for being late.

When you ask your child to forgive — to say "okay" when someone has said they are "sorry" — does your child really understand what that means? Did they let go of the issue or are they repeating what you are telling them to say?

It is important for children to understand compassion, loving-kindness, and forgiveness. Teaching your child to forgive is an essential life tool that will make navigating childhood and adolescence easier. Holding on to anger and resentment is a recipe for anxiety and depression for children and adults. The earlier forgiveness is taught, the earlier you can prevent children from taking on the victim role. That in turn helps prevent anxiety and depression.

### So How Do You Teach Forgiveness?

While there's no sure-fire way to teach your child forgiveness, some of these ideas may help get you started.

#### Forgiving Is Not Forgetting

Children — and many adults hesitate to forgive because they believe it means condoning the other person's behaviors. There is also a misperception that forgiving means forgetting, which might bring on fear it will happen again. In reality, to forgive is to say, "I did not like or appreciate your words or actions, but I am willing to let it go because it does not help me to hold onto these feelings."

#### In Order To Forgive Sometimes We Need To Look Beyond The Action And Explore The Person

For example, if your child is upset Susie called him or her a name during recess, help your child explore what was happening. Maybe Susie was on the outskirts of the hop-scotch game and wanted to play. Maybe she felt bad she was not invited to play or was jealous of those who were.

**Helping your child understand a possible trigger for the person's actions encourages compassion and forgiveness.**

**Before asking your child to let go, forgive, or excuse a behavior, it is first important to identify the feeling your child is experiencing.**

**Are they angry, embarrassed, or disappointed? He or she needs to understand how the incident made him or her feel before he or she can forgive.**

### **State The Feeling Before Offering Forgiveness**

**Instead of asking your child to immediately accept their sibling's "I'm sorry," have them state how they feel. For example, "Jenny, I am angry you borrowed my shirt without asking. Please ask me before taking my things next time. I forgive you."**

**Once the feelings are understood, visualization can help your child let go of any harbored feelings.**

**Hand your child a pretend balloon. Ask him or her to think about the feelings he or she stated — anger, sadness, embarrassment. Then ask them to blow all of those feelings into the pretend balloon. Tell them that the balloon is tied to him or her by an imaginary string. When they are ready to let go of the feelings, hand over pretend scissors to cut the string and release the feelings. Help your child imagine the balloon sailing high into the sky. When ready, imagine that the balloon gently pops, spreading a dusting of love and compassion to both parties. Remind your child it might take more than once and they can practice the visualization as much as they would like.**

### **Write A Letter**

**This is a helpful exercise, particularly for teens. Practice writing a letter stating what caused the upset and how he or she feels about it. Then have your child write a compassion statement or one of forgiveness to the offender and to themselves. End the exercise by having him or her rip the letter up into the garbage, signifying the release of forgiveness.**

### **Be The Example**

**Show your child how you forgive others.**

**It is important for children to understand that learning to let go may take time. The important lesson is to keep trying, making efforts, understanding forgiveness and loving kindness. Anger plus anger only equals more anger. Compassion and love are what heals.**

# HOW TO TEACH A CHILD FORGIVENESS

**Cara Davis is a content consultant and co-founder church'd.com.**

Salvation is based on the unmerited grace, i.e., forgiveness, of our heavenly Father. So the single best way to give your children a solid foundation for understanding salvation is by talking to them about forgiveness.

**Here are some ways to explain what forgiveness is and isn't.**

## **Forgiveness is...**

### **Given**

You don't have to wait on an apology before you forgive. **Forgiveness is what helps us let go of the wrong done to us.**

### **Our Responsibility**

**Because we've already been forgiven by God, the Bible tells us in Matthew 6:14 that we should forgive others.**

### **Ongoing**

**Forgiving someone doesn't mean you'll immediately feel better about what happened. It's a choice to move beyond it. Think of a cut on your skin - forgiveness covers like a bandaid and protects you while your body heals.**

### **Healthy**

**Not forgiving others can leave us feeling really bad on the inside, and cause us not to trust other people. Over time, not forgiving can be like picking a scab. Keep your hurt covered with forgiveness and your heart will stay healthy!**

### **Throwing Away**

**A quick object lesson to do with your children when they're angry over an offense is to ask them to write it down in ink or marker on a piece of paper. Explain that forgiveness is like tearing up that paper and putting it into water. After a few minutes collect those pieces and form them into a ball and toss it into the trash.**

## **Forgiveness Is Not...**

### **Keeping Score**

**When we throw away the bad thing that happened, it means we don't remind the person again that they did it. It means we start over.**

### **Forgetting**

**Even though we've thrown out the bad thing that happened. If someone who hurt us before tries to hurt us again, , we don't have to forget it happened we can protect ourselves. You should always tell an adult you trust when anyone hurts you-no matter what.**

## **A Feeling**

**Forgiveness is something we give even when we're still hurt by what happened. Our feelings may still hurt for a time, but we can talk to Jesus and ask him to help heal our hearts.**

## **Fair**

**It's not fair that a person who hurt us gets a second chance, but love isn't based on fairness. It's based on the love of God who loves us without condition. I often tell my daughter, "Nothing you could ever do will make me love you less." It's true with our relationship with God, and it can be true with our relationship with others.**

**When you talk to your kids about forgiveness, ask them for ideas they would add to these lists, or examples of how they forgive. You may be surprised at how much they can teach you about forgiveness.**

# **WAYS TO TEACH YOUR CHILD HOW TO FORGIVE**

## **All Pro-Dad**

**Giving forgiveness is both difficult and beautiful. When we forgive, we set healing in motion. Un-Forgiveness deepens wounds and causes withdrawal. Instill in your children the ability to forgive and let go. It will bring them peace in their lives and relationships.**

## **Sibling Arguments**

**All siblings bicker and fight. This provides the perfect training ground for giving and receiving grace. Kids need to learn reconciliation. Train them how to do it and be consistent in reinforcing the principles of forgiveness with even the smallest issues.**

## **Unconditional Forgiveness**

**Teach your kids to forgive regardless of the other person's response. What matters is that your child has feelings that need to be released. Unconditionally forgive even when it's not reciprocated.**

## **It's Not About Being Right**

**When you forgive someone, it should never be about being right. It's about the relationship being right. Teach your kids to care more about that.**

## **No Stipulations**

**By placing stipulations on our forgiveness, we are not truly forgiving. "If you make my bed for the next week I will forgive you." That's extortion, not forgiveness. Forgiveness is given without expectations or conditions.**

## **Give It Time**

**We can't make our children forgive someone. If we pressure them to say something when they don't mean it, nothing gets solved. Explain the importance and the benefits of**

forgiving, however, the actual act must come from their heart and not our demands. Give it time.

## **Teach Perspective**

We tend to only see our side of an issue. We need to teach our kids to be able to see things from the other side. Our side is only part of the story. Forgiving is much easier when we know the whole story and not just half of it.

## **Don't Be Held Back**

What do you gain by holding a grudge? Feelings of resentment keep us from moving forward. We end up stuck in emotions from past experiences. Bitterness lurks below the surface ready to rear its ugly head. Forgiveness releases it and gives us a clean slate for new experiences and emotions.

## **The Inside Eventually Comes Pouring Out**

If you are filled with bitterness, then that's what you'll give others. You can't get clean water from a dirty source. Fill your heart and mind with peace and forgiveness, so you'll be ready to pour that into others.

## **Teach Them To Serve**

Volunteer at a homeless shelter. Go on a mission trip where they can learn to serve others. Giving forgiveness takes humility. Build a spirit of humility by being mindful of the needs of others.

## **The Golden Rule**

"Treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves." Ask your kids how they would want someone to respond when they did something wrong. They would want to be forgiven. Then tell them to do likewise.

# HOW TO TEACH KIDS FORGIVENESS SKILLS

BY MARYAM ABDULLAH

Young kids can learn the building blocks of forgiveness and develop them as they get older.

This past weekend, my preschooler's neighborhood buddies didn't want to play Frisbee with him. Despite his insistence, they left him to go play with his soccer ball—and, unsurprisingly, he was fuming.

Although my son didn't stay mad for long, kids, like adults, can hold on to intense anger when they feel wronged. At its most extreme, this anger can lead young people to ruminate about betrayal and seek revenge through acts like physical aggression that can devastate families and communities.

## Can we teach our kids to forgive instead?

As psychologist Robert Enright and psychiatrist Richard Fitzgibbons write, **Forgiveness is a choice to let go of anger toward someone who hurt you and to think, feel, or act with kindness toward that person.** They clarify that **Forgiveness is not being weak—it takes strength and courage to forgive. It is also not forgetting, condoning, or putting up with being hurt; you can forgive while still seeking justice.** And **forgiveness is different than reconciling with someone; you can forgive without receiving an apology.**

Forgiveness might seem like an impossible feat for a child who doesn't yet have all the tools in her toolbox that adults do to handle emotions like anger and the desire for vengeance. But a wide range of studies have found that forgiveness programs can help kids of different ages feel better, strengthen their relationships, and improve their academic performance. According to Enright, we can learn from these programs about how to teach age-appropriate forgiveness skills, so kids grow up to be more peaceful and forgiving adults.

## Teaching Forgiveness Around The World

**Forgiveness Programs** typically invite families or students to participate in facilitator-led weekly group sessions over multiple weeks.

Children are introduced to conflicts between fictional characters before they are guided to reflect on their own personal conflicts.

They explore the different ways to deal with the hurt that results from conflicts, including the option of forgiveness.

After children learn the foundational concepts of forgiveness and what forgiveness is and is not, there is facilitated reflection on how to forgive—as modeled by a story character first, and then as a choice they can make toward forgiving someone who hurt them.

In studies, while some kids go through a forgiveness program, other kids are part of a control group so that their results can be compared. Those kids either go about life as usual or learn something else, like effective communication, conflict resolution, assertiveness, or empathy.

**First graders all the way through 21 year olds** have participated in Forgiveness Programs like this. They have been implemented in **Belfast, Northern Ireland—the most impoverished area of the United Kingdom**, which has a history of conflict between Irish Catholics and British Protestants; **Milwaukee, Wisconsin—a highly segregated city where children struggle with poverty and there is conflict among racial groups**; and some areas of Turkey that are stricken with poverty and violence. They have also been offered to **Midwestern teens who experienced a deep personal hurt, like being abandoned, cheated on, emotionally abused, or raped**; and to young women in South Korea who were victims of aggression.

After learning forgiveness, some children even perform better at school, have fewer conduct problems and delinquency, and feel more positive about their parents and teachers.

In these studies, Forgiveness Programs offer kids a variety of benefits compared to control groups—ranging from more empathy and hope to less anger, hostility, aggression, anxiety, and depression. After learning forgiveness, some children even perform better at school, have fewer conduct problems and delinquency, and feel more positive about their parents and teachers.

## Forgiveness Skills For Different Ages

### Greater Good

In researching forgiveness for over three decades and implementing some of these programs, Enright has gained insights into how to help children and adolescents learn and practice forgiveness. Here, he describes how to set the stage for forgiveness in your very young children and start building their forgiveness skills as they become young adults.

### Ages 4-5

**Before introducing young children to the subtleties of forgiveness, you can first introduce them to the concept of love—caring for the other for the sake of the other.** For example, you can do this by reading picture books to your children in which there are loving family interactions.

### Ages 6-7

Starting at about age 6, children have the capacity for what Jean Piaget called **Concrete Operational Reasoning, meaning that they now can understand the causes and effects of people's actions.** Because of this advance in reasoning in young children, you now can begin to introduce forgiveness systematically. There are **five sequential steps** you can take to help such young children become rather sophisticated in their understanding and practice of forgiveness.

### Step 1

You can introduce the **theme of Inherent Worth** or the **idea that all people—no matter who they are or how rich or poor they are or how smart they**

**are—have value.** Each person is **special, unique, and irreplaceable.** Again, you can introduce this concept apart from forgiveness and through picture books like Dr. Seuss's **Horton Hears a Who!** This is a helpful story for introducing inherent worth because of the repeated theme: **"A person is a person no matter how small."**

### **Step 2**

**Before introducing the theme of forgiveness itself, you can then lay a further foundation by showing children the themes of kindness, respect, generosity, and again love.** You can continue this learning apart from forgiveness and through story books.

### **Step 3**

**Once young children know about worth, kindness, respect, generosity, and love, you can then introduce them to forgiveness, but only through stories and not through their own experience of forgiving those who hurt them.**

## **You Can Explain Forgiveness This Way**

**When people forgive, they are kind to those who are not kind to them.**

**When people forgive, they try to show respect to those who have not shown respect to them.**

**When people forgive, they try to be generous to those who have not been generous to them.**

**When people forgive, they try to be loving to their family members even if the family members are not loving to them, at least at the moment.**

### **Step 4**

**You can be very clear to young children that to forgive does not mean automatic reconciliation.** Sometimes, a child must stay away from another child if the latter is continually bullying. The one who is being bullied needs to tell an adult.

### **Step 5**

**Next, parents can then apply all of this learning to children themselves, but only if they are ready and only if they choose to consider forgiveness.** Forgiveness is a choice and should not be pressured. For those who are ready, they can draw on what they have learned from the picture books and consider seeing the one who acted unjustly as possessing worth. For those who are ready, they can then consider offering kindness, respect, generosity, and love toward the offending person.

**Because these steps require time, they should be continued for the next several years, using new stories so that the learning deepens in different contexts.**

## **Ages 10-13**

**As children get older, parents can introduce the three themes of forgiving, receiving forgiveness, and reconciling, which can occur in later Elementary School and Middle School.** To receive forgiveness requires the humility to acknowledge wrongdoing and to wait until the one offended is ready to forgive. To reconcile, the two people are willing to come

together again in mutual trust. In other words, the one who was unfair takes steps to change. Forgiving can occur without reconciliation if the one who offends refuses to alter the unfair actions

### **Ages 14-18**

Once they are versed in the above themes, High Schoolers are ready for a more sophisticated forgiving by following the steps in the **Forgiveness Process Model**. Adolescents in high school may be ready to consider the challenge to forgive not just one person but anyone toward whom they harbor continuing resentment.

It is recommend **Family Forgiveness Gatherings** at least once a week, such as during mealtimes, to talk about what forgiveness means, how it feels, and what is easy and hard about it.