

5 KEY MISTAKES TO AVOID



So your child
listens to you
the first time
without ignoring,
bargaining or
flat-out refusing

MISTAKE #1

Indifferent

Body Language

- Not facing your child, or being engaged in something else when you're asking your child to do something is the most common mistake I see that **causes kids to get into the habit of "tuning out" or "disrespecting" their parent(s).**
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- We intuitively pick up on body language.
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- What are we intuitively communicating to our children when we ask them to do something but aren't facing them or looking at them? We're basically saying that we don't care much about our request or their answering of it.

Try this instead...

Direct

Eye Contact

- Making direct eye contact, or even requesting direct eye contact, naturally, and easily redirects your kid's attention to you and to addressing your request.
- When asking your child to do something, first, request if necessary, and make direct eye contact with them.

MISTAKE #2

Telling Them Straight Away

What to do

- Kids are constantly being told what to do and what not to do with no regard to what they are doing in that moment, or what they are trying to express.
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- **We, as humans, naturally "push back"** or at least feel the urge to push back when we are told to do something that we don't want to do; especially when, in that moment, we are enjoying what we are currently doing.

Try this instead...

Validate

What they are doing

- Validate what they are choosing to focus their attention on in that moment, then say "and right now I need you to..."
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- For example: "Kylie I love watching you play with your Barbies." "Tyler I love it when you play with your Legos." "Taylor I love that your watching such a good/funny/well-made show." "Jake I love that your enjoying your video game." And right now I need you to come downstairs and have lunch.

MISTAKE # 3

Reacting

To their emotions

Children's brains are naturally excitable. Their brain chemistry is tuned to react to everything in their environment. (It's what makes them learn so easily.)

Try this instead...

Ask Yourself

What they are trying to express

- Take a second to ask yourself what it is that they are trying to express to you.
- Allowing your kid their feelings and guide them to feel better. It takes 2 steps:
 - Step 1: Sympathizing with their feelings - "Yes, that would be frustrating/irritating/annoying/hurtful." (don't condemn the other person. E.g. "uh, he did that again?" is a no-no.)
 - Step 2: "I would love to help you two get over this. And ("And" is a key word in this sentence, do not use "but") And right now we need time. I need you get your favorite lego set or character or grab the tablet and show me... (just something they will want to show you)." This is called a pattern interrupt and it allows them to calm down easily and effectively.

MISTAKE # 4

Not Acknowledging

What they are feeling

- Your child is acting "off"; just different from his/her norm. And you don't directly acknowledge it.

Try this instead...

Ask Yourself

What are they trying to express

- Did your kid get into an argument with someone? (maybe their sibling or a peer at school)
- Try saying this: "I can tell your not feeling your best. How are you feeling?" If nothing... "I love talking to you. I'll be here for you when you want to talk."
- Provide calm, active listening. For example: "So Jenna told the teacher that you did it, and you got in trouble? I'm so sorry. How did you feel when she did that?"

MISTAKE # 5

Not Realizing

The impact of your statements

- Your kid is always observing you for clues on how to be.
- What you say you are, they will soon say they are and act accordingly.
- **Modeling is the strongest form of influence you have.**
- Telling them a story from your past is the same as modeling "in the now".
- Be sure you are telling them something you want them to model!

TRY THIS INSTEAD...

Treat yourself

The way you want your child to treat themselves

- Do you want your kids to be happy? Model it.
- Do you want your kids to feel good about themselves when they look in the mirror? Model it.
- Want your kids to make healthy lifestyle choices? Model it.
- Having a difficult time with their other parent/significant caregiver and it has become a topic of discussion? Identify the positive attributes and/or intentions and/or desires of the person. Your children will remember how you didn't criticize.
- Caught yourself labeling your actions as "a procrastinator" or not good at something? Follow up with, "But the truth is, 'sometimes it takes me longer', or 'sometimes something is harder' than I think it is, but I always get it done." If it's regarding something that is difficult for you, you may follow up with, "because I'm not afraid to ask for help when I need it."

- Further, as your kids get older, almost inevitably, difficult situations will arise, and stories from your past will become a talking point at some point or another. None of us are perfect. We've all made a poor decision a time or two. So what to say?
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- Stay age-appropriate and explain the feelings and emotions that are associated with the difficult situation whether it's a current event or an event from way back that is being recalled. Explain how they make each person involved (including yourself) feel. This helps your child understand the situation and possibly why a person involved is acting a certain way.
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- Next take them through >identifying the choices< you have/had; whether it already happened or not, identify and explain how you identified the choices.

So... for the Best communication with your kid try this right now. Go to them, face them, say their name once then ask them to look at you. Validate whatever it is that they were choosing to focus their attention on before you walked into the room (Kylie I love it when you play with your Barbies. Tyler I love it when you play with your Legos. Taylor I love that your watching such a good/funny/well-made show. Jake I like that you're enjoying your video game.) And now I need you to come downstairs/to-the-counter/table and have lunch. Note: There is nothing "wrong" with being flexible; if they ask you for a minute more and you feel like granting it to them, do it. Always follow your heart when you're connecting to your child. And in instances like this you are building trust between him & you. And if they don't respect the agreement then follow these connecting-to-respecting steps and/then ask them what they think there consequence should be. They will usually come up with the most justified, best ones! If not, validate what they requested as their consequence: "I can see how you would like an extra scoop of ice-cream as your consequence. I love your sense of humor. (Then make sure they are looking at you, ask them to if they are not) Your consequence is no more video (or whatever they were focusing on) for the rest of the evening.

If this is confusing in anyway, don't worry, I will be in touch soon with more great stuff to answer any questions and make it so-very-crystal-clear.

Happy Parenting & God Bless!

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