



## Improve the Everyday Quality of Your Relationship with Your Children

**BE FIRM AND LOVING EVEN WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ANGRY, COMPLAINING AND WHINING!**

### Ways to Answer Your Children's Most Common Gripes

Some things children say can send us running for cover; having no idea how to answer them. Anything we say seems to make them more angry, whiney or demanding. So how do you answer them without conflict? How do you turn negative communication patterns into more positive ones?

Here are some ways to respond that will eliminate the conflict:

#### **1. "YOU DON'T TRUST ME!"**

##### **Instead of:**

"Why should I trust you, you never listen to me, you are always late for curfew, last week you told me you were with Jackie and you weren't ....trust is something you need to earn, young lady." Or: "Of course I trust you, that is a silly thing to say."

##### **Try this:**

Acknowledge their feelings: "You seem really upset about this whole trust thing-when we both calm down-I think it will be an important discussion to have." Redirect your child to the situation at hand: "I would love to talk to you more about trust, but right now we need to discuss the reasons Daddy and I feel you should not go to this movie..." "Trust is something we will discuss another time. Right now we are discussing why you cannot take the car for an hour's trip."

## 2. "IT'S NOT FAIR!"

### **Instead of:**

"You gotta roll with the punches" Or: "Life is not fair and the earlier you learn that the better off you are."

### **Try this:**

Acknowledge their feelings: "Sometimes life feels really hard and tough. It can hurt so much when life feels unfair."

Redirect your child to the situation at hand: "Right now, the fact that Sammy got to go with Grandma is really making you angry and upset... and you feel like it is so unfair! Your turn to go with Grandma is next week. Let's go put it on the calendar so we can remember it."

## 3. "YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME"

### **Instead of:**

"Don't you talk to me that way or you'll be really sorry."

### **Try this:**

Acknowledge their feelings: "You really don't want to brush your teeth right now-if you were your own boss you would never brush your teeth! Sometimes you like having Mommy to take care of you and sometimes you wish you were your own boss."

Redirect your child to the situation at hand: "You want to be in charge of when you go to sleep; when you are in bed let's talk about all the things we can find for you to be in charge of. Right now you don't like being rushed to get in the car. You wish you could have decided when it was time to put away the legos and when it was time to go to school."

#### **4. "I HATE YOU"**

**Instead of:**

"How can you say such a terrible thing? That is not nice."

**Try this:**

Acknowledge their feelings: "You are really upset about all this! I am really sorry you feel that way."

Redirect your child to the situation at hand: "You seem to be really upset with me right now. When we are both calm we will discuss why you need to clean your room. I can see where you would feel that way right now-sometimes in order to be a good parent we make rules that can make kids pretty mad."

#### **5. "WHY DO YOU ALWAYS LET HIM, BUT NOT ME"**

**Instead of:**

"What are you talking about, didn't I let you watch TV a whole hour yesterday and weren't you allowed to go to Justin last week.... "

**Try this:**

Acknowledge their feelings: "The fact that he was home sick today and got to watch lots of T.V. seems very unfair to you. It sounds like you wish you had been home the whole day too."

Redirect your child to the situation at hand: "Usually we try to work things out fairly, but, sometimes he gets extra T.V., sometimes you get extra T.V. That is the way it works in a family."

## **6. "WHY SHOULD I DO IT, I DIDN'T MAKE THE MESS?"**

### **Instead of:**

"Because I said so!"

### **Try this:**

Acknowledge their feelings: "This looks like a big clean up job to you and you didn't even make the mess. You are probably feeling how I feel sometimes when I have to clean up everyone's stuff."

Redirect your child to the situation at hand: "In this family we work together and pitch in. Sometimes that means cleaning up other people's messes."

## **7. "WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL, ALL MY FRIENDS ARE GOING!"**

### **Instead of:**

"If all your friends jumped off the Empire State Building, would you do it too?"

### **Try this:**

Acknowledge their feelings: "It sound like you are wishing right now that Mommy and I were not concerned about what goes on at rock concerts. You wish that we were less concerned about safety and rules."

Redirect your child to the situation at hand: "Nevertheless, Mommy and I decided that this rock concert is out of the question. When we all cool down we can talk about the rules in our family."

Using these clever responses, parents can be loving and firm. They can maintain the rules that they set, kindly and respectfully. This will ensure that the lines of communication remain open between parents and children creating a warm home environment.

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