



A Parenting Survival Pack : -

'From stressed and surviving to successful and thriving'

Content and worksheet – Video 2
Connection & Communication

Tools, Tips & Techniques - a new way of being & parenting

Give them your full attention

Remember to be present. Not simply saying “Hmmm” when they are speaking to us, while we’re ‘busy’ texting on the phone. They want and need our full attention, eye contact and interest in them. This is ‘intensive care’. It’s easy for them to build up a limiting belief that they’re not important when they experience that lack of interest. If it really isn’t the time for much conversation, let them know that. It only takes a couple of seconds to stop what you’re doing, look at them and tell them “I’m very busy at the moment and as soon as I’ve done this I’ll be able to talk to you” or whatever it is they want you to do. I don’t believe we should put them first all the time, or neglect what we want to do in favour of what they want. It’s about finding a balance. This lets them know where they stand. They get used to you having rights and needs and a healthy relationship is formed.

The best present you can give your child is ... Be it!

Carl Rogers’ (German Psychologist 1902-1987) “Reflective listening” is a good habit to get into. You paraphrase back what has just been said to you so that you make sure you have it right. You can ask your child to repeat back to you what you have just said, to check that they heard and ask if they understand. Do this with eye contact and not while doing something else.

Another thing he taught and talked about was ‘Unconditional Positive regard’.

Unconditional positive regard

Where parents and significant others accept and loves the person for what he or she is. Positive regard is not withdrawn if the person does something considered wrong or makes a mistake. The consequences of unconditional positive regard are that the person feels free to try things out and make mistakes. People who are able to self-actualize are more likely to have received unconditional positive regard from others, especially their parents, care givers and teachers in childhood.

Conditional positive regard

Where positive regard, praise and approval, depend upon the child, e.g., behaving in ways that the parents think correct. Hence the child is not loved for the person he or she is, but on condition that he or she behaves only in ways approved by the parent(s). At the extreme, a person who constantly seeks approval from other people is likely only to have experienced conditional positive regard as a child

To 'care' fully for our children means caring about what they're thinking, feeling and doing, caring about their emotions. Care about what they are interested in, you don't have to be interested in it just in them being interested in whatever it is. We can show we care in the way we are with our children. How we 'be' with them as well as by what we do and say. My three main focus areas of Parenting Magic are offering ways to **'Be' 'Do' and 'Say'** things differently to achieve the results you want.

Benefits of Letting Them Know You Care

It will:-

- Raise their self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence
- Help you reap what you sow. When you show them how much you care, they'll show you how much they care about you. Remember children will do as you do not as you say (though more of that when you put the tools and tips I've shared into place!) they will become what you and their environment shows them and allows them to be, so set a good example.
- Build a stronger connection between you and your child
- Help you to be able to separate the person from the behaviour your child is displaying, by remembering you still love the child, it's the behaviour you don't!
- Encourage communication and openness.
- Allow them to build up their trust so they can allow you into their world, at any age.

Seven steps to Let Them Know You Care

1. Tell them and keep telling them you love them and as importantly, SHOW them. (Actions speak louder than words)
2. Praise them for what they do well, even if it isn't as you would have done it, and avoid telling them how you would have! Learn to deliver a 'feedback' sandwich. Tell them what's good, say a positive first – lose 'but' use 'and' and finish on a positive ☺ Let's lose criticism, think more of it as 'instruction' or 'guidance.'
3. Compliment them and mean it e.g., when they've made an effort to look good even when you think that shirt doesn't really go with those pants. Or you don't like the colour of that lipstick.
4. Show interest in what they are interested in. No 'dissing' what they like. Say, "I'm glad to see you reading (whatever it is, well within reason) or "It's great you're taking an interest in music", even if it's not your cup of tea.
5. Be clear they understand it's their behaviour you don't like and not them. Say "I don't like what you've done", or "that behaviour is selfish."
6. Be present and give them the time they need, to know you care, e.g., when they want to show you something or tell you something, or just want to share something, spend time with you. Be aware of telling them "Not now, I'm busy" you may genuinely be though what your child hears is "I'm not important" or "what I have to say isn't important" what we say to our children has a huge impact on them. Alter what you say slightly "I'm a bit busy right now and as soon as I've finished I'll come and talk to you" reassure them of your interest and that they do matter.
7. Say Yes more often and mean it. Very often a child will ask if they can do something, paint, go outside, play with a certain friend and without thinking we say 'No'. What we often mean is not now, or I don't want you to, because the truth is they actually 'can' do or are able to do that thing! This confuses the unconscious mind that knows they 'can' they know they are able to do it and so the lies begin. Say "Yes" first and then qualify it, with something like "when we've finished tidying up" or "Yes, tomorrow" "Another time" let them hear the word Yes more often.

Magic language

There are certain words that have more impact than others and can elicit certain behaviour. Words are evocative and incredibly powerful. The way they are said and how they are used in a sentence can encourage the behaviour or response you want, or indeed, have the opposite effect. One of the most common complaints I hear is “My kids don’t listen to me” and “They never do as I say” (of course *never* isn’t true! they do sometimes) Words like never, always, everyone, nobody, never are what we call universal quantifiers and are not true! They are exaggerations, not accurate. One reason children don’t do as we ask, or seem not to listen is because we’re not telling them what we want, they may be listening and only hearing what you *don’t* want!

Ditch your ‘Don’t’s’

You probably spend a lot of your time telling your children to don’t do this or don’t do that, telling them what you don’t want them to do, instead of asking them to do what you do want them to do. How many times do you hear yourself saying to younger children, “Don’t run”, “jump on the furniture”, “touch that” or to teenagers “Don’t be late”, “Don’t leave your room a mess”, “Don’t lose your keys” and “Don’t get drunk”? (If, of course you know they might do!)

Reword what you say and ask them to do what you would like them to do. I’m not saying they always will, though the unconscious mind will be getting a clearer picture.

Let’s reword the above Change:-

- “Don’t run” to “walk”
- “Don’t jump on the furniture” to “keep your feet on the floor” or “Please sit on the furniture”
- “Don’t touch that, to “Leave that alone”

With older children instead of

- “Don’t be late”, “Be home on time”
- “Don’t leave your room a mess”, “Keep your room tidy”
- “Don’t lose your keys”, “Remember to keep your keys safe”
- “Don’t get drunk” say “Stay sober”

We bring their attention to and focus on negative stuff. Your unconscious mind can’t directly process negatives. So, if I say to you “Don’t think of an elephant”. You have to think about an elephant (the thing you don’t want to think about), before you can even attempt not to think about it! That being the case imagine what we’re doing to our children! Even if you said “I didn’t think of an elephant I thought of a giraffe” your mind had to think of an elephant to know that’s not what you were to

think of! It would be a two-step process because your mind cannot process a negative directly. Our mind immediately pictures things, we see them. If ask you what is your front door like, you immediately find a picture of it you see it in your mind. To finish on, don't think about a red double decker bus, or a computer!

Common Mistakes Parents Make

Are to Think That:-

- Your children are mind readers. A lot of the time they don't know what you want, because you haven't told them!
- They look at the world the same way you do. Even if you want them to, it's good to remember they are wired differently. They are not a clone of you
- Their priorities and values are the same as yours. Their priorities and values are the result of all the influences on them, not just yours and relevant to their age and interests
- Using the word 'don't' will stop them doing what you don't want them to do. In fact it actually highlights something they may not even have thought of

Sit on your 'Buts'

Another word we use often is 'but' it's a word that when we want to make an impact, stay positive and effective, is best avoided. 'But' is a negation that takes away anything positive said before it!

Think about what happens when you hear someone say "but". You know something not so good is coming, don't you? For example, has anyone ever thanked you for something and then said, "But"? Remember how it feels. Your heart sinks, doesn't it? Now, think about when you've used it with your children. "Yes, that's a lovely picture, but we need to tidy up now" "Thanks for doing the washing up, but you could have cleaned the sides while you were at it" Or, "Yes, you have made your bed, but all your washing's on the floor"

The Benefits of Sitting on Your Buts

- Your child will hear that they're getting some things right, that you're pleased (with no down side!)
- Over time they will start to be more willing to listen to you
- When they start to feel less criticised, they will tell you more about what they think. They'll open up to you more
- Their confidence will start to improve and they'll be happier
- They will become more communicative in every area of their lives

How to Reduce Your Buts

1. Be aware of how often you say the word, "but" and make a conscious decision to eliminate it
2. Be aware of how often other people use it and point it out to them in a supportive way
3. Replace "but" with "and", a positive building word. Use it with enthusiasm, and it turns criticism into feedback
4. Learn to use a feedback sandwich. Start with something positive; use 'and' instead of 'but' and then say what you want to change or improve; finish on an overall positive comment. e.g. If your teenager has made tea and made a mess in the kitchen, instead of saying: "Thanks for making tea **but** you've made a right mess" say "Thanks for making the tea **and** I'd really appreciate you tidying up as well please, it was a really thoughtful and helpful of you to make tea tonight"

Say when

Say 'when' instead of 'if'... "When" implies something will happen, it's just a matter of time. If allows more choice.

It's Because

Get familiar with the magic word 'because'. It encourages compliance. It gives validity to what's said after it. After 'because' we expect a reason, an explanation, a truth because that's what we usually get. As long as it's not just "Because I said so ". You can have fun using 'because', if you're in a supermarket queue and only have a few things in your basket, ask the person in front of you if they mind if you go before them. Say something like "You don't mind if I go before you do you?" (they very well may already be saying go ahead) then you can qualify the request with "because I've put the wrong shoes on this morning and ..." or "Because I didn't have my porridge this morning and ..." people are often not listening once you've made the request and started to tell them why!

Stop Trying

Remember the words of the great philosopher Yoda "*Do or do not do, there is no try*" Avoid saying "Try to ... " simply say "do" encourage children to "do their best" that's all they can do, no need for the "try" first. It almost sets up for failure, or gives them the option. Even when encouraging babies or children to eat something new,

we can eliminate the “Just ‘try’ some” “Just have some” is a better directive ... they either will or they won’t.

When my youngest had finished his science exam one day and his father picked him up, he asked how it had gone. Eden said he didn’t think it had gone too well. His dad said “Never mind, as long as you tried your best” Eden (remember he has me for a mother) said “I didn’t try. I **did** my best

Exercises

Write down the things you are saying ‘Don’t’ to and take time to reframe them into asking for what you do want.

Catch yourself before you say ‘But’ practice making it an ‘and’

Get into the habit of not ‘trying’ the best place for any try is on a rugby pitch 😊

Choose one a day and concentrate on that then move on to any of the other practices you’re going to use.

Drop the ‘interrogation’

Rather than start a conversation with interrogating your children, say (declare) how you feel, what you’re thinking

Why W words won’t work!

The ‘w’ words I mean are Why, When, Who, What and Where. These are ‘interrogatives’. We’re interrogating our children when we start a question with any of these.

For instance:-

“Why on earth

“When are you ever going to learn”

“Who do you think you are ...”

“What did you think you were doing ...”

“Where do you think you’re going ...”

The reason it isn’t helpful to start a conversation this way, is because they feel threatened and automatically go into defence mode. It’s the unconscious mind responding, a natural response. Of course, we’ll use these words, it’s just not helpful to start with them, ‘especially with the negative energy that accompanies it. It will encourage a knee jerk response, a story or a flippant reply. Give them time to respond better by keeping calm, breathe, collect your thoughts and use something like:-

“I’m wondering (then the what or who) ...”

“I’m curious (then the when or what) ... “

Or “I’d like to know/hear/understand ...”

These are ‘declaratives’. You respond rather than react and give them time to formulate a response to your question or statement instead of a defensive or even sarcastic reply. You are starting with you and are ‘declaring’ how you are feeling.

When we remember who we and are children are, human beings sharing a life and here to enjoy it. That we are in control of ourselves, no one else and that what comes out of our mouths is our choice, then it’s easier to remember there really is no need to argue. Let’s face it, it takes two. What good is there in arguing with your child. Debating something, where you are both putting forward your viewpoint is a different thing. For every action there is an equal and opposite one, when you react to whatever has been done or said, then there will be an equal opposite one coming back at you! Avoid it. Let’s learn to respond not react.

Don’t ask questions you don’t want to hear the answer to

When being gentle and thoughtful and caring towards our children we often encouragingly ask “Shall we ...” hoping to perhaps lead them away from an activity we want them to stop doing E.g., “Shall we stop pulling the dogs ears?” “Shall we leave the buttons on the washing machine alone?! Be prepared for a “No” answer. Rather than ask question you don’t want, that you might not like the answer to, offer an invitation, it’s more of a directive, say “Let’s stop pulling the dogs ears” “Let’s leave the buttons on the washing machine alone” and depending on the age of the child, direct. Be ready with an alternative activity and use the word ‘and’ “Let’s stop pulling the dogs ear **and** play with (whatever they like to play with) or read your favourite book or any other activity they enjoy. Also explain why we’re not pulling the dogs ears any more! When we make an invitation “Let’s ..., It’s inclusive and a suggestion, you’ve put an idea into their head rather than asked the question and given them choice to say No.

Use Tag Questions

Mentioned in Magic Language Tagged on at the end of a sentence accompanied with the appropriate body language. Eg “Let’s put all the toys away now, I know you can do a good job of that, can’t you? (nodding your head to add positive alignment) remember body language is a huge part of the meaning that’s conveyed. I have used it when asked whether I’d like another glass of wine “ I have said, used the words, “Oh no thanks” while nodding my head, smiling and moving my glass towards them, I get my glass refilled! Yes I know it can be considered manipulative, I’m not advocating that. NLP is sometimes considered manipulative, though it is a tool, like a knife that in the hands of a surgeon can save lives and in someone else’s hands can take life. It’s not the tool that’s dangerous it’s how it’s used.

Yelling and Nagging Cause Deafness

Not because the decibels when shouting may damage their hearing, though they might! Because your children will switch off. They stop hearing you, or what you are saying, they just hear noise. The same with nagging. Neither will help you connect and communicate effectively.

When we shout, we've lost control, we're usually angry, annoyed, irritated, frustrated and that emotion is transmitted, the energy of it is out there along with unhelpful words.

Saying "Because I told you to ... " or "Because I said so" isn't fostering a good relationship, it teaches an unequal relationship, one where someone has more authority than the other. An interesting word often used is 'understand' Parents often ask after saying something to their child "Do you understand?" I know we use the word often, though the original meaning when asked by authority is asking do you agree to stand under me, be less than, let me have authority over you! Interesting isn't it?

Remember to:-

- Treat your child with the respect you would want to receive
- That judgment and criticism isn't helpful or constructive.
- To insist on your way or the high way teaches not to consider other people's perspective.
- Not to belittle, make fun of or dismiss their ideas or what they say
- To look at what's happened in perspective not blow it up out of proportion, i.e. make mountains out of molehills.
- Wear your Rose Coloured Specs as often as possible and find some good in a situation. What might this lead to, what will they have learned, and remember life is about showing us all lessons to learn from enabling us to grow.

Stop Commanding – it's imperative

Commands don't work either they're known as 'Imperatives'. Remember to step into their shoes and how you'd feel if you were being commanded to do something. I often hear parents shout 'commands' at their children "Pick your clothes up" "Shut the door after you" "Get down here right now" "Put your toys away now" and using a lot of 'Don't's' too, e.g., "Don't you speak to me like that". Start with a 'declarative' that's starting with you, make a statement e.g. "I'd like you to ..." or "It's time to ..." you are declaring something.

Imperatives are not going to elicit as positive response or compliance as much as declaratives. They are dictatorial and don't show respect. Saying "Pick your bag up", "Close the door" or "Do your homework" is not as effective or polite as saying "I'd appreciate you picking your bag up please", "Would you mind closing that door

please” or “I think it would be a good idea to do your homework now” and without sarcasm too!

Also using “Thank you” at the end of a sentence rather than “please” has implicit effect. “I’d like you to do the washing up before you go out, Thank you” has more of an expectation and assumption that it’ll happen than pleading “I’d like you to do the washing up before you go out please” There’s a different energy in it.