

How To Talk So Your Children Will Listen

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Peace†
of **MIND**

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Structure

- Tone
- Volume
- Context
- Complexity
- Rapidity
- Length


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Pick the right time

- Hungry
- Angry
- Lonely
- Tired
- Location

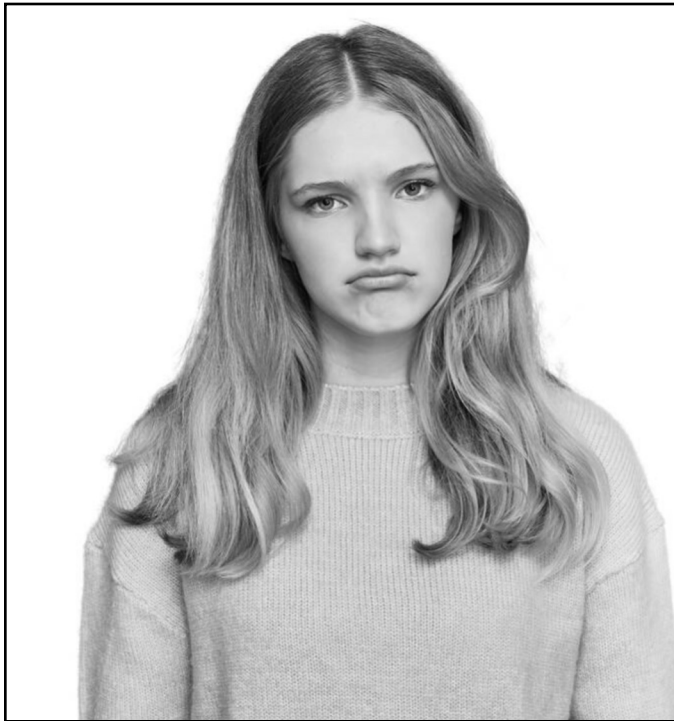
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Content

- Every child desires to be heard
 - Reflect/mirror
- No lecture ever lands
 - Length, emotion it elicits, brain reaction
- You learn more from questions or invitations to expand
 - Say more about that
 - Tell me more
 - What else?
 - Is there anything I can do/say that won't make this worse (L.Damour)

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Find the underlying emotion

- Name the emotion and check for accuracy
 - Diffuses the intensity of emotion
 - Makes more open and less defensive

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Littles

- When you are trying to get things done
 - Brief, direct, not questions
- When you are trying to correct behavior
 - Connect to and validate their emotion
 - Give example of a time they did it well – I know you can do this, and you will get better every time you practice
 - Family agreements – family charter of behavior
- When you are frustrated, afraid, worried, angry, etc
 - CHECK YOUR OWN EMOTIONS/Model taking care of yourself

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Middles (middle childhood grades 2-5)

- Brain changes that happen around 4th grade
- Recognize and admire the struggles they are navigating and skills they are developing, not the gifts and talents they were born with
- When they hide stuff from us – sometimes it means they have learned to “protect” us
- Kids need us to be confident, calm, sure, unworried
- If they become Eeyore, it might mean we get very engaged when they are complaining, and we ignore when they report positive events

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Early Adolescence 6th-8th Grades

- Change in the way we parent
- Calm but curious
- Reflect and mirror
- Get at the emotion underneath
- Listen more than you talk
- Understand it is their job to begin to pull away, peers become important, parents less so – it can hurt our feelings
- STILL, we are their most important role model
- Talk to them like adults WHEN they want to talk
- Happy/lovey/ninja parenting

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Kids with EF deficits

- ADHD, Autism, Learning disabilities, anxiety, depression
 - More patience
 - External prompts (lists, electronics)
 - Make sure you have their attention first
 - Few words, one step instructions
 - Reduce distractions
 - Reduce screen times
 - No arguing – power struggles

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Kids with strong emotional reactions/intense children

- Recognize the emotion
 - Strong emotional reactions are typically inability to deal with uncomfortable or difficult emotions (anger, frustration, shame, sadness)
 - All emotions are experienced less intensely when they are named
- Give them time to take care of selves – model this yourself
- Negative self talk – recognize the emotion, not the content (no arguing)
- No power struggles

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Relationships that have become negative

- Refuse to energize what you don't want to see
- Commit to **relentlessly** energizing neutral or positive behaviors
- Have clear expectations (revisit family charter, expected behaviors) and enforce rules


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Kids that won't talk

- All kids want their parent's attention/love/approval
- Watch how you respond when they try to talk
- Are you distracted, on screens, multi-tasking?
- Avoid interrogating
- Ask about "other kids their age" not them directly
- Ask open ended, wide-world, hopes and dreams questions
- Spend time 1:1 in their interest area
- Travel


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Kids that are mean or rejecting

- Good opportunity to demonstrate boundaries
- Notice what it elicits inside YOU (outrage, hurt, impulse to reject, shame)
- Respond from the “wise adult” not the “injured or outraged child”
- You get calmer and more certain – kids need to feel like we can handle them at their worst
- In the moment you can say “not the way I deserve to be treated”
- Later you can teach them that words hurt

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Kids that seem not to empathize or see other people's point of view

- First check your emotions (this can scare us or make us angry)
- Empathy can be taught (emotional versus cognitive empathy)
- Avoid shaming
- Acting, role playing, literature (with discussion) movies, can build cognitive empathy

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Take-away

- Tone, time, place, content, delivery
- Identify, name, and empathize with child's underlying emotion
- You learn more from clarifying questions than anything else, and kid feels heard (mirroring or reflecting)
- Best course is for child to solve their own problems (how do other kids your age do this)
- Slightly different strategies at different stages
- Special circumstances – guiding principals are the same

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