

PARENTING TIPS for the 21st Century

GENERAL tips that work:

- Parents make lots of mistakes with their children; However, *the most critical times for a child* to develop trust and feel safe and secure are:
 - Waking up in morning (or anytime from sleep)
 - Mealtimes
 - Transition times (home from school, pick-up/drop-off at daycare)
 - BedtimesMake an extra effort to show care, touch, eye contact, positive attention at these times. "I'm glad you are my son/daughter."
- When you feel unusually irritated, anxious, upset and want to lash out at someone else (like the grocery clerk, the receptionist, or your child), HALT (H.A.L.T. T. !!) and ask yourself:
 - Am I Hungry?---eat carbo's or drink milk---stop caffeine intake
 - Am I Angry?---acknowledge it now, feel it, and tell someone, even the dog/cat.
 - Am I Lonely?—say it outloud, feel it for one full minute, maybe shed a few tears, reach out to a safe person to touch or talk/meet.
 - Am I Tired?—close your eyes, breathe deeply a few times and set a time to nap or sleep very soon.
 - Am I "Triggered" by something/one I just saw, smelled, heard that reminds me of a *past* negative experience? Acknowledge it, say it outloud, look at the time, place, and purpose you are there and say, "I have a choice Today. I am no longer the person I was then."

WORDS that work:

- "I see you ...sharing with your brother, feeding the dog, putting your toys where they belong."
- "I like the way you...hold your fork, close the door, wipe your mouth."
- Praise for doing (tying shoes) and Praise for Being (my daughter).
- Give directions ...One Step at a Time.
- "I made a mistake! I should have said/done _____ instead of _____. "Mistakes are for learning." I willuse my inside voice, be gentler, _____ next time.
- When the child does something wrong and you need to consequence: "Mistakes are for learning. You can do better next time. But this time, I will ...take up your toy truck for the rest of the day."
- To be sure you have the child's attention: "Let me see your eyes."
- "When the timer rings, this show is over; When the water is this high in the tub ..., When you see the porch light go on, etc.,you need to

- stop what you're doing and ... (go to bed, come in, turn off water, eat dinner, do homework, pick up your toys.)
- Saying kind words (praise), to and about yourself in front of the children.
 - Saying nice things about a child to someone else *in front of* that child.
 - "I'm sorry"...I hurt your feelings....I misunderstood...you feel bad/sad.

ACTIONS THAT WORK:

- When you & your child/your spouse are in a Power Struggle:
 - Leave the room where the toxic gridlock w/ child or other person is--ensuring that child is safe.
 - Breathe and hold & count to 10
 - Talk 5 minutes to another adult about something very trivial.
 - Return to problem person/situation.
 - Laugh with the other person about how silly situation was.
- Parent Time Out – Give yourself something the kids understand! They'll respect you for it.

AND some more ideas...

- To create a calming feeling for an anxious person---Upon first seeing that person you know and care about: Look the child/person in the eye, gently touch them on shoulder, hand, or arm, and say their name and a positive statement, "Eric, I am glad to see you." "Nikki, I am glad you are here."
- Hugs that don't last too long.
- An arm around someone's shoulder, saying something like, "We stick together" or "I'm glad ... you're on my team.....we're sisters, brothers, friends/family/housemates."
- Reaching out a hand to help someone...pick up toys, clothes, dishes...get up from the floor, a chair, out of the car, walk across the street.
- Sending notes, pictures in lunch kits, backpacks, mail, on door.
- Sharing food or inexpensive items
- Laughing at yourself when you make mistakes.
- Looking in the mirror and saying kind words to or about yourself.
- Distracting off uncomfortable situations by doing something fun or productive---doing jumping jacks, taking a bath, making beds, cleaning closets, flipping TV channels, making popcorn.
- Deep breaths, counting to ten before acting, leaving a place that feels explosive.
- Take in the sunshine---20 minutes of sunshine a day lifts the spirits.

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