

Ep #16: No, Stop, and Don't: How to Change Your Approach and Get Your Kids to Listen



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host
Lisa Smith

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Welcome to *Real World Peaceful Parenting*, a podcast for parents that are tired of yelling, threatening, and punishing their kids. Join mom and master certified parent coach Lisa Smith as she gives you actionable step-by-step strategies that'll help you transform your household from chaos to cooperation. Let's dive in.

Welcome, welcome, welcome. I am so excited to be here with you today. I want to begin today's episode by giving a real world peaceful parent shoutout to Amber H. Amber H. left a review on Apple podcast.

She wrote, "Lisa's information has been life changing for our family. We have four children ranging in ages from nine months to seven years. I was in tears listening to her episode on getting kids to listen without yelling. The tension in our house lately has been so high, and none of us have been happy. Our kids are frustrated and so are we. We started using the techniques Lisa suggests, and it has been a game changer. Things have gotten much calmer, and we are working together with our kids now to accomplish tasks at home.

"I love this podcast. My husband who does not listen to podcasts has even started listening to these. We have a strong willed three-year-old child who has been a challenge for us since she was born. These have helped so much with her too. Thank you, Lisa, for what you do."

Oh Amber, Amber, Amber, Amber. Thank you so much. I love this review because I love knowing that the tips and tools and coaching that I'm providing is making a difference. And you're picking up the techniques and bringing them to your home. It's having a profound impact on everybody.

And as many of you know, I really focus on helping parents of strong-willed kids. So to know that this has helped your strong willed three-year-old and

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the mom and dad is everything to me. Everything. So thank you. Thanks, Amber, for sharing that. I appreciate the feedback from my own learning so that I can continue to up my game and bring you more and more good stuff.

More importantly, however, I appreciate the feedback and the review rating and reviewing the podcast. Because when you do this, what you're really doing is paying it forward to other families. When you leave a review, the site is much more likely to recommend the podcast to others who are looking for a parenting resource.

So when you take the time to leave a review or rate the podcast, you are paying it forward to other families and other children who really need their parents to hear this information. So from the bottom of my heart, thank you, thank you, thank you for helping change the world one family at a time.

So today in today's episode, we're going to talk about no, stop, and don't. As parents, these words come up a lot. Let me ask you. Have you said them? Stop it right now. Get off there. Don't do that. Quit it. Stop. No. Take inventory. If you were giving yourself a report card, do you think you say these words occasionally, often, all the time? Do you feel like a broken record? Do you feel frustrated when your kids don't listen to you telling them no, stop, don't? Right? That's kind of funny.

Let me ask you. Do you sometimes feel like a failure when you tell your kids no, don't, stop and they don't listen, follow, or obey at any age? Yeah, this happens a lot. We feel like broken records. We feel exasperated. We feel frustrated. We feel like all we do is go around all day and say no, no, no, no, no. Right? We spend so much time sometimes telling our kids no, stop, you can't. Don't do that.

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Today I'd like to encourage you to move away from this style of parenting. Instead move towards telling your kids what you do want them to do. I want you to paint the picture of what success looks like. I think many times our kids don't know what's expected of them because we don't communicate it. Instead we spend all our time telling our kids what not to do. All the focus, attention, and energy becomes centered on what not to do, what they're doing wrong, what's going wrong. It just creates this negative energy for them and for you.

What we do need to do is give at least, at least equal airtime to what they can do and what they should do. We need to give at least equal airtime to what success looks like. What does success look like? Do you know? Do you have a clear picture in your mind? Do they know? At any age, do they know? Do you communicate it regularly? Do you give them the formula or the recipe or the game plan for what to do? Or are we just always pointing out what not to do.

Now let me blow your mind here for a moment. It's very interesting to me. As adults, we don't treat each other this way. We really don't. Imagine if we did. Oh my goodness. Imagine if your boss talked to you this way. Always telling you, maybe even yelling at you, "Stop, no, don't." If your boss was always focused on what you did wrong.

Imagine if you had a job where no one ever told you that you did a good job or were successful. Imagine in your job if goals or objectives were never laid out for you or discussed. Every day you got up and went to work not having any idea how to be successful. Not having any idea what was expected of you. Instead your boss just yelled at you or punished you every time you did something wrong. Right? It's crazy. It's crazy to even imagine that.

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Or maybe you have a job where every time you proposed an idea or tried something, your boss just said, "No, stop, don't." But nothing else. Nothing. It wouldn't be very fulfilling, and you probably wouldn't work there very long, right? I mean it makes me laugh, chuckle just to imagine it.

Well, as a kid with an underdeveloped brain, our kids are navigating the world. They're learning, and they're working to become an expert at things. They're building their 10,000 hours in. Many, many, many times they have no idea what success looks like. As parents, we play a critical role in this. A critical role. I cannot emphasize this enough. You have a choice. You can be your kid's critic, or you can be their coach. I would so much rather you coach them than criticize them, right.

Imagine if you're a basketball critic, right. Y'all know I love basketball. My son plays basketball. Imagine if you weren't the basketball coach. You were the basketball critic. Your daughter shoots a free throw, and you say as the critic, "Yep, you missed that free throw. Your show isn't working. You didn't hit it." Right? That wouldn't be very helpful or motivating.

Now if you are your daughter's basketball coach, you say things like, "Straighten your elbow. Use your legs. Keep your eye on the basket. Get into the rhythm of dribbling before you shoot the free throw. Don't worry. You'll get it. You'll correct it. You can do this." Right? That's so much more positive and affirming. It's so much easier for your child to learn from the coach than the critic.

Do you know that your voice today becomes your child's inner voice at any age? Do you know that? Let me say that again. Your voice becomes your child's inner voice. Maybe upon hearing this you're like, "Oh my Lisa." It's okay. Remember. When we know better, we do better. Right? I show up

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here every week to be your coach not your critic. What I know is that when we know better, we do better.

So what inner voice are you creating for your kids? Let me ask that again. What inner voice are you creating for your kids with your voice today? With your words, with your intention. I invite you to really ponder this. Become the watcher of your voice, of your words. How you speak them, the tone, the intention. Become the watcher of your words you speak to your kids at any age. If you're the critic now, transition to being the coach.

Let's look at some examples of what being the coach might look like. Let's say your kid is crawling all over you at your other kid's basketball game. Instead of saying something like, "Stop it right now. Get off me. Sit down." You might say, "I can see you want to touch me. How about you touch my arm?" Yeah?

Let's say you're making dinner and your two kids are jumping on and off the couch. Instead of saying, "Get down right now and stop that." You might say, "I can see you need to jump. Let's get some pillows and jump on those on the floor. Or let's jump from room to room around the house like a bunny rabbit."

Let's say your two-year-old has a habit of throwing dinner on the floor when she's all done eating. Instead of saying, "Cut that out. Quit that. Stop that right now." You might say, "Hey, instead of throwing your food off the tray just say all done." Yeah?

Let's say your little boy is sitting at the kitchen table and coloring, and you notice that he's decided to color on the table. Instead of saying, "Don't do that. Stop it right now." You could say, "I see you want to color. Let's color

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on paper because then we could hang it up and keep it forever, and it doesn't hurt the furniture."

Let's say one of your kids is hurting the other. Instead of yelling, "Stop hitting. Do it again and you're going to your room." You could say, "Hey, I see you're trying to get your brother's attention. How about you wave your hands or say his name?" Or you could say, "Hey instead of hitting, you can say can you help me daddy? Can you help me mommy? Can you help me brother?" Right? You're coaching. You're directing them to what you do want them to do rather than focusing on what they're doing wrong.

Here's a good one. Let's say your four-year-old is crying about getting in the swimming pool at swim lessons. Instead of saying, "Don't be afraid. Get in the water." You could say, "You're safe. You're completely safe. I promise you. I'm right here." You're directing their attention on what you want them to do rather than what you don't want them to do. You're coaching them rather than criticizing them. Ah, it's so good.

You can also affirm their better choices afterwards. I appreciate when you ask for help rather than hitting. In this family, we color on paper instead of furniture. I'd rather you jump on the cushions than jump on the couch. I like it when you touch my arm rather than crawl all over me. Inner voice, inner voice.

An added benefit to focusing on what you want your kids to do instead of what not to do has to do with a term called confirmation bias. Simply stated confirmation bias means that your mind looks for evidence to support your thoughts, and it finds it 100% of the time. Said another way, what we focus on expands. When we focus on what our kids aren't doing, all we notice is all the things our kids aren't doing. When we focus on directing our kids what to do, suddenly we start focusing on all the things they are doing.

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Another way to expand is when you're focused on no, don't, and stop, you're much, much, much more likely to get frustrated and react. The mind looks for the mistakes. Again, it's called confirmation bias. I'm going to dig into this much more in future episodes.

What I want you to remember is where your focus expands. So if you're always focusing on what your kids aren't doing, your mind is going to always find evidence for what they aren't doing. If your mind focuses on the future and what you want them to do, the mind will look to the things they're getting right.

Okay. Let's recap the three reasons we want to move away from no, stop, and don't. Number one, by telling them what to do instead of focusing on what not to do, there's a higher likelihood of success. You're coaching them in the direction you want them to go.

Reason number two, your voice becomes their inner voice over time. Do you want your kid's future inner voice to be about what they can't do or what they can't do? Do you want it to be about limits or possibilities? Do you want it to be about successes or failures?

Number three, when you focus on what you want your kids to do, you set up your brain to be less triggered, less frustrated, less judgmental because you've given your brain the assignment of looking for the positive actions. Looking for the success. Looking for what they should do. Your mind looks for evidence to support your thoughts, and it finds it 100% of the time. So if your thoughts are always focused on the no, stop, and don't, your brain is always going to see the no, stop, and don't actions and behaviors.

I'd much rather catch my son doing things right than wrong. It's much more likely to create connection and cooperation, and I'm much more likely to

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enjoy parenting him. Yeah? You see? Lightbulb. “Ah wow Lisa. I get it. I see.”

Okay. So this week here's your homework assignment. I want you to number one notice what you're saying to your kids. Become the watcher. Become the listener. Can you do better? Number two, I want you to work on moving from critic to coach. Spend more time telling your kids what you want them to do rather than not do. More time focusing on the positive, on the actions, on the behaviors that you want from them. Really commit to being the coach rather than the critic. All right?

You got this. I know you can do it. Remember, your mind expands on what you focus on. So this small change will result in seeing your kids in a much more positive light. I promise. It's a total game changer. Okay. Until next week, I'm wishing you peaceful parenting.

Thank you so much for listening today. I want to personally invite you to head over to thepeacefulparent.com/welcome and sign up for my free peaceful parenting minicourse. You'll find everything you need to get started on the path to peaceful parenting just waiting for you over there at www.thepeacefulparent.com/welcome. I can't wait for you to get started.

Thanks for listening to *Real World Peaceful Parenting*. If you want more info on how you can transform your parenting, visit thepeacefulparent.com. See you soon.