

Ep #179: The Truth About How Your Words Affect Your Child's Future



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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. Welcome to today's episode. I am so excited to be with you here today because today we're diving into a topic that is fundamental to raising confident, resilient, and emotionally healthy children, and that is the topic of the power of words. Bet you didn't think I was going to say that, did you? I know, I know.

The words we speak to our children play a critical role in shaping their internal voice, i.e. their self-esteem, their self-confidence, how they perceive themselves, how they see themselves, how they see their place in the world, and frankly, their worth.

So let me say this again. The words we speak to our children play a critical role in shaping their internal voice, forming the foundation of their self-perception, their self-esteem, their worthiness, and their worldview. It begins from a very early age.

So let's start this all-important topic by understanding the impact of positive communication. I'm not talking about things here we don't mean or over flowery affirmations. I'm talking about just basic positive communication. Speaking positively to our kids, even when they make a mistake or need direction, fosters confidence and resilience in your kids. This helps them develop a sense of self-worth and the ability to overcome challenges.

Conversely, harsh criticism can undermine their self-esteem and instill self-doubt. Our children internalize the messages from us as truth, which becomes the subconscious dialogue that guides their thoughts and actions throughout their life. However, this doesn't mean we're not parenting them

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or letting them get away with things. Not at all. Positive communication is not about avoiding discipline or ignoring inappropriate behavior.

Instead, it's about guiding our children with empathy and understanding, setting clear boundaries and offering constructive, keyword there, feedback while staying connected with our children. I feel like I need to say that again.

This episode is about guiding our children with empathy and understanding, number one. Number two, while setting clear boundaries, and number three, offering constructive feedback while staying connected with our children. Let me tell you, I want that for you. I want that for your kids. I want that for your family, deeply down to the depths of my soul. I want that for every family in the world.

When we speak positively, we provide our kids with the tools they need to learn from their mistakes and make better choices in the future. We can still hold them accountable and teach them right from wrong, but do so in a way that builds them up rather than tears them down and does long-term damage by negatively impacting their self-worth and self-esteem. This approach ensures that our children feel supported and valued, even when they're being corrected, which ultimately strengthens our relationship with them and promotes their overall well-being.

Our words matter immensely when talking to and interacting with our kids. Let me tell you something. They believe you when you speak about them and to them. They believe you. So whatever you're saying to them, they believe you, even when they're storming, pushing back, and shutting down.

As your parent coach, I'm here to remind you often, our outer voice becomes our kids' inner voice. So let's break down what this means in practice.

Number one is to just know this by listening to this episode today. Be aware of the power your words hold, even if you think they aren't sinking in, or

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your kid is saying that's not true or storming or ignoring you. Your words hold power. Your voice today, the things you say to your kids, will become the things they say and believe about themselves down the road.

Number two, observe your language. Be the watcher of yourself while you're parenting. Pay attention to what you're saying to your kids, especially when you're dysregulated, upset, triggered, or mad.

Number three, take inventory. Reflect on whether you're speaking from your higher brain and being emotionally mature while speaking, or you're speaking from your middle brain, your emotional center, and maybe being emotionally immature while speaking to your kids while you're triggered, mad, or upset.

Now, remember, there's no judgment from me, and there's no shame as you're taking this inventory. We are a shame-free, safe place here at Real World Peaceful Parenting. So I want you to take that inventory, and remember, it's all about progress, not perfection. Could you do a little bit better?

Step four, commit to change. As the late great Maya Angelou says, when we know better, we do better. Now that you've listened to this episode today, commit as much as possible to using shame-free scripts and sentences that don't contribute to low self-esteem. Commit to using scripts that instead teach right from wrong without harming self-worth.

Can you do that? Can you commit to working on that? I'm taking the commitment, and I'm observing and noticing and committing and working on it myself.

Now, let's explore some common parenting tactics that can shame our kids and produce negative results rather than teaching right from wrong. Let me give you some examples. Category one is put-downs. Things like you're acting like a spoiled brat. You're so sensitive. Stop being so dramatic. You're so irresponsible. You're so bad with money. You're so

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disrespectful. Yeah, let's not do those things. Those definitely become our kids' inner voice.

Category two might surprise you, and it's called comparisons. It sounds like do you see anyone else here acting like this? Or it's why can't you be like your sister? She's just getting on with it. You always make things so hard. It could be things like no one else in your class seems to be struggling. No one else loses their gym clothes. No one else wears that or says that. Or it could be your sibling didn't do that at your age. Why are you doing it?

Category three, the perfect or good child narrative. Good boys don't do X. Good girls do Y. It could be I love when you listen, and you're a good boy or good girl. Or it could be why don't you be a good boy and go put your shoes on? Why don't you be a good girl and sit here quietly?

Category four is age-based criticism. You're too old for this. Stop acting like a baby. Or you're a big girl now. You don't wear diapers like your little sibling. Or it could be you're not a baby so stop acting like one. Or it could be telling your teenager, you're acting like a spoiled brat, or you're acting like a baby. Those criticisms hurt and sting.

Category five is gender-based criticisms, which sound like stop acting like a little girl and man up. Or were you raised in a barn? Can you be more lady-like? I heard that one a lot as a kid. Then category six can revolve around criticisms and shaming around the body, body shaming. It sounds like subtle but shaming thoughts like don't you think that's enough sweets? Or at the other extreme, you look skeletal. I can see your bones. That's gross.

Instead of these harmful tactics, which often provoke shame, we want to use positive instructive language that guides our kids on what we do want them to do. So, for example, instead of saying, were you raised in a barn, can you be more lady-like, you could say please remember to use your napkin and keep your elbows off the table. We're instructing on what we would like to see happen.

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When you tell someone, were you raised in a barn? Can you be more lady-like? You're assuming that they have any idea what that means. Yeah? Can you see that? But being more direct and more neutral, I'd like you to use your napkin and keep your elbows off the table. Or we don't sit at a table and put our elbows on the table. Please take yours down. It's not shameful. It's not affecting self-esteem. It's positive and instructive.

This is where I want you to direct your brain. This is how I want you to think about guiding your kids. Here's some more examples of how to replace harmful tactics with positive instructive language. So instead of saying you're so irresponsible, you never do your homework on time, you could say, I noticed you're having trouble keeping up with your homework. Let's work together to create a schedule that helps you manage your time better. Or what could you do to better manage your time? Or how are you focusing on getting better at managing your time? Much better, yes?

Instead of saying, why can't you be more like your sister? She's always so organized. You could say I see you're struggling to keep your room tidy. Let's find a system that works for you to help you stay organized in your own way. So much better, right?

Instead of saying stop being a crybaby and toughen up. You could say, I see you're upset, and it's okay to feel that way. Let's talk about what's bothering you and figure out how to handle it. Or come up with some ideas on what to do.

Instead of saying, you're so disrespectful. You never listen to me. You could say, I need you to listen when I'm speaking. It's important for us to listen to each other, and I appreciate that you show respect by listening when I'm talking. So much more instructive, yes?

These positive instructive approaches not only guide our children on the desired behavior, but also reinforce self-esteem and create connection and cooperation between you and your kids.

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Our goal is to guide our children with love and respect and understanding. It's about teaching them right from wrong while they're growing up without damaging their self-worth and their self-esteem. As parents, our words have the power to build up or break down our child's self-esteem. Let's choose to build them up. Let's commit to that together.

Notice what you're saying to your kids. Observe and notice. Commit to finding a more neutral way to provide direction rather than shaming them into behaving. Understand that our words matter, and we want to teach our children right from wrong without damaging their self-worth.

Yes? Oh, so we're a committed community. Progress, not perfection. We're not going to get it right every time, but the real world peaceful parenting community is all about choosing to build our kids up together. Build their self-esteem while we're teaching them right from wrong.

You in? Well done. I know you are. I love it. Thank you for joining me today. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for doing this important work. For you. For your kids. For the world. When we raise children that are learning right from wrong without damaging their self-worth and building up their self-esteem, we change the world one family at a time. I'm so proud of you for taking this on and committing to it. Well done. Until next time, 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.